

GYANTSE AND ITS MONASTERIES
Part 1
General description of the Temples

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

English version of
INDO-TIBETICA IV. 1

edited by
LOKESH CHANDRA

from a first draft translation by
UMA MARINA VESCI

ADITYA PRAKASHAN
NEW DELHI

This volume is a major breakthrough for the history of the Sa-skya period of Tibet, the art treasures of the Gyantse region, and the evolution of a distinctive Tibetan style from the multiple strands of Indian iconographic elements, Chinese tendencies in larger compositions and the Khotanese manner in statuary.

So far it had been held that Buddhism went to Tibet through Nepal and Kashmir, but this volume points out for the first time how it also traversed the Sikkim-Gyantse way. It details the historical monasteries on the road to and in the city of Gyantse, which are of unique value for the development of the Tibetan visual arts. The small temple of Bsam-grub lha-khan near Phari has frescoes of the XV century and a statue of Avalokiteśvara and two book covers of possible Indian origin. This book treats of the extraordinary flourishing of art due to the enlightened patronage of the Sa-skyas during the long tenure of their power. The princes of Zhalu and Gyantse followed their example. Chinese influences came to be felt during the hegemony of the Sa-skyas who maintained cultural and political relations with China for two centuries.

The volume reviews the disappearance of ancient historical records because of the suppression of all rivals by the emerging Gelukpa sect. The Myan-chun chronicles and the Eulogy of Nenyng monastery, which have escaped, are unique sources for the history of the artistic heritage of the region. Along with them, historical geography, the chronologies of the Sa-skya abbots and of the princes of Zhalu and of Gyantse, and their relations with the Mongol court are discussed.

The monastery of Kyangphu at Samada was founded in the XI century, but was restored in the XIV under the Sa-skyas. It has statues and stūpas of Indian origin. Its surviving murals betray Central Asian style. Several maṇḍalas of Vairocana from different tantras are dealt with.

The Gyani monastery in the Salu village has capitals of the XIV century. The monastery at Iwang was constructed before the arrival of Śākyaśrī the Great Pandit of Kashmir in the XIII century. An inscription on its mural says that it was painted in Indian style. Another inscription points out that Amitāyus was done in the Khotanese way. The ancient monasteries of Shonang and Nenyng have been restored and repainted, though at Nenyng splendid fragments of the best epoch of Indo-Nepalese art survive.

The superb monastery of Gyantse is described in all scientific details for the first time in this book. The most outstanding monument of the region is the Kumbum of Gyantse, also known as Dpal-hkhor chos-sde, important both for its architecture and for its paintings. It is a gigantic complex of several maṇḍalas, a veritable *summa* of tantric revelations. The inscriptions name its painters and sculptors: unique in the history of Tibetan art. They give summary descriptions of the frescoes which serve as remarkable iconographic guides. The paintings can be dated to a well-determined period, namely the XV century, when an independent idiom of Tibetan art developed.

Part 1 details the iconography of the Kumbum which is an architectonic maṇḍala, where progressive ascending from one floor to the other corresponds to an ascension from a lesser order of tantras to ever higher ones. The 73 major temples and minor chapels on its four floors and dome are described at length. An astounding number of 27,529 deities are represented in the Kumbum. This book is a mine of information and perceptions of the great master Giuseppe Tucci, and invites further researches on the vast tantric iconography and its symbolism detailed herein. Part 2 gives the text and translation of the inscriptions in the temples and chapels of the various monasteries. Part 3 is devoted to the mural paintings in them.

First published in Italian :

Roma, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1941

English translation : New Delhi, 1989.

©Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma, Italy.

ISBN : 81-85179-19-0 (SET)

ISBN : 81-85179-24-7

Rs. 470

**Lumbini
International Research**

Institute 5584

Published by Pradeep Goel for Aditya Prakashan,
4829/1, Prahlad Lane, 24, Ansari Road, New Delhi
Phototypesetting by Navchetan Photoset (P) Ltd.,
and Printed at D.K. Fine Art Press, Delhi-110052.

TO DOLMA/TĀRĀ

mūrtis te janani tridhāmaghaṭitā sthūlātisūkṣmā parā/
vedānām na hi gocarā, katham api prāptām nutām āśraye//

CONTENTS

Page	§
xi	FOREWORD : by Lokesh Chandra
1	Preface
	Chapter I. Importance of the monuments studied in the trip of 1937
5	1 The Sikkim-Gyantse road and its monuments
9	2 The importance of these monuments for the history of Tibetan art
16	3 The lists of sculptors and painters in the inscriptions of Gyantse
21	4 Importance and character of the paintings in these monuments
25	5 Chinese influences on these paintings
28	6 Paintings in Indian style
30	7 Painters and paintings
31	8 The diverse elements by whose fusion Tibetan painting is born
35	9 The statues
38	10 Architecture
39	11 Importance of the Sa-skyapa sect
	Chapter II. Sources
40	12 Disappearance of ancient historical documents
42	13 The Myan-chun
44	14 The eulogy of Gnas-rñin
45	15 Secondary sources
	Chapter III. Historical geography
47	16 The land of Nñ
54	17 The monasteries of Nñ-smad
66	18 Nñ-bar
68	19 The temples of Nñ-smad

Chapter IV Chronology of the monuments and especially that of the Kumbum

- 73 20 Chronology of the Sa-skya abbots
78 21 The princes of Zha-lu and of Gyantse
84 22 The Sa-skya monks and the Mongol court

Chapter V. The temples of Samada

- 93 23 General characteristics
95 24 The mgon-khan
97 25 The chapel of the victory over Māra
98 26 The atrium and the first chapel
101 27 The inscriptions of Chos-bloṣ and the foundation of the temple
106 28 The mudrā of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana
108 29 Scheme of the maṇḍalas of Rnan-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana described in the preceding volumes
110 30 Vajradhātu-maṇḍala and Mahākaruṇāgarbha-maṇḍala
113 31 Why the maṇḍalas of a single cycle can be many

Outside the text,
between pages 120-121

MAṆḌALAS :

- 32 From Rtsa rgyud: Tattvasaṅgraha/De-ñid-bsdus
33 From Vajraśekhara (Toh. 480)
34 From Śrī-Paramādyā-tantra (Toh. 487)
35 From Nāma-saṅgīti (Toh. 360)
36 From Vairocanābhisambodhi (Toh.494) and affiliated texts
37 From Śrī-vajramaṇḍal-ālaṅkāra (Toh. 490)
38 From Sarvadurgati-pariśodhana (Toh.483)

- 119 39 The maṇḍala of Samada represents the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala
122 40 The cycle of Mon-bu putra in the temple of Dregun (Samada)

Chapter VI. Salu, Iwang, Shonang and Gnas-rñiñ

133. Salu

- 134 41 The chapel of Iwang embellished in the Indian
manner
138 42 The chapel embellished in the Khotanese manner
141 Shonang
142 43 The foundation of the monastery of Gnas-rñiñ.

Chapter VII. Gyantse and its main temple

- 146 44 The three chapels on the first floor
153 45 The chapel of Lam-bras
158 46 The chapel of maṇḍalas

Chapter VIII. Kumbum

- 168 47 General symbolism of the Kumbum
172 48 The first floor of the Kumbum
201 49 The second floor of the Kumbum
218 50 The third floor of the Kumbum
290 51 The fourth floor, the dome and the campana
of the Kumbum

FOREWORD

The transmission of Buddhism to Tibet had so far been held to be through Nepal and Kashmir, but this volume points out that it had also traversed the Sikkim-Gyantse way. Near Phari is a small temple Bsam-grub lha-khañ which has frescoes of the XV century and a statue of Avalokiteśvara and two book covers of possible Indian origin.

The most outstanding monument of the region is the Kumbum of Gyantse, also known as Dpal-ḥkhor chos-sde, important both for its architecture and for its paintings. It is a gigantic complex of several maṇḍalas, a veritable *summa* of tantric revelations, compiled in encyclopaedic works like the *Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho* or *Sgrub-thabs-kun-btus*. The inscriptions name the painters and the sculptors who are unique for the history of Tibetan art. They give summary descriptions of the frescoes which serve as remarkable iconographic guides. The paintings can be dated to a well-determined period, namely, the XV century when an independent idiom of Tibetan art developed. Chinese influences can be felt during the Sa-skya hegemony, who maintained cultural and political relations with China for two centuries. The Chinese manner is evident in scenes of paradise, landscapes, palaces, floral plays, clouds hanging in the air. The Indian style is strong in the maṇḍalas. Central Asian style from Khotan, the *Li-lugs*, is evident in the statues of Iwang. The Indian elements in the iconography and the Chinese tendencies in the larger compositions mature into a Tibetan aesthetic sensibility.

The flourishing of art was due to the enlightened patronage of the Sa-skya-pa during the long tenure of their power. The

princes of Gyantse followed their example. In course of time, the Dge-lugs-pa sect became predominant. The chronicles of the earlier rival sects and of families in whom these lands vested, disappeared gradually. The Dge-lugs-pa suppressed the historic works that were not to their liking. Thus the Eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ has survived only in personal libraries, and the Myañ-chuñ annals are very hard to find. Both these texts provide precious and extensive data on the monuments at Gyantse. The chapels are described in detail; all the books and statues in

the disposition of figures in the maṇḍala. This Tibetan word is an equivalent of *vyūha* in the Mahāvyutpatti. It occurs as early as the Sukhāvātī-vyūha which may be assigned to the first century A.D. The concept of vyūha or a large number of Tathāgatas and beings in the congregation of the main deity is an ancient idea. In the smaller Sukhāvātī-vyūha, in the east are other blessed Buddhas, led by the Tathāgata Akṣobhya, the Tathāgata Merudhvaja, the Tathāgata Mahāmeru, the Tathāgata Meruprabhāsa, and the Tathāgata Mañjudhvaja. In the south are: the Tathāgata Candrasūryapradīpa, the Tathāgata Yaśaḥprabha, the Tathāgata Mahārciskandha, the Tathāgata Merupradīpa, the Tathāgata Anantavīrya. In the west: the Tathāgata Amitāyus, the Tathāgata Amitaskandha, the Tathāgata Amitadhvaja, the Tathāgata Mahāprabha, the Tathāgata Mahāratnaketu, the Tathāgata Śuddharaśmiprabha. In the north: Tathāgata Mahārciskandha, the Tathāgata Vaiśvānara-nirghoṣa, the Tathāgata Dundubhisvara-nirghoṣa, the Tathāgata Duṣpradharṣa, the Tathāgata Ādityasambhava, the Tathāgata Jāleniprabha (Jvālinīprabha ?), the Tathāgata Prabhākara. In the nadir: Tathāgata Simha, the Tathāgata Yaśas, the Tathāgata Yaśaḥprabhāva, the Tathāgata Dharma, the Tathāgata Dharmadhara, the Tathāgata Dharmadhvaja. In the zenith: Tathāgata Brahmaghoṣa, the Tathāgata Nakṣatararāja, the Tathāgata Indraketurdhvajarāja, the Tathāgata Gandhottama, the Tathāgata Gandhaprabhās, the Tathāgata Mahārciskandha, the Tathāgata Ratnakusuma-saṃpuṣpita-gātra, the Tathāgata Sālendra-rāja, the Tathāgata Ratnotpalaśrī, the Tathāgata Sarvārthadarśa, the Tathāgata Sumerukalpa (Max Müller, SBE.49, 1894: 100-101). The *vyūha* is the initial stage in the emergence of the maṇḍala.

THE TEMPLES OF SAMADA

Two monasteries of Kyangphu and Riku situated at Samada deserve notice. The first monastery is famous in tradition as the oldest. The present structures however date to the XIV century. Entering through a narrow gate we see small cellas, one is the mgon-khañ and the other on the right is dedicated to Lha-mo. In the court the first chapel is Śākyamuni's victory over Māra. In the atrium of the main temple are frescoes that remind of the style of India. The temple was founded by Chos-kyi-blo-gros, a disciple of Rin-chen-bzañ-po. The first chapel of the main temple is called the southern chapel. Its altar has statues of Indian origin (p.100). The magnificent stūpa behind the altar is of gilded bronze with the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala in high-relief. Executed with extreme finesse it can be a work of the late Pāla period. The other chapel to the left is the big northern chapel which has statues of the Buddhas of the past, future and present: Dīpañkara, Maitreya and Śākyamuni. The most important objects herein are the pediments of three statues of the three protectors: Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuḥṣa. The extant image of Avalokiteśvara is of Indian origin. The metrical inscription indicates that it was ordered by Chos-kyi-blo-gros, a disciple of Rin-chen-bzañ-po. He in fact was the founder of the Kyangphu monastery in the XI century but it was restored during the Sa-skyā period in the XIV century. On the first floor there are two chapels. The right chapel is dedicated to Sarvavid Vairocana (p. 106). Professor Tucci dilates upon the several cycles of Vairocana to determine the maṇḍala in this chapel. He comes to three main figurations of the maṇḍala of Vairocana, based on the Tattva-saṅgraha, Vairocanābhisambodhi and Durgati-pariśodhana. The maṇḍala in the right chapel is derived from the Tattva-saṅgraha. To the left is the chapel of Prajñāpāramitā (p. 120). To the left of the door is the image of Hayagrīva and to the right that of Acala (p. 121). The mural

paintings surviving here and there on the second floor betray Central Asian style.

Leaving the village of Samada, half a kilometer down, is the monastery of Riku or Dreguñ. Some of the paintings can be ascribed to the XVI century. Its most ancient part is the Mgon-khañ, with Gur mgon the protective deity of the Sa-skyā-pas, surrounded by the divinities of his cycle, Pu-tra miñ-sriñ (p. 123).

Prof. Tucci details the various maṇḍalas of Vairocana from seven texts. He begins with the Tattva-saṅgraha, whose first section pertaining to abhisamaya has six maṇḍalas classified as: (1) detailed, (2) intermediate, and (3) concise. There are four detailed maṇḍalas, and one maṇḍala in each of the other two. The intermediate caturmudrā-maṇḍala is one cycle with Vairocana in the centre and the four Tathāgatas in the four cardinal points. The four Tathāgatas are not accompanied by other deities. Tucci assigns a maṇḍala to each of them (6-9) which has to be corrected.

The first four maṇḍalas are :

1. Mahāmaṇḍala : Vairocana in bodhyagrī-mudrā, paré and crowned, sits on seven lions, Gobu 1.
2. Guhya-dhāraṇī-maṇḍala with figures, or samaya-maṇḍala with emblems : Vairocana is replaced by Vajriṇī or Vajradhātviśvarī, crowned, seated on a lotus, holds a caitya on a pediment, Gobu 39.
3. Dharma-maṇḍala, or sūkṣma-maṇḍala, Vairocana in bodhyagrī-mudrā, paré and crowned, adorsed by vajras, sits on a lotus, Gobu 72.
4. Karma-pūjā-maṇḍala, Vairocana as a monk (neither paré nor crowned), sits on a lotus, Gobu 105.

In these four maṇḍalas, the attributes of the 37 deities change and also their names. For a detailed study the introduction to my edition of the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha* (STTS) has to be consulted, in conjunction with my *A Ninth Century Scroll of*

the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala. The latter work illustrates the six maṇḍalas of the first abhisamaya section of the STTS by Śubhākarasimha (A.D. 637-735) in a scroll termed Gobu-shinkan. The central deity of the first four maṇḍalas is reproduced here from this scroll to show the variation pattern.

All the maṇḍalas enumerated by Prof. Tucci from the STTS and other texts have to be re-defined, and their entourage clearly enumerated from the original tantra, from Classical commentaries, and from later reworkings. Thus, the nos. 15-19 is one caturmudrā-maṇḍala and has to be assigned one number.

GYANI MÓNASTERY IN THE SALU VILLAGE

The Gyani/Rgya-gnas monastery was controlled by the Sa-skya-pas. Capitals in its atrium belong to the XIV century.

MONASTERY OF IWANG

The monastery at Iwang is one of the important monuments of the region, as it had been constructed by Chos-byañ a pre-incarnation of Śākyaśrī the Great Paṇḍita from Kashmir who arrived here in the XIII century. It is divided into three chapels. The central chapel is dominated by Amoghadarśin, flanked by six Tathāgatas, constituting the Seven Buddhas/Rabs-bdun. The mural paintings have preserved an inscription which says that Rgyal-mtshan-grags has painted in the Indian manner. The right chapel has Amitāyus, with ten statues around. From the dresses, ornaments and shoes to the delicate colours, techniques of drawing and painting, all remind of Central Asia. The whole cycle has been transported from there. An inscription confirms that it has been done in the Khotanese way (*Li-lugs*). The left chapel represents the assault of demons on meditating Śākyamuni (p. 139). These works of art predate the emergence of the Tibetan style which can be seen at Kumbum with the most extensive pictorial



इषेव वे रावव । उंसिउयति य वं क रा
शे

Vairocana in the
Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala
Gobu-shinkan no. 1



उं व इष वा श्री वृ हं व इ षा ।

Vajradhātviśvarī or Vajriṇī
in the Guhyadhāraṇī-maṇḍala
Gobu-shinkan no. 39



उं प्र इ व इ ष व म य यं गं क ग क वे रा व व ।

Vairocana in the
Sūkṣma-maṇḍala
Gobu-shinkan no. 72



उं म व क वा ग क व इ ष वा श्री वृ गं व क र प्र य
म य यं गं क ग कं वे रा व व ।

Vairocana in the
Karma-pūjā-maṇḍala
Gobu-shinkan no. 105

panels of the XV century.

MONASTERY OF SHONANG

The local chronicles speak of it as one of the most ancient monasteries of the area. It has been restored and repainted. It has two floors : the lower chapel has nothing of interest. The upper chapel has the Seven Buddhas/Rabs-bdun, of impressive grandeur.

MONASTERY OF NENYING/GNAS-RÑIN

It is one of the oldest monasteries founded by Rgya Hjam-dpal-gsañ-ba, royal chaplain to King Khri-Ral-pa-can. It has been hailed as the Bodhgaya of Tibet whence Buddhism spread to the entire country. It was destroyed in the Anglo-Tibetan War and has been rebuilt thereafter. Splendid fragments of Indo-Nepalese art of the best epoch survive.

THE GREAT MONASTERY OF GYANTSE (p. 146f.)

The great monastery to the north of the bazar and the Kumbum within its sacred precincts are superb monuments, nowadays known by the name of Dpal-ḥkhor chos-sde 'the Śrīcakra monastery; and as Dpal-ḥkhor bde-chen in the Myañ-chuñ chronicles. On the lower floor is the hall of congregation with three minor chapels that open on the back and the two sides. An immense statue of the Buddha dominates the hall. It represents the Jo-bo of Lhasa. It is flanked by the images of Mañjuḥṣa and Avalokiteśvara, as well as Dīpañkara and Maitreya of the past and of the future.

The left chapel is dedicated to the Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala. The statues are of painted stucco, jutting out from the wall. They are works made during the highest flourishing of Tibetan art, with echoes of the Indian tradition. This chapel was built during the time of Chos-rgyal Hphags-pa-dpal-bzañ-po. It has a superb copy of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā in golden letters on in-

digo-paper. The walls are covered with the Thousand Buddhas:

249 figures	white	Vajrasattva
249 figures	red	Vajraratna
249 figures	red	Vajradharma
249 figures	greed	Vajrakarma

996

Alongwith the four Tathāgatas of the pentad, they make a Thousand Buddhas. This is a very important observation of Prof. Tucci. It helps us to identify the 504 statues at the Barabudur as the Thousand Buddhas ($504 \times 2 = 1008$).

The right chapel is dedicated to Maitreya. In ancient times the central deity was Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara according to the system of Nāgārjuna. He is flanked by statues of stucco with an admirable realism. On his right are Mañjuḥṣa, Padmasambhava, Kamalaśīla and Atīśa. On his left are the three great kings of Tibet: Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po, Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan, and Ral-pa-can.

On top of the congregation hall, the upper floor is a vast courtyard. To its left and right open two chapels and at the back is the central chapel (*dbu-rtse*). The left chapel is the Lam-ḥbras-lha-khañ. It has stucco images of the masters of the Sa-skyapa revelation: Vajradhara flanked by Nairātmā (r.) and Virūpā (l.) and the incarnations of Sa-skyapa Lamas. The centre of the chapel is occupied by a wood-and-stucco maṇḍala of Śaṁvara. There are frescoes of the eightyfour siddhas, done with extraordinary finesse. Episodes from the life of the Sa-skyapa Pañ-chen are represented on the left wall, and those of the life of Chos-rgyal on the opposite right wall.

The central chapel is very high and represents the most sacred part of the monastery. It reproduces several maṇḍalas. The central maṇḍala is that of Kālacakra on the back wall. Maṇḍalas abound on all the walls and they are identified by the

Myaṅ-chuñ. Around the chapel runs the path for circumambulation, frescoed with the Thousand Buddhas.

The right chapel has stucco images of the sixteen arhats.

KUMBUM OF GYANTSE

The Kumbum is an architectonic maṅḍala, with four doors opening in the four directions. The central principle of the temple is symbolised in its highest cella by Vajradhara. The building is a visual dharma-kāya: progressive ascending from one floor to the other corresponds to an ascension from a lesser order of tantras to ever higher ones. We start with the Kriyā-tantras and reach the Anuttara-tantras on top of the building. The Kumbum has four floors, surmounted by a dome and a campana. In the centre of each floor are major temples with minor chapels in the projections. There are 73 chapels in all:

I floor	4 major temples	16 minor chapels	20
II floor	no major temples	16 minor chapels	16
	(their space corresponds to the upper portion of the temples of the first floor)		
III floor	4 major temples	16 minor chapels	20
IV floor	—	12 minor chapels	12
V dome	4 major temples	—	4
VI campana	Image of Vajradhara		1
			<hr/> 73 <hr/>

On the top of every page, we have indicated the floor by Roman numbers I-VI and the temples and chapels by Indo-Arabic figures 1-20. Thus I.1 is the first temple of the first floor. This indication is not given in the original work. It has been done to provide a context to the description of the chapels, so that one is not lost in the detailed narrations. According to the calculation of the Myaṅ-chuñ 27,529 deities are

represented in the four floors and dome of the Kumbum.

The main deities of the several temples and chapels of the Kumbum are as follows :

I.1T	Śākyamuni
I.2	Mārīcī
I.3	Bhūtaḍāmara
I.4	Sme-brtsegs
I.5	Sitātapatrā
I.6T	Sukhāvati of Amitāyus
I.7	Parṇaśabarī
I.8	Hayagrīva
I.9	Acala
I.10	Grahamātrkā
I.11T	Dīpaṅkara
I.12	Vasudhārā
I.13	Nātha
I.14	Mahābala
I.15	Dhvajāgrakeyūrā
I.16T	Maitreya
I.17	Vaiśravaṇa
I.18	Entrance to stairs
I.19	Pañjara-Nātha
I.20	Vijayā
II.1	Amitāyus
II.2	Khadiravaṇī Tārā
II.3	Simhanāda
II.4	Amoghapāśa
II.5	Hayagrīva
II.6	Kurukullā
II.7	Rājalilā-Maṅjughoṣa
II.8	Vidāraṇa
II.9	Śākyamuni
II.10	White Tārā

II.11	Samantabhadra
II.12	Jagadbhadra Vajrapāṇi
II.13	Akṣobhya
II.14	No statue
II.15	Vādisimha
II.16	Avalokiteśvara
III.1T	Amitāyus
III.2	Vajrasattva
III.3	Jvālānala
III.4	Prajñāpāramitā
III.5	Vairocana
III.6T	Ratnasambhava
III.7	Jñānasattva Mañjuśrī
III.8	Bodhisattva-vajra
III.9	Phyag-na-rdo-rje-ḥchi-bdag
III.10	Śākyasimha
III.11T	Amogha
III.12	Sarva-durgati-pariśodhana Vairocana
III.13	Amitāyus
III.14	? Vajraśekhara
III.15	Saṅs-rgyas-sna-tshogs
III.16T	Akṣobhya
III.17	completes the preceding chapel
III.18	vestibule
III.19	Śrī-Paramādya
III.20	Sukhāvatī-Vajrasattva
IV.1-20	Series of masters divided in schools
Dome 1-4	Vairocana, Vajrāṣaṇa, Śākyamuni, Prajñāpāramitā.

Mārīcī. Prof. Tucci (p. 174) is right in connecting *Mārīcī* with the Sun and with *marīci* 'ray'. The word *marīci* means 'a particle of light, shining mote or speck in the air' RV, AV, 'a ray of light (of the sun or moon)' RV etc. *Marīcimat* 'having rays, radiant or shining with' MBh, 'the sun' Kathāsaritsāgara.

Mārīca is the name of Kaśyapa in the Mahābhārata. The masculine plural Kāśyapāḥ denotes a class of semi-divine genii connected with or regulating the course of the sun, AV.13.1.23, TĀr.1.8, PārGr.2.9.13. The connection of the Kāśyapas with the sun is beyond doubt. The demon Mārīca transforms himself into a golden deer in the Rāmāyaṇa to attract Sītā's attention, and to take away Rāma from her side. Thus Mārīcī can be the golden goddess of the Dawn, as already hinted at by B.C. Bhattacharyya. Pigs can be seen scavenging around Indian villages early in the morning. They herald the dawn. Boars are male uncastrated pigs. So the seven boars draw the chariot of Mārīcī as the goddess of the Dawn. She occurs in the hymn to Sarasvatī in the Suvarṇa-prabhāsa (ed. Joh. Nobel 1937) *ciciri śiri miri Mārīci*, where the consonants of Mārīcī are mangled into *ciri* (backward) *miri* (forward with *ri* omitted) *śiri* (=ciri: in Tamil c=ś).

The words for dark or black are also used for beautiful. They denote the enchanting beauty of negritude. The word *rāma* means 'dark, dark-coloured, black (compare *rātri*), *rāmaḥ śakuniḥ* 'a black bird, crow' Kāṭhaka-gr̥hya. Later it denoted 'pleasing, pleasant, charming, lovely, beautiful' in the Mahābhārata, 'pleasure, joy, delight' in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The feminine form *rāmā* is a beautiful woman, any young and charming woman, mistress, wife, any woman in Kaṭha-upaniṣad, Mahābhārata; etc, a dark woman i.e. a woman of low origin, Taittirīya-saṁhitā, Taittirīya-āraṇyaka (MW.). We may also compare the word *abhirāma* 'pleasing, delightful, agreeable, beautiful' (MW). Likewise *masi* should mean a lovely or charming woman. *Masi* as the attendant acolytes of Mārīcī have to be resplendent like Uṣas the Goddess of Dawn who is the model for Mārīcī. 'Uṣas is the most graceful creation of Vedic poetry and there is no more charming figure in the descriptive religious lyrics of any other literature. Clothed in light the maiden appears in the east, and unveils her charms, 1.123.3-4 (Mac-

donell, *Vedic Mythology*, 46-47).

The sun is the eye fixed in heaven (RV.1.22.20). Sun is the eye of the Gods: Uṣas brings the eye of the gods and leads on the beautiful white horse (RV.7.77.3). Sun is the eyes of Mitra and Varuṇa (RV.1.115.1 etc.). When the Sun = eye, why not the acolytes be the masi, the collyrium to embellish the eye. The collyrium adds charm to the eyes and extends them. *Viś-ālākṣī* 'large-eyed', *āyatākṣī* 'having longish eyes', *āyatāpāṅgī* 'having long-cornered eyes' are symbols of feminine beauty. Masi or collyrium which is *snigdha* 'unctuous, resplendent, soft, tender, affectionate', enhances the seductive attraction of the eyes. As *snigdha-śyāma*, masi is the tender agreeable dark complexion. Masi stands for a charming and sensuous belle. In Indian artistic anatomy, the restless eyes of women are elongated in expressive ways by applying collyrium. Masi, the 'black powder used to paint the eyes', is one of the sixteen elements of the makeup of a woman (ṣoḍaśa-śṛṅgāra, Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti Kośa, Poona 1976:506). Thus *masi* at the end of the names of attendant deities means a beauty, a goddess.

The first four goddesses Arka-, Marka-, Antardhāna-, Tejo-masi represent the four stages preceding sunrise: the sun is invisible (arka), it is concealed (marka), it becomes dimly visible (antardhāna 'invisibility' MW), and it glows out (tejas). Marka is eclipse of the sun in RV.10.27.20 (MW). The next four goddesses occupy the intermediate points: Udaya-, Gulma-Vana-, Cīvara-masi. Udaya- is sun-rise, Gulma- is a thicket or bush, Vana- is forested area, and Cīvara- is the robe. Early in the morning, Indian villagers go to ease themselves to a thicket in the nearby wooded region, get up and move a bit to fasten the dress.

The twelve goddesses in the second circle are:

E	Mahācīvara-masi	Varāhamukhī
S	Padākrama-masi	Varālī

W	Parākrama-masi	Vadālī
N	Uraga-masi	Varāhī

Intermediate points: Varttālī, Vadālī, Varālī, Varāhamukhī. As one lifts up the long-hanging dress (mahācivara), and is about to leave (padākrama), a snake (uraga) appears and courage has to be summoned (parākrama). The four names suffixed with masi represent the morning scene. The other eight names seem to be connected with Varāhī. The names Varālī and Vadālī can be variants of Bharālī < Bhaṭārī. They are repeated in reverse order in the intermediate points.

The four jingling words naming the door-goddesses defy interpretation:

Ālo	aṅkuśa 'hook'	compare āloka 'light'
Tālo	pāśa 'noose'	compare tara 'star'
Kālo	sphoṭa 'chain'	compare kāla 'dark, blue'
Matsaro	āveśa 'bell'	matsara 'envious, jealous'.

Tucci does not enumerate the last goddess Matsaro.

The suggestion of Tucci that-masi is from *udayam asi* instead of *udayo 'si* is grammatically untenable, as he himself doubts as to how a masculine has become a neuter.

The temple III. 6 dedicated to Ratnasambhava is considered to be outstanding for the magnificence of its paintings and the richness of its decoration.

The treasures of the vast tantric lore unravelled in this volume by Prof. Tucci invites a detailed study of each and every maṇḍala, along with their schematic sketches. They have to be compared with the Sanskrit texts for their original nomenclature. For the moment the pilgrim to the Kumbum has completed his ascent to the sanctum and phenomonic existence has been transcended into the absolute consciousness whose symbol Vajradhara smiles mysteriously in the dark cella at the summit of the sanctum.

Lokesh Chandra

PREFACE

In 1937, I left for a new expedition in Tibet, which was sponsored by Prassitele Piccinini, who had already sponsored that of 1935. As it can be seen from these pages, the results we obtained are superior to those of the previous travels. It is therefore right that I express my thanks to Mr. Piccinini who has favoured this new expedition of the Academy of Italy in the harsh lands of Tibet, and has allowed me to discover such remarkable monuments of that Indo-Tibetan culture which day by day reveals itself worth studying.

Prof. Piccinini, leaving aside his major field of research in the medical sciences, continues with his generosity the humanistic tradition of our people. It is but natural that Italy deals with Tibet, because the Italians first made known to Europe, and not in a superficial way, the soul and the beliefs of these people so profoundly devoted to religious ideals (1).

(1) See G. Tucci, Italy and the exploration of Tibet, *Asiatica* 1938.

A book like that of Desideri does not become dated.

I must also thank Doctor Fosco Maraini who has been an intelligent collaborator and a good travel companion. He has done the entire photographic work, and the plates of this book are all by him.

I do not publish the diary of the expedition. Others have gone to Gyantse before me and have described the land. I could not add new things. But I have discussed in this book the art monuments found along the roads and the reflections that can be made and the conclusions to be drawn for the study of the political, religious and artistic history of Tibet. This book includes many new things and much material investigated for the first time.

From Western Tibet I have gone to Central Tibet: but the geographical distance does not make a difference in culture. We are always faced by the same religious and artistic world and by the same spiritual unity.

This series of Indo-Tibetica which I slowly keep on writing and in which I describe the material collected in my scientific missions, has now come to its fourth volume, after six years of its starting.

Since I am working on a virgin ground and I am going on exploring day by day new sectors of the vast Tibetan literature, which still can be reached with great difficulty, it is right

to look back and to ask ourselves if the work already done would not require a revision of some points. To this effect I have read again and attentively the volumes of Indo-Tibetica already published and I have found that by and large I have not much to add or to modify. I noticed, however, some inaccuracies or incomplete details. And because this series of Indo-Tibetica has to remain a unity they should be corrected. To those who have read the previous volumes I recommend to look at the appendix published herein where whatever should be considered wrong or imperfect, due to carelessness or to defect of information, has been completed or corrected.

Thus, the previous work has been revised by the *Zhu-che*, and I am glad to have been the *Zhu-che* of myself.

12 Dec. 1938

GIUSEPPE TUCCI



POSTSCRIPT

The date of the Sku-ḥbum is registered in two chronological lists, namely in that published by Csoma de Kóros and taken from the Vaidūrya-dkar-po and in the other redacted by Sum-pa-mkhan-po and edited by Sarat Chandra Das: both of them give the date of building as 1438, namely 1440 after the correction to be done in the dates of Csoma and in those of the Reḥu-mig. It seems that the sources studied by me do not give rise to the slightest doubt about the date 1427. Saṅs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho and Sum-pa-mkhan-po have either used another source or are referring to the date of its final completion. The first hypothesis is validated by what we read in the cited guide of the Kumbum that the date *sa-lug* (1439) contained in the ancient dkar-chag of the temple is mistaken (*yi-ge nor-ba*).

CHAPTER I

IMPORTANCE OF THE MONUMENTS STUDIED IN THE TRIP OF 1937

§1. *The Sikkim-Gyantse road and its monuments.* The road Gangtok-Gyantse (1) has been traversed many times. Books have described it. But the information they give is so scanty as to make one think that this portion of Tibet is almost without any monuments of great historical or archaeological interest, worthy of being of the same standard as those discovered in Western Tibet. Therefore, when I left for the travel in 1937 I did not have much hope to make archaeological discoveries. I hoped to collect only bibliographical materials, but I did not think that this new expedition would solve the many doubts that I still had on the development of Tibetan art. Much less would I have imagined the things I would find along this road, certainly one of the best known roads in Tibet.

I knew already that Sikkim, where the caravan route starts, is a land recently conquered by Lamaism, and that, before Lha-btsun

(1) For the geographical names, I follow the spellings of the maps of the *Geographical Survey of India* when there are no errors. The correct forms are given in chapter III dedicated to historical geography.

(XVII century), the apostle in these regions, there had been no direct exchange between Tibet and India through this way. Chronicles and biographies indicate that Kashmir and Nepal were the two regions through which Buddhism and Indian culture with it, penetrated into Tibet, and through which spiritual contacts between India and Tibet were maintained for a long time. But my travel has shown that in these places between Sikkim and Gyantse too, although far away from the road traversed in ancient times, the civilising wave of Buddhism had spread. The moasteries, which were built here soon and which are now mainly in ruins, had a great splendour of art and had a prime importance in the formation and evolution of the thought and of the cult of Lamaism.

There are monuments that demonstrate it. We will see that some of the sources discovered by me and which have been studied here allow us to reconstruct, I do not claim the entire history of these lands but at least to better know some events and to enlighten the fortune of the Sa-skya school and the grandeur of some of the main monasteries that the piety of princes has erected in the province of Gtsañ.

Unfortunately the place explored is not very vast, but much and well cannot be done at the same time.

I will deem compensated for my labours if this investigation can be a guide to future researchers who following my steps will have more time and more funds to pursue further and deeper researches. This will be possible only when the Tibetan government will open the doors of its land : provided it will not

be too late, because to be frank, the way in which these monuments are kept is awful. Neither the authorities nor the lamas have any idea of their great importance, and already a lot has been destroyed during the Anglo-Tibetan War in 1904.

Although the frescoes have resisted many centuries in the chapels and in the temples which have escaped destruction, yet they run the risk of being covered with lime and to give way to the pictures of the new rough craftsmen, encouraged by the mania of the new which starts also in Tibet.

Out of the many monasteries of which there are traces in historical documents, I shall speak especially of Samada, Iwang, Shonang (1) and Gyantse: that is to say of those more worthy of study. I will not study the new or very new monasteries that the traveller finds on his way and which are best known. They are the first which are found on Tibetan land and, because nearer to India, have less difficulties to accept visitors (2).

(1) And not Shomang as in the maps of the Survey.

(2) There is, for instance, the one marked in the map as Kaju Gompa, but it should be called Trommo me (Gro-mo smad 'Inferior Trommo') to distinguish it from the other convent Trommo to (Gro-mo stod 'Superior Trommo') to the north-west of Yatung. That first part of Tibet, known also by the name of Chumbi, is called Gro-mo by the Tibetans. The sects to which the two monasteries belong are different. Trommo me belongs to the Bkaḥ-rgyud-pa, rather to a special sect of that school, the one from the name of its founder is called Hbar-ras-pa (The biography of this monk including the chants attributed to him has this title: Rje-btsun Hbar-ras-pa rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzan-poḥi rnam-thar mgur-ḥbum dan-bcas. This work is divided into four sections; the author of the biography is Rgyal-mtshan-dpal). The other monastery belongs to the "Yellow Sect" and owes its renewed prestige

All this portion, Chumbi or Trommo, belongs to Tibet only from recent times. It is foreign to it even geographically. The real Tibet with the vastness of its plains, starts from Phari (Phag-ri) where, nevertheless, traces of ancient constructions are lacking, except for a small temple located about 300 meters before reaching the village known by the name of Sandub Lakang (Bsam-hgrub lha-khañ). At present this chapel belongs to the Hbrug-pa sect which has its custody. Tradition ascribes it to Thañ-ston-rgyal-ba, a renowned Hbrug-pa ascetic, well known in this part of Tibet. The shrine, poor and badly kept, has frescoes that perhaps go back to the XV century and it has some objects of possible Indian origin: a statue of Avalokiteśvara in bronze, and two book covers (*glegs-sin*).

The proper archaeological terrain is found after Tuna; the map is covered by names which recall persons, things or events that a scholar of Tibet or of its religion cannot ignore. We have entered the province of Gtsañ which, together with Dbus, is the most famous in Tibet. Both in fact represent the geographical and historical centre of Tibetan culture.

The borders of this province of Gtsañ are difficult to determine also because possibly they have changed during centuries. Nevertheless, according to the geographical treatises the province

to a celebrated ascetic who lived here for a long time and passed away only recently with the fame of being a realized soul. I mean Trommo Geshe whom I met in 1935 at Poo, since he used to enter into meditation in a hermitage near Lipa in the state of Bashahr. The real name of the monastery is Duñ-dkar which means "the white conch". Its name comes from the shape of the rock which lies **above** the convent and over which run curious lines which from afar resemble a conch. The conch is, as known, an auspicious symbol according to Indo-Tibetan ideas.

of Gtsañ borders on Gtsañ-po i.e. Brahmaputra, to the north; to the east it reaches till Trigu Tso; to the south confines with Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal; and in the west includes more or less the entire territory that would be to the right of a hypothetical line that running from south, from Kyirong (Skyid-sron), through the border of Nepal, would reach the Gtsañ-po to the north.

I have maintained this time too the same standard as followed in the previous volumes and have given a detailed description of every chapel I met on the road, so that these lines may serve as a guide for those who want to visit intelligently the places studied by me, and it may serve to give those who cannot go to Tibet a rough idea of the things one may see there.

§2. *The importance of these monuments for the history of Tibetan art.* The accurate study of these temples and of the art objects in them brings a remarkable contribution to the iconography of Mahāyānic Buddhism. The many thousands of images carved or sculpted and painted which we shall describe represent either new forms of known divinities or cycles on which we do not have any information as yet. Moreover, we have a clear advantage over the iconographic collections published till now: in these collections we have a series of images without relation to one another. But an image thus isolated is often an abstraction, i.e. it loses its value as a symbol and loses that ideal connection that inserts it in given religious experiences. In our case, instead, since every chapel is dedicated to a particular tantric cycle and therefore represents the visible expression of a mystic experience, every image belongs to an organic complex of symbols with which it is strictly and necessarily connected.

From the images, or rather from the wholeness of the represented images we can go back to those liturgical texts which inspired them and which have served the statues to translate in visible forms some given psychological and mystical states of mind or peculiar ritual moments. This is clearly seen by studying the most important of these monuments in which these figures are painted, that is the Kumbum (*Skū-hbum*) of Gyantse. It puts us in direct contact with the religious psychology of the esoteric schools of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and leads us to see how art is dominated and directed by that psychology alone.

This Kumbum is famous all over Tibet and is considered the biggest stūpa of the Land of Snows. Whether this boast of the Gyantse people has some truth in it or not, I cannot say for certain. But I must recognize that the same opinion is shared by many lamas and many pilgrims of other regions who have travelled all over Tibet and are in a position to draw parallels with other monuments at other places.

The importance of Kumbum is double: both for its architecture and for its paintings.

From the architectonic point of view the Kumbum is a stūpa/mchod-rten of the type known under the name of Bkra-śis-sgo-man “the auspicious stūpa of many doors” i.e. one of the eight types of stūpas numbered and described in Indo-Tibetan treatises. After what has been said on the stūpa/mchod-rten of Tibet in the first volume of *Indo-Tibetica* and of what has been said at the same time by Paul Mus on Barabudur (1), it is useless

(1) In a study published in the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 1935ff.

to recall the symbolic value of similar constructions. I will not dwell on the origins of this symbolism which P. Mus has studied in its phases, but I will rather refer to the psychological value and to the religious meaning attributed to these buildings during the latest Buddhist period by those tantric schools to which this remarkable monument of Tibetan architecture belongs.

The Tibetan buildings have interest not only for the beauty of their architectonic lines, that they sometimes continue the shape of the rock and sometimes remind us of the sacred character of the earth with the symbolism of their structure. They are rendered more solemn and great by the land around them, by the rocks which seem made out of gold, by the silent plains that run even till the horizon so as to give them relief, by the loneliness that surrounds them as a prayer, and by a sky that has the transparent luminosity of gems.

In the West to construct means to imagine and to enrich the work of nature with un-considered creations of the imagination. Only music means to re-live cosmic life and it is an immediate participation in the eternal course of things.

For the Tibetans instead, to build -- and I speak of course of religious art -- means to re-do the world. He who has built the Kumbum has re-created the universe, not in its material structure, which does not matter, but in its ideal construction, in the moulding of the forces animating it, in the play of psychical energies lending it variety and change of aspects. This universe is an idea germinating from the primordial conscience, from that uncoloured and elemental light which, by an intrinsic necessity transforms itself into concrete images, so that the One

becomes many, refracts and reflects itself in the infinity of things to become at the end negation and prison of itself, that is to say matter.

In this building, visiting the chapel according to the ritual round from left to right, we are so to speak introduced to the mystery of creation: the thousands of gods who now look at us with serenity, and now hang over us with terrifying faces, translate in the symbol of figures the confused tumult of the cosmic forces.

In other words, the Kumbum is a gigantic maṇḍala which contains, painted on the walls of its cellas, infinite other maṇḍalas in which are expressed through equivalent symbols particular systems of mysticism. These systems teach us how the universe evolves, and they also point out to us how it can again dissolve itself in the primigenous essence.

Liberation in fact means to consubstantiate oneself with the cosmic conscience and this consubstantiality happens through an elimination of the infinite play of māyā, the realm of “becoming”, naturally opposed to that of “being”. This elimination is awareness of the universal process, because through awareness there is purification: to know the complex mechanism through which the primordial consciousness hides itself behind the infinite play of its magic freedom (*māyā*) means to overcome it and therefore to transcend from the world of becoming to that of being. This is the religious psychology which has determined the building of the Kumbum, where the primordial consciousness, symbolised by the image of Vajradhara/Rdo-rje-ḥchan located in the upper chapel, projects itself in infinite lightnings which are its vibrations and which is manifesting itself in the world of contingency, and at the same time

they are also the way of redemption for the initiated who have understood the arcane ways of its operating. One has also not to be surprised that the means of salvation are manifold: infinite are the emanations of the absolute and numberless its epiphanies. Every being or category of beings has secret and inexorable affinities with one or the other of these ways through which the One becomes manifold. Each of us belongs to a mystic family which leads to the first separation of the One into the pentads symbolically represented by the five Buddhas. The further we go away from the source of the Whole, the more complex becomes this apparent reality in which we live. Therefore also more complex becomes the scheme of intellectual and psychical forces which, moulding themselves on such a source, have to nullify it by purifying it by the light of the supreme gnosis. The Buddhist law therefore also varies in its aspects, as various are its cosmic manifestations as different are individuals from one another. Every maṇḍala represents the diagram of a given evolution and of a particular system, which revealing to us the evolution of the cosmos gives us the hint to overcome it and to transcend it.

The Kumbum is therefore the scheme of the world and a sylloge of tantric experience, i.e. of the principal esoteric revelations that tradition attributed to the Buddha, that is to the supreme truth become accessible to men.

When, in the first half of the XV century, the Kumbum was built on commission by a pious prince, Tibet had already felt the necessity to collect the mystical science of Mahāyāna in organic treatises. Various masters had tried to compile a *Summa* of the various experiences able to rescue creatures from the domain of births and deaths and to raise them to higher planes

of existence. With this in view the *Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho* (1) had been written already. It remains even today the fundamental ritualistic work of the Sa-skyapa schools. In this book the Mahāyānic olympus is interpreted in its inner symbolic meaning and was taken as basis for meditation which had to transhumanize the initiated ones. Shortly before the building of this Kumbum one of the greatest figures of Lamaism, Bu-ston, had written his digest of the maṇḍalas included in the most important tantric cycles. This work of the great master has surely served as guide to him who built the Kumbum. This is not an hypothesis of mine, but an indisputable fact demonstrated beyond doubt by the inscriptions we read in the chapels. In these inscriptions not only the name of Bu-ston is mentioned often, but entire passages of his works are quoted thereby giving proof that those who designed the Kumbum got inspiration from his treatises.

The Kumbum, as already the temple that Bu-ston had constructed at Zha-lu, is the visible synthesis of this liturgy, just as the texts were its verbal expression. Each of his planes had a symbolic interpretation, immediately perceived by the eyes, of the many ways that the religious psychology of tantrism had imagined for the redemption of man. It is a kind of Kanjur or Tanjur where the symbol of figures and of colours has been substituted by the symbol of words.

(1) The Kumbum guide says: "this beautiful heavenly palace whose essential nature is the same as that of the sūtras, of *Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho*, of *Kriyāsamuccaya* etc." (p. 18). This work corresponds to that included in the Tanjur (LXXI nos. 95-340) with the title *Sgrub-thabs kun-las-btus-pa*. This name *Sgrub-thabs-kun-btus* is now given to another collection of sādhanas in 11 vols. plus 2 supplements, published at Sde-dge but with affinity to Sa-skyapa by inspiration, and strictly similar to it. Supplement, *ibid.* LXXXV.14-86 (Tāranātha).

These *summae* and this Kumbum, like the temple of Zha-lu of which Bu-ston dictated the explanatory inscriptions, come from one and the same impulse and from the same desire of the lamaistic community to put some order into the often discordant doctrines of the masters and of the exegetes. Bu-ston at the same time listed the Buddhist works and gave a definite form to the two main collections of sacred scriptures the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and the Bstan-ḥgyur. He also tried to draw up a kind of liturgical code that, besides giving the plurality of divergent opinions, would establish an orthodox point of view based on the authority of a sure tradition. Art also was influenced by it; in these esoteric schools the truth, represented in symbolic expressions, is necessarily translated in the schemes and diagrams of maṇḍalas. Therefore the number of divinities who make up every maṇḍala is determined with great precision, their colours and their attributes are stated, and at the same time the opinions not corroborated by authoritative evidence are eliminated. Therefore, in the times of Bu-ston when literature becomes more sure and the tradition more reliable, the symbolic representation too was partially renewed, by rejecting all that was arbitrary or uncertain and by moulding it again on surer Indo-Tibetan traditions.

Thus so framed in a given historical moment of the lamaistic religious evolution, the Kumbum acquires a new significance, to which corresponds also the value of its paintings. These paintings give us a clear idea of the living art streams operating in the XIV and XV centuries in Gtsan; they give us an idea of the centres in which they flourished, of the traditions followed by them and of the most celebrated masters. In fact for the

first time we find here in Gyantse long lists of painters that give us a first class document to reconstruct the history and the vicissitudes of the Tibetan pictorial art.

§3. *The lists of sculptors and painters in the inscriptions of Gyantse.* These lists are found in the inscriptions which not only mention the names of the deities to whom the chapels are dedicated, but give us much other information of great interest. They form a very authoritative guide which allows us to identify with surety which divinity is represented in the statues and in the paintings and give us the tradition by which the artists have been inspired. I have translated them completely in order to ease the task for him who is not able to read Tibetan correctly and also because they are good examples of Tibetan epigraphy about which we know very little as yet. They give an accurate description of the cycles represented in every chapel and are composed according to a common scheme, partly in prose and partly in verses. They start with an invocation, followed by the list of statues which are at the centre of the maṇḍala, to which every chapel is dedicated and which therefore gives the chapel its name; after this there follows a summary description of the frescoes, wall by wall. The position of the walls is determined with respect to the axis of Kumbum, each of them being put in correspondence with the four sides of the monument and they follow the four cardinal points (1). When the list of divinities ends, then usually comes the name of the

(1) For instance, the east of a chapel corresponds exactly to the eastern side of Kumbum, and so on.

donor or of the donors and then the name of the artists who have done the statues or painted the frescoes.

The inscription very often closes with the expression of a vow (praṇidhāna, smon-lam) generally in verses; it is prayed that the donors with their own relations and all the creatures may obtain salvation or consubstantiality with mystic planes.

This scheme is generally followed also in the metrical inscriptions whose artifices of language and style, often of bad taste, show how their authors, at rare times expressly mentioned, were familiar with the rules of rhetoric that the work of Daṇḍin, much studied even today in the great monasteries, had made known to the Tibetans (1).

The importance of these inscriptions is therefore remarkable from many points of view: not only as mere epigraphic documents or because they are first class iconographic guides, but especially for indications of historical and artistic character that they contain. From these inscriptions we find out as to when the Kumbum has been built. If the exact date is missing in them, although maintained in the eulogy of the monument found out by me (2), they maintain that the inspiration of this great work was a king of Gyantse, who lived in the XV century, namely the Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzan-ḥphags-pa. I have

(1) This is a constant scheme which we see followed, for instance, also in the inscriptions of the monastery of Zha-lu, which was caused to be built by the feudatory prince of that district, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan; these inscriptions, dictated by Bu-ston, are preserved in the collection of his work in vol. TSA.

(2) Year: *me-lug*, fire-sheep. See chapter IV.

collected more details about him in the chapter dedicated to chronology. But the Kumbum is a collective work; the entire ecclesiastical and lay nobility of the territory, where the Chos-rgyal was the recognized chief, had a hand in it: both the great monks and the major dignitaries of the court, and the local nobility of the small villages were not deaf to the invitation of the king and every one had contributed, according to the measure of his means, to the definite embellishment of this work to which was due the ornament of the kingdom of the Chos-rgyal and which was to hand down his fame through the centuries.

Sometimes in the inscriptions the king himself is recalled as the donor, in some cases high dignitaries of the state are the donors, or a Lama of high rank, or civilian and military officials of a more modest rank. Sometimes even the inhabitants of an entire village are the donors.

Even more important is the list of the sculptors and of the painters which we can make out from these inscriptions. The history of Tibetan art was anonymous till today. We did not know the authors of the paintings embellishing the temples we knew. We had a series of works, some of them remarkable, as those discovered by me in Western Tibet, but without any indications about the artists who made them. For the first time we know now the names of the authors of these paintings and therefore we begin to have an idea of the styles, of the schools and of the masters who had major diffusion of influence during the first half of the XV century in Central Tibet and especially in Gtsañ.

Here is the list of painters whose names and places of origin are recorded in the inscriptions:

At Iwang: Rgyal-mtshan-ḥgrags.

In the Gtsug-lag-khañ of Gyantse: Gañ-bzañ (fig.72); Rin-chen-ḥgrags of Bzañ-ri in Sñe-mo; Dpal-ḥbyor.

The longer list is found in the Kumbum:

1. Kun-dgaḥ-ba of Rgya (I.3) (1).
2. Śes-rab-dpal-bzañ-po (pa) (monk) of Rgyal-khañ in Ñug (I.4, II.5, 6, III.12, 13).
3. Thar-pa-pa of Lha-rtse (I.5, 6, II.16, III.20, IV.5, campana, lower cella, 11).
4. Sañs-rgyas-bzañ-po, monk (I.5).
5. Śes-rab-dpal, perhaps same as no.2 (I.8).
6. Don-grub-bzañ-po of Lha-rtse, the master of Don-ri (I.9, 10, 14, III.10, 14, 15).
7. Monk of Lha-rtse (I.9).
8. Bkra-śis-bzañ-po (I.10).
9. Śes-rab-rgya-mtsho of Bzañ-ldan (I.12, II.10).
10. Bkra-śis of Śag-tshal (2) in Lha-rtse, perhaps same as no.8 (I.15).
11. Rgyal-mtshan-pa of Gnas-rñiñ (I.20).
12. Nam-mkhaḥ-ḥod-zer of Bde-chen in Lha-rtse (II.1).
13. Dge-ba of Bde-chen in Lha-rtse (II.2, IV.6).
14. Blo-gros-rab-gsal of Dge-ma in Bde-chen of Lha-rtse (II.3, IV.6).
15. Dge-sñen of Lha-rtse (=no.7?) (II.3, IV.12, cupola 1).
16. Dkon-mchog-bzañ-po of Jo-nañ (II.4, III.7, cupola 1, campana, lower cella 1, 6, 9, 10).
17. Bsam-tan-bzañ-po of Lcags-thañ (II.4).
18. Ban-chen-skabs-pa of Bzañ-ri in Sñe-mo (II.7, III.9, 11).

(1) Roman numbers indicate the floor, while the Arabic the chapel.

(2) Compare no.29 Bśags-tshal.

19. Tsan-nes, Btsan-ne of Gnas-rñin (II.9, 11, 12).
20. Bla-ma-mgon (II.11).
21. Nam-mkhaḥ-dpal (II.12).
22. Btsan of G.yag-sde in Sñe-mo (II.13).
23. Dpal-ḥbyor-rin-chen of Gnas-rñin (monk) (II.15, IV.1 Rin-chen-dpal-ḥbyor).
24. Rin-chen-dpal-grub (IV.2, dome 1).
25. Bsod-nams-dpal-ḥbyor (II.15, dome 4).
26. Dpal-chen of Rdzoñ-śos in Lha-rtse (III.3).
27. Khro-rgyal-dbañ-phyug of Khab-gsar in Lha-rtse (III.4).
28. Chos-skyoñ-bkra-śis of Bśags-tshal (III.15).
29. Bkra-śis-bzañ-po of Bśags-tshal in Lha-rtse (III.17).
Perhaps the same as no.10.
30. Legs-pa of Bsaḥ-luñ in Lha-rtse (III.19).
31. Lhaḥi-rgyal-mtshan, son of no.23 (IV.1, dome 2).
32. Don-grub-skyabs of Mkhar-kha (IV.2, 8, 10), elsewhere said of Dpal-ldan-ḥkhar-dgaḥ (dome 3), campana, upper cella 1, 2, 4, 5, 11).
33. Dpal-ḥphel of Gnas-rñin (dome 2, campana, upper cella 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11).
34. Sañs-(rgyas-)rin-pa of Ḥkhar-dgaḥ (campana, lower cella 5).

This desire of the artists to enter into history and to be mentioned in the inscriptions is not new in the Indo-Tibetan world. In India we know statues which have the names of their sculptors engraved on them. We do not have paintings and therefore we cannot say for sure whether the custom of these temples of Central Tibet had been anticipated by Indian artists. But if Tāranātha has preserved the names of some painters of India, it is possible that his sources were based, not only on ancient tradition, but also on inscriptions that once existed in the temples

and monasteries of India. In any case the coming up of the names of artists in such great numbers points to a humanistic efflorescence that perhaps did have a long duration in Tibet.

Painting is no longer understood as an act of mere devotion; the artist acquires the conscience of being not only an instrument but a creator. He knows that the work he is working at bears the signs of his soul and of his intelligence. This means that we have here not only an artistic revolution, but a psychological one. It is the sign of personality which we hail in these inscriptions. Man was committing without doubt a sin, because he violated that principle of renunciation of every vanity imposed by religion, he had forgotten for a moment that he is only a dream and a phantom, by taking pride in his own creation through which he wanted to go on living.

§4. *Importance and character of the paintings in these documents.*

Such a numerous school of painting could rise only in a period of great creative activity. Buddhism was surely already diffused among the Tibetan people. The dynasty of the monks of Sa-skya, after having obtained the investiture by Mongolian princes, had the illusion to have given back to Tibet its political unity, which had declined since the apostasy of Glan-dar-ma, and the trouble derived from it had made the power and the force of expansion of the country, which it had at the time of Sron-btsan-sgam-po and of his immediate successors, collapse. Masters and ascetics of great fame had inspired new religious ardours. Princes and communities had competed in enriching the land with monasteries and temples

and in embellishing them with pieces of art. During the XIV and XV centuries, namely when many of the temples that interest us were constructed, the Sa-skyā school was still the most powerful. The H̄bri-guñ-pa and the Kar-ma-pa did not succeed in undermining its supremacy completely. The other sects were represented by particular directions. They were proud of very noble figures of thinkers and ascetics but did not succeed in creating a veritable church. Their communities were based on the spontaneous adhesion of religious and lay disciples to the fascination roused by some personalities of great relevance. But the Sa-skyā-pa had founded a church which held temporal power, more or less effectively. The religious authority of its high officials was supported by their political power and by the prestigious investiture given to them by the Mongolian kings. Furthermore, many of these high officials were spending great part of their life in China and from these long visits to the Mongolian court they took impulse to build in their own land works that although at a great distance, wanted to compete with the Chinese monuments. The Sa-skyā abbots, therefore, greatly helped the arts. The princes and the vassals, to whom the abbots made the Mongolians give the investiture on special territories, followed their example of building art. Due to the atmosphere of the moment, to erect a monastery or a temple amounted to do a work of religious devotion and of political shrewdness. If we examine the lists reproduced above we find out that the artists mentioned in the inscriptions are almost all from the surroundings of Sa-skyā, of Lha-rtse and of Jo-nañ; only a few of them are from small towns near Gyantse, especially from Gnas-rñiñ which, as we shall see later, was one of the major centres of Tibetan culture till the coming of the Yellow Sect. Sa-skyā was then the major religious and political authority of Tibet: it is but natural that around its court were

prospering the schools of craftsmen and of artists.

But, as I have told already, this multiplying of sacred buildings so rich in works of art could not have happened without everybody cooperating in it, not only with the *élan* of its religious fervour, but also with the desire of doing beautiful things and to see expressed in art its faith and its taste, or without the entire people having had the capacity of admiring what the artists were producing or of appreciating the works of art with intimate participation.

This painting, no longer anonymous, but which could be attributed to known authors and to a chronologically well determined period, namely the first quarter of the XV century, has its great importance because it is the first manifestation of Tibetan painting proper. It has more character compared to the more ancient works. It has acquired an appropriate physiognomy and a style in design, in colours and in composition which give to Tibetan painting a special aspect. While studying the frescoes of Western Tibet I had already pointed out how the first painting in those provinces was inspired by Indians; some chapels as that very remarkable of Mañ-nañ, have maintained wonderful masterpieces of Indian artists, most probably Kashmiri. Mañ-nañ was not, certainly, the place where these artists have worked. That other examples of Indian mural paintings are not yet known in Tibet does not mean much. Many of them have been destroyed when the primal chapels were renewed by the generosity of the kings of Guge. The little temple of Mañ-nañ had the great fortune of being neither at Tsaparang, nor at Thöling, the two principal centres of the state of Guge. The capitals are generally subjected to major remodelling than the small villages.

We have seen in the previous volume how the most ancient painting of Guge both mural and that on cloth of thanka was inspired by Indian motifs. It has very different characteristics from those of the more recent paintings which seem to have been largely influenced by Chinese style. The first one is an art so particular and so near to the Indian model that I would propose to call it by the name of "School of Guge" pointing out by this a way of art geographically limited (with that approximation allowed for such cases) to the area of that kingdom, which had its duration from the times of Rin-chen-bzañ-po till the fall of the kingdom of Guge at the hands of Sen-ge-rnam-rgyal (1580?-1640 circa). Evidently it was a school which had evolved, though with the slowness of all Tibetan things, but which assumed by gradual degrees a character more and more Tibetan in itself, yet never went too far from the prime Indian inspiration. This inspiration remained present in the colour, in the general composition of the painting and in the framing of scenes.

Did the researches of the present year and the study of pictorial monuments found in the monasteries of the province of Gtsañ modify the conclusions to which I had arrived at in the preface to the second part of the third volume of the *Indo-Tibetica*?

It is but natural that a definitive answer cannot be given till all the temples between Gyantse, Shigatse and Sa-skya have been studied accurately. But it is also true that Samada, Iwang, the Gtsug-lag-khañ and the Kumbum of Gyantse have already given such abundant material so as to render a certain number of conclusions rather probable. The paintings these monuments

(1) See L. Petch, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*, Calcutta 1939, p.137ff.

have preserved for us represent beyond doubt a school having its peculiar characteristics. They have, no doubt, many elements in common with the art of Guge, but on the whole they represent an independent direction which had developed under other influences and in a milieu rather different. In this case too Indian inspiration can be found out easily, but it is not the only one. There is not the direct continuity of development of an original impulse from India. Other elements can be noticed that show a much different conception of art and a much different technique in design.

§5. *Chinese influences on these paintings.* We have not to forget that this type of art has been born around Sa-skya, a monastery which tried it is true to maintain relations with India, but which tried to establish cultural and political relations with China as well that lasted for almost two centuries. While Chinese influence did not reach Guge, the same cannot be said for Central Tibet. Tibetan paintings, beginning with the time of the fifth Dalai Lama, have had ever-increasing influence of Chinese paintings. This influence became very strong after K'ien-lun (1736-1796) had practically made Tibet a Chinese province. But already before this there were exchanges with China and these must have exercised a remarkable influence on Tibetan culture. This happened at the time of the Sa-skya abbots. We can even document the actual presence of Chinese artists in Tibet; this information is found in a passage of the Myan-chun (1),

(1) p.257b: *Sar-rgya-hor-gyi yul-nas bzo-bo mkhas bos.* Compare in the biography of Bu-ston, *Chos-rje thams-cad-mkhyen-pa Bu-ston lo-tsa-ba'i mam-par-thar-pa snin-pohi me-tog*, in his complete works, Vol.SA fol. 14a.

which says that the princes of Zha-lu had invited Mongolian and Chinese artists to build and to embellish the temple which they had projected on the advice of Bu-ston. The Tibetan schools then studied and imitated the Chinese manner, both by inviting masters, as in this case, to Tibet for the Sa-skyā court, and by sending Tibetan artists to learn the art there. At any rate, there is no doubt that China made its influence felt on some of the works we are dealing with in this volume. As examples I will recall the frescoes of the chapels of the Gtsug-lag-khañ of Gyantse where the principal events of the life of Sa-skyā Paṇḍita have been reproduced, or the chapel of arhats in the same temple, or the sixteenth temple of the first floor of the Kumbum.

Normally the Chinese manner is especially evident in the great scenes of Paradise, where monks and Bodhisattvas are passing through ethereal landscapes, harmonious and rich pictorial projection of the heavenly beatitude that the faithful imagined as comfort for their poor earthly life and as compensation for their virtuous deeds. Although the figures are numerous and the artist has left too much of free space between a figure and another, which he fills with floral motifs and with light clouds moving with whimsical spiral turns, the different groups of persons are not superimposed, put one near the other, static in their heiratic posture, but they move, they kneel down, pray, adore, discuss; an unusual breath of life blows through these frescoes. Sometimes the painter is so skilled as to succeed in breaking the conventionalism of iconographic rules with the delicacy of his design. The gods he paints have no longer the faint uniformity of the serial pictures where the symbol or the colour has the unchangeable value of a mystic

alphabet, but they acquire the composed serenity of those creatures whom the richness of their interior life transforms and transhumanises the flesh. Sometimes the form is so pure and angelic that it seems that the artists wanted to depict spirits and not bodies at all. When they descend from the heavenly planes to the human world, life offers them infinite types, which they try to reproduce. There are not abstract figures representing only a man or a monk, but concrete persons showing us this or that particular man alive, revealing with only a few lines not his physical characteristics but his interior personality as well. And sometimes they overstress the feelings so as to create most efficacious caricatures (see figures 204 and 205).

The difference between these paintings and those of Western Tibet is noticeable especially in the representation of the heavenly kingdoms and of the depicted legends and cannot be missed by those who observe these scenes with some attention. When the artists want to represent the life of the Buddha they put a Tibetan landscape as background: small white houses with the ever present red line running under the roof, close to one another, rare little trees and pastoral scenes. It is a local art, grown under the first push from India, nourished by more or less continuous (according to the places) relations with Indian centres and then developed independently, confined to the kingdom of Guge far away from those streams of culture felt in Central Tibet at the time of the great power of Sa-skyā. In Gtsañ, instead, the background of these great compositions -- I do not speak of the maṇḍalas proper -- is Chinese or a reminiscence of Chinese motifs: landscape, mountains, palaces, floral plays, plays of clouds hanging in the air. One cannot help thinking of scenes of paradise painted at Tun-huang with which our frescoes of Sukhāvātī have a lot of analogies.

§6. *Paintings in Indian style.* The influences came from China and encouraged by the Sa-skya monks could not silence the schools which follow the primary Indian inspiration. These did not compete in great compositions; they did not deal with them at all. They remained faithful to the purely religious tradition of paintings, keeping away from every profane contamination and avoiding any element which would not have an iconographic and symbolic value. These schools painted mostly maṇḍalas, both by representing them in their liturgical scheme and by dissolving them in their own elements and they spread along the walls in long parallel lines the gods that had their determined and particular places in the maṇḍalas.

In these paintings, scrupulously following the iconographic rules, the artist has no freedom of choice. He can modify nothing out of the inspiration of his genius. He can at the most cover the spaces with stylized small trees or with scattered flowers; but also these are few and shy. And yet these frescoes have their special value, although the single figures may be empty of expression and although the endless series of the gods depicted on the walls may appear monotonous. They have a vitality and a richness of colours wisely combined, a fantastic synchrony that shines at the light of the sun with iridescent luminosity. Some inscriptions rightly compare them to the rainbow, of which they have the main colours: red, green, yellow and blue, as they avoid almost completely the half tints and half tones.

These paintings demand of the artists a perfect knowledge of liturgy; that is why around every main Tantra various schools of interpretation have arisen and the ritualistics derived from

them often followed different ways when finding expression in particular maṇḍalas. That is why the painters, who were lay persons, often could not do better than reproduce the schemes of the maṇḍalas prepared specially for them by monks very skilled in the technicisms of mystic liturgy. These monks, in fact, sketched the order in which the various figures had to succeed one another and they designed the schemes which the artists had to follow scrupulously. This scheme is called *bkod-pa*, a word that means also the disposition of figures in the maṇḍala. The inscriptions that Bu-ston dictated for the paintings in the temple of Zha-lu bear almost always the name of the monk who had drawn this scheme, or at least who had guided and supervised the artists, so that they would respect the iconographic rules of the liturgic treatises.

In some cases these tantric systems were so complex and the theories about the proportions of the maṇḍalas and about their characteristics so different that counsels of specialized monks were absolutely necessary. The inscription of the first chapel in the dome of the Kumbum dedicated to Vairocana is very instructive: there was need, as in this particular case, to choose and to follow a school better than another. The doubt could not be resolved by the artist, but by a person to whom doctrine and realization would give an indisputable authority. As the matter related to the Kumbum the task somehow became easy as it is clear that the king and his religious advisers had decided to follow the canons given by Bu-ston.

The paintings in the inscriptions are generically termed *ri-mo* which rather means design, while the action of painting proper

or better of fixing the series of maṇḍala in the painting and therefore the symbols of the liturgy is called *ri-moḥi bkod-pa*, *ri-mor bkod-byed-pa*.

The painting on a wall on the whole is named *logs-kyi ri-moḥi zhiñ-khams*, or simply *zhiñ-khams* which literally means “kingdom” i.e. “kingdom of the Buddha” or “paradise”. The paintings in fact, were considered as the projection of a superterrestrial sphere or of a plane of transcendental existence, to which the mystic was climbing in the absorption of his meditation, by partaking in the vision of secret beatitudes and by transferring himself to an ineffable world whose symbols become intelligible and revealed to him the mystery.

§7. *Painters and paintings.* The painter, to whom the inscriptions give great praise, is called *ri-mo-mkhas-pa*, but sometimes also *pir-thog* (1), *ḥbri-phrug*, *lag-bde-mkhas* (Bu-ston). The painting proper is called *lag-paḥi-ḥdu-byed*, and the art generically *bzo-sbyaṅs*: only at Iwang is the painting called *snum-ḥtsher* which probably indicates the mural painting polished with resinous substances, according to the technique generally used in these mural paintings.

As one can see from the list reproduced above not all the painters were monks, but for the most part they seem to have been lay persons, because any indication about possible ecclesiastical title is missing and it would have not been so with respect to a monk. It is to say that art in Tibet had also gone out of the monasteries and was spread among laymen. Some families were handing down their tradition from father to son

(1) According to Laufer the word is derived from Chinese 筆.

giving thereby special fame to the village in which they lived. Some of these families practised this art for centuries as it has happened for instance to one family in Gnas-rñin, near Gyantse, to which belongs the most skilled painter alive today in the region of Gtsan.

From the inscriptions it also appears that the painter seldom worked alone, because the master was always helped by his disciples. The guru would impart his teaching to the students by training them to work with him, to follow him daily in his work and through experience and direct confrontation with art to train the sensibility that only direct participation in the master's work could refine. In these cases the disciple remains anonymous: in the entire East the respect for the master is too great for anyone to dare add one's name to that of the person who gave oneself the initiation in an art or in a discipline. The merit of the work, if any, goes to the master and the disciple is satisfied to have assisted him. Sometimes, we find father and son united in the work, or two brothers, *sku-mched*: but these are rather vague expressions, because in the mystic schools the lineage does not only follow relations by blood, but rather spiritual affinities; every disciple becomes a son of his master, and his colleagues brothers in the received instruction.

§8. *The diverse elements by whose fusion Tibetan painting is born.* At Gyantse we find two dominating artistic tendencies, the Indian mostly iconographical, and the Chinese specially followed in the large compositions. But at the same time we are already faced with the first maturity of an art which, though following such influences, has a well defined character.

This character marks this painting with a precise manifestation of the Tibetan aesthetic sensibility. The Indian and Chinese elements which had already forged the religious spirit and the culture of Tibet are present also in art. It is relatively easy to discover in this art how much it derives from the Indian manner and how much from the Chinese: sometimes the two elements coexist in the same painting. But this does not mean that they are simply juxtaposed, materially transplanted by the Tibetan artist in his own work. He rather tries to transmute them through his different aesthetic sensibility and through his very peculiar manner to express his religious fantasies in art. These paintings in Gyantse are then a very remarkable document of the first moulding of Tibetan art: the schools were no longer drawn after the Indian or Chinese or Khotanese manner, as it was in earlier times, but they show that they have acquired a peculiar taste, and that they have created an artistic type of their own. In other words, a truly Tibetan manner was born, which dispensed with the old schools that followed Indian, Chinese or Khotanese manners rigidly. In fact, these three were the manners that had influenced Tibetan artists and that the latter had faithfully followed exactly to a T in a manner in which less cultivated people put, when they imitate their masters. This art, furthermore, was sacred and reproduced only religious matters; therefore it could not deviate from these rules. The disciple followed with care the teachings of the master in order to be able to transmit them, in his own turn, unaltered to his disciples. The religious art had — so it was thought — a divine origin: man could not change it at his will. For this it needed a great flourishing of civilisation and one

had to wait for a fervid exchange of cultures with other countries, as it happened with the Sa-skya coming to power. In this way the tradition could lose its rigidity and could open the way either to new ideas or to new streams from which Tibetan art could arise with a particular individuality of its own. That in earlier times this could not happen is documented not only by the literary tradition, but also by some monuments I shall speak about later in this volume. In the statues of Samada and of Iwang the influence of the Chinese style transplanted in Central Asia is evident: in these cases the Tibetan artists -- in case they were all Tibetans -- did nothing but to copy Centro-Asian patterns. Then if we come from the statues to the paintings in the entrance to Samada and in the central chapel of Iwang from one side and in the right chapel of Iwang from the other we find two very different styles: the first Indian, the second Centro-Asian. I use the word Centro-Asian to point out that Chinese provincial art that spread all over Central Asia and which, although never reaching the greatness of Chinese creations proper, nevertheless continued its traditions.

The derivation of the paintings or of the statues of Iwang from the Centro-Asian is so evident that there is no need to adduce comparisons in minute details; in any case, even if the analogies in drawing and in colours and in expressions would not be enough, we could always have the authority of the inscriptions, where the painter affirms that he has followed the way of "Li" (*Li-lugs*) namely Khotan, to distinguish his work from that of the Indian chapel, made by an artist who followed the Indian way (*Rgya-lugs*).

Therefore, while in Western Tibet painting was formed under the influence of Kashmiri artists, in Central Tibet we find a double influence since the earliest times: the Indian which came through Nepal, and the Centro-Asian especially

Khotanese, replaced by Chinese proper after the coming of the Sa-skya. The Tibetan tradition has maintained in various ways memory of the importance of the role of Khotan in the dissemination of the thought and culture of Buddhism in Tibet. This was not only due to the contacts by the conquests of the first Tibetan kings; but to a penetration proper of Khotanese monks whose reminiscences are recorded both in the Rgyal-rabs and in some works of prophetic character, as for instance the prophecy of Saṅghavarman, the prophecy of the country of Li, and some other records recently studied and translated by Thomas (1).

In convents, as we know, not only were dogmatism and ritualism taught, but also **schools** of art were flourishing where novices could learn **painting and sculpting**. With the coming of the Khotanese monks to Tibet and with the penetration of Buddhist culture from Khotan through them, it is natural that pure artistic trends could also enter, and these have given birth to special schools, as we see from the inscriptions of Iwang. But these influences did not occur only in the period specified by the above-mentioned prophecies (VII-VIII centuries): modern researches and new discoveries are now inclined to consider that Tibetan political influence and Buddhist religion remained in Khotan longer than it was thought of earlier (2). The contacts between the two countries, therefore, would have lasted through several centuries.

(1) Thomas F.W., *Tibetan Literary Texts concerning Chinese Turkestan*, p.43, 46, 49, 76.

(2) Thomas, *op.cit.*p.76 who cites Grenard, Dutreil de Rhins, *La haute Asie*, II. 49-50; Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, 181-182.

We find clear evidence of these contacts at Samada and Iwang even if the inscriptions would have not been there; the paintings and even more the statues would have told us in clear terms that the art fashions of Central Asia had complete dominion over the guilds of skilled workers out of which they all emerged. It is not a case to insist more on this point because the figures show it in the clearest way; we would however come back to them when we talk about these very chapels in greater detail.

The Chinese trend instead did come but later, surely not before durable political relations between Sa-skya and the Mongolian empire started.

Out of these different inspirations the schools of Tibetan art proper were born, and these were well established in the temple of Zha-lu, in the Gtsug-lag-khan and in the Kumbum of Gyantse.

§9. *The statues.* Along with the paintings Tibetan plastic art was also being formed. The temples of Central Tibet, which I visited, are rich in stucco statues of all kinds and proportions. Stone sculptures have never been attempted, while examples of wooden sculptures are many, especially in more ancient times. I do not think that it was for lack of workable stone; rather it was that foreign masters were lacking who could initiate the Tibetans into this art. Whatever be the reasons for this fact, sculptures in stone are replaced either by those in wood, or in a greater measure by the statues of stucco, by those of papier maché, or by those in bronze. The term "statues of stucco" is imprecise. Normally they made a wooden framework of the figure, on which they moulded the image by using a mixture of

earth and straw, over which a thin layer of plaster was spread ready to receive colour. The technical term in use today for such statues is *bzo-sku*; but the inscriptions of the Kumbum almost always use: *lde-sku*, *sku-gzugs ḥbur-du gtod-pa*, while the artist who makes them is called *lha-bzo-mkhas-pa*, *lde-sku-mkhas-pa*.

The inscriptions have preserved the names of many of these sculptors.

At Samada: Mati the Indian.

In the Kumbum:

Brtsen-pa (I.4).

Tshan-pa (Ṭsan-pa) (I.8, II.1, 11).

Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan of Lha-rtse (I.9).

Lhaḥi-rgyal-mtshan (I.14, II.4, 15, 16).

Dge-bśes Rgyal-se (I.15).

He from Stag-na (II.8).

He from Rgyan-mkhar in Lha-rtse (II.10).

Nam-mkhaḥ-bzañ-po of Lha-rtse (II.12, III.14, 15, 16, 19, 20, IV.5, 6, 8, 10).

Dpal ... of Mtsho-po in Lha-rtse (III.3).

Lhaḥi-rgyal-mtshan is known as a painter, besides being a moulder of statues.

The sculptors as well came from schools that, as those of painting, were formed around Sa-skya, encouraged by the munificence of that monastery and by its political power. However,

generally the statues of Kumbum are by far inferior to its paintings; they lack expression and vitality. The iconographic scheme has totally bound the artist, who almost is never able to reproduce that serenity which we have admired in some statues of Tsaparang. Some exceptions, however, are there; for instance, in some images of Samada the obedience to the iconographic rules does not harm the grave majesty of the figures. They are deities colder and farther off than those of Tsaparang, less partaking of human life, but in their concentration, not disturbed by any passion, there is a silent invitation to prayer and an austere call to daring renunciation. The richly carved thrones, the dresses and the ornaments, on which the smallest details are represented with the greatest care, increase the regal majesty of these figures inspiring timorous devotion.

In the chapel of the arhats, then, in the great temple of Gyantse, or in that dedicated to the Sa-skyapa sect we find the more interesting statues: the three kings of Tibet or the masters who had transmitted to one another the spiritual revelation of Vajradhara/Rdo-rje-ḥchañ are represented with more adherence to life; in them can almost be seen the effort to impress on the images a realistic character, which the iconographic rules did not make possible in other cases. The tendency to the portrait now starts which the influence of Chinese art has brought to the Tibetans. This art tried to reproduce with realistic efficacy the figures of masters, by imparting individuality to each of them. It is no longer the symbol, which points out and designates the saint represented there: each of the saints has his own unmistakable physiognomy which differentiates him from others and which is enough to make him recognizable.

§10. *Architecture.* The architecture of temples does not allow special observations. Certainly, with respect to the most ancient chapels of the type of those built by Rin-chen-bzan-po, those which have dominated the sacred architecture in Western Tibet, a certain progress can be noted. Not only are the proportions bigger, although without much alteration in the plan, new architectonic elements enrich the sacred buildings. The primitive chapel was made up by a single square room, with or without an atrium; sometimes the back wall had a niche for the main statue. This niche was surrounded in some cases by a passage for ritual circumambulation. Here in Central Tibet, the temples have a tendency to become larger: that of Iwang is simpler: made of a central chapel and of two lateral ones. The others however are enlarging and adding atria, court-yards and elevations.

Already at Samada the temple has two storeys, each divided in two chapels. The atrium becomes spacious and solemn; the sanctuary is preceded by a large court-yard, along side is a covered verandah on whose walls open up minor cellas. The Gtsug-lag-khan of Gyantse repeats this pattern, but the courtyard disappears while the entire building rises massive as a fortress. The atrium of Samada is changed here into the main hall, for the meetings of the monks (*hdus-khan*); the second floor (*dbu-rtse*) arises majestic over the rest of the building and dominates the open verandah, which enlarges on the roof of the lower temple and dominates the side-chapels that surround it on the sides. In this particular case it is the civil architecture of Tibet which has influenced the religious. The style of palaces has modified that of the temples.

§11. *Importance of the Sa-skyapa sect.* We may attempt another conclusion from the study of these religious monuments of Central Tibet. Today these regions are totally dominated by the school of Dge-lugs-pa, the Yellow Sect. Lhasa, wherefrom it reigns all over Tibet through the person of the Dalai Lama, is not far from here. Tashilhumpo, which Dge-ḥdun-grub made into a stronghold of the new school, is three or four days of walk. But the Yellow Sect has inherited the temples of the sects which have preceded it. But it could not build anything new or great in the places I am speaking about. The monasteries which I visited and which I studied in this volume, were once flourishing very much, but nowadays they are in a most deplorable state of abandonment and of decay; of abandonment because it seems that nobody takes care of them, of decay because they no longer spread the light of thought and of spiritual nobility for which they were once renowned. In most cases they were built by the Sa-skyapa and embellished by them. The statue of the patron Gur-mgon in the Mgon-khañ, although in the convent where monks of the Yellow Sect celebrate today, as in the great Gtsug-lag-khañ of Gyantse, it is enough to reveal to us the Sa-skyapa origin of the temples. During the long period in which the Sa-skyapa had the lead, art flourished greatly and many works were accomplished which testify to their enlightened patronage. It is but natural that the princes of Gyantse followed the example of the Sa-skyapa; they were not only their vassals, but also had parental relationships with them, through the Lords of Zhu-lu, who were connected to them and to the abbots of Sa-skyapa through marriages.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES

§12. *Disappearance of ancient historical documents.* The sources on the history of the province of Gtσαñ are poor and fragmentary. When the various regions were unified under the domination of the church of Lhasa, the local chronicles disappeared little by little, together with the families who had privileges and investitures on these lands. And the chronicles of the convents had no better fortune than the former. They were destroyed in wars and invasions, or have been burnt in the fires which have often ravaged the sacred buildings of Tibet. Moreover, the rise of new sects and the increase of their fortune has helped to let the annals of rival schools fall into oblivion more or less voluntarily, together with the documents recording these sects. An example of this can be seen in the chronicles of the monastery of Nenyīng (Gnas-rñiñ), near Gyantse, which was once one of the main centres of diffusion of Rñiñ-ma-pa schools; when this place changed to the Yellow School, perhaps in the past century, its chronicles were deprived of their first chapter where the history of Tibet was narrated in a manner perhaps not totally orthodox or at least in a way not acceptable to the dominant sect. For this reason complete copies of this very interesting book are found today only in private libraries and no longer in the monastery where they were written and printed. Probably

the matrixes themselves of this very chapter have been destroyed.

Another example of this attempt by the Dge-lugs-pa to suppress the historic literature they did not like can be seen in the vicissitudes of the Myañ-chuñ, the most important chronicle of the entire region we are studying now. Today it is very difficult to find copies of it. The officers sent by Lhasa to rule over the region, be they the Khampo or the prefects, Zoñ-pon (Rdzoñ-dpon), made it a duty to withdraw them all (1); only two or three copies are left, which belong to some noble families who are very reluctant even to show them. The reason is clear. The Myañ-chuñ has been written by an author who had great sympathy for the Rñiñ-ma-pa, Bkañ-brgyud-pa and Zha-lu-pa schools, that is how the followers of Bu-ston are called. But this author does not mention almost at all the Dge-lugs-pa, although he had lived after Tsoñ-kha-pa and Dge-ḥdun-grub. The book is a glorification of the ancient sects, and it ascribes the vicissitudes and the annals of the region to schools that the dominant sect did tolerate but did not like. We have to look for their notices in the general chronicles, like the *Rgyal-rabs gsal-baḥi me-loñ*, which is very poor in information on the province we are studying. We have to look for this also in the biographies of the saints and monks who did live in these regions, in the inscriptions I have transcribed and translated, and also in the chronicles of the monasteries, or in popular legends.

(1) That this has happened since several years and by order of Lhasa is already clear from what S.Ch.Das says in his *Journey to Lhasa* (ed. Rockhill), p.88.

§13. *The Myañ-chuñ.* Leaving aside the *Rgyal-rabs gsal-baḥi me-loñ* which is known by all the scholars in Tibetan matters and where some very brief information about Gtsañ can be gleaned here and there, and not considering for a moment the inscriptions, even if they provide us precious data on the persons who built in Gyantse the remarkable monuments studied in these pages, we have to mention here specially the Myañ-chuñ. Myañ-chuñ is the short name by which is commonly called, even by the Tibetans, a work whose title is much longer: *Myañ-yul stod smad bar gsum-gyi ño-mtshar gtam-gyi legs-bśad mkhas-paḥi-hjugs ñogs.* Myañ-chuñ means “the little Myañ (or better “ñañ” as we will explain in the following chapter when speaking about the historical geography of this region) is the name the Tibetans give to a great portion of the Gtsañ province. The name “Little Myañ” is given in order to distinguish this work from its larger version. This work is perhaps among the handwritten works of king Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa, zealously preserved in the library of the Ri-khrod above Gyantse which I could not see, although insisted a lot. Surely for the reasons adduced above.

The author of the book is not known. The colophon too is missing. The work is surely not finished, because both the copies I have, end at the middle of the description of Bsam-sgrub-rtse (Shigatse).

About the date of its composition it is difficult to say anything — certainly it is later than the first half of the XVII century if the Lha-btsun of the Ḥbrug-pa school quoted on page 213 is the apostle of Buddhism in Sikkim.

The author, whoever he be, did not belong to any particular school, and does not show any preference for any sect. He

narrates all the legends, believes in all the miracles and venerates equally all the masters. And yet in his book the Bkaḥ-brgyud-pa, with their ramifications, and the Rñin-ma-pa have the upper hand. Remarkable, although not as rich, are the details about the Sa-skyapa. Completely lacking, as stated above, are references to the Yellow sect.

I have two copies. One belonged to a high officer whose family lives near Gyantse. It is written in dbu-med script: it is not very old, but correct enough. The other is a copy I got done from a rather ancient original, which was carefully revised. Also this one is in dbu-med, and belongs to another officer. The Myan-chun is enriched here and there with glosses written in red ink, where difficult passages are explained or histories simply hinted at in the text are narrated with greater richness of details. It is not divided into chapters. Historical facts, myths and legends are fused together. But to an attentive reader of the text the book reveals first class information, which could not be found elsewhere.

There is not a village or a monastery about which the book does not speak extensively. The main chapels are described in every detail, and the books and the statues which they contain are fully enumerated. In a word, this work is a proper guide to antiquities and to the glories of the region, and is a precise evocation of the great figures, both Indian and Tibetan, who gave impulse to religion, and who passed their lives in these convents.

Evidently, the compiler of the Myan-chun had at his disposal very rich material, which he could use with wisdom, material which is mostly lost today or traceable with great difficulty, specially the chronicles of the various monasteries he is speaking about. Comparing, for instance, the guide of Gnas-rñin with

the chapter the Myañ-chuñ has devoted to this very convent, it is clear that the author has not missed any important fact and that he has chosen with sense and shrewdness the more important things which he has then rightly framed in the organic plan of his work. The only fault in it is that he wanted to collect too many things; and that he often speaks at length about topics which do not specifically enter in the sphere of his subject. This fact is sometimes prejudicial to the clarity of the text.

§14 *The eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ.* There is then the guide, or as it is called *dkar-chag*, of Gnas-rñiñ. This guide has the following title: *Skyes-bu dam-pa-rnams-kyi rnam-par-thar-pa rin-po-chehi gter-mdzod*, namely, “the precious treasure of the lives of supreme creatures”. In fact, the history of the convent is narrated through the story of the lives of the abbots who lived in them and who ruled over their fate.

The book is divided into two chapters or sections *ka* and *kha*: the first, of 16 folios, contains a summary of Tibetan history from the beginning to the first kings of the Guge dynasty, and dwells considerably on Padmasambhava. The other, having 88 folios, contains the chronicle of the convent and the biographies of its abbots. The first part that stops at page 40, was written by Bde-legs Ga-pa-dbon-po-nam-mkhañ and represents the first and more ancient core of the work (1). Then it was

(1) This section ends with the biography of Rin-chen-blo-gros-dpal bzan-po. Since he was chosen as master of Tai bsvi-tu (Tai si-tu) Hphags-dpal, the grand-father of Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzan-hphags-pa, the cyclical years given for his birth and his death, namely *chu-bya* and *chu-glan* must correspond to 1333-1373. This means that this portion of the book, which ends with his biography, must be a little later.

brought up to date and completed by lama Bde-legs-hjam-dpal-rgya-mtsho and by the Dpon-po Nam-mkhaḥ-bzañ-po in the year water-horse (1).

§15. *Secondary Sources.* Scanty but useful information is found in geographical compilations which though late are very important because the authors have really travelled through the country with intelligence and have recorded the most interesting traditions.

I quote for instance the *Dbus Gtsaṅ gnas-rten rags-rims-gyis mtshan byaṅ mdor-bsdus dad-paḥi sa-bon* by the Lama of Khams Kun-gzigs-mkhyen-brtseḥi-dbañ.

Then comes a chapter *Bod-yul khri skor-gyi leḥu* of a proper handbook of universal geography entitled: *Hdzam-glin chen-poḥi rgyas-bśad snod bcud kun-gsal me-loṅ* by another famous Lama of Khams *Smin-grol no-mo-han* (2). The book shows in some places a certain knowledge of geographical notices of Italian origin, perhaps due to some materials left by missionaries who entered Tibetan territory during the XVIII century or due to the influence of treatises published by the Jesuits in China.

Almost nothing, instead, is found in the guide to the Kumbum: this book is a very rare work indeed, and when it came to my hands the monks themselves of the monastery were astonished, because they had never heard about it. It is anonymous,

(1) As at page 85 it is mentioned that Tai si-tu Kun-dgaḥ-ḥphags-pa was father of the Chos-rgyal of Cyantse and was born in 1357, this year of water-horse corresponds to 1402.

(2) This chapter corresponds to the treatise of Tibetan geography translated by Vasiljev in his *Geographiya tibeta*, Petersburg, 1895.

handwritten in dbu-med characters, rather ancient and has the title *Chos-rgyal sku-ḥbum-chen-pohi dkar-chag*. Actually it contains much less than the inscriptions which illustrate and explain the paintings; the names of the painters and of the persons who commissioned the frescoes or the chapels are not given.

At last there comes a very popular book which the people know thoroughly, often by heart. It narrates, in a dramatic form, the vicissitudes of a local heroine: namely, A-lce-snañ-gsal, born, according to legend, near Gyantse and who did pass great part of her life in Ri-nañ, a narrow valley to the south-east of that very city. The book has the title *Rigs-bzañ-gi mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma snañ-ḥod-ḥbum-gyi rnam-thar*. A summary of this work is found in Waddell (1).

(1) *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, p.533.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

§16. *The land of Nāñ.* Gyantse (Tib. *Rgyal-rtse*, *Rgyal-mkhar-rtse*) rises on that part of Gtsañ which is known by the name of Nāñ.

This region includes the entire valley of the river Nāñ-chu (1) which is also called *gser-gzhuñ ri-mo* ("the golden line"), and the valleys of its tributaries. The spelling of the name wavers between the forms Myañ and Nāñ. The pronunciation being the same, it is probable that the spelling Nāñ be the more exact. Myañ which means "taste" has the appearance of being a learned written form, due to a legend reported by the Myañ-chuñ (page 5). It narrates that Indra offered a cup of ambrosia to Padmasambhava, and the great thaumaturge let his twentyfive disciples taste it. The form Nāñ (2) instead is generally found in the inscriptions of the Sku-ḥbum of Gyantse, in the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ and in other texts. It is,

(1) This river originates from Gans-bzan-po, on which see below. The names of its two branches Ralung chu and Nyera chu, as written in the maps of the Survey, are unknown to my informants.

(2) Thus in the *Nāñ stod skor-la phebs-paḥi lam-yig tshig-bcad* in the *gsun-ḥbum* of Pan-chen Blo-bzan-chos-kyi-rgyal-ntshan-dpal-bzan-po quoted in the *Mdo rgyud zab-moḥi chos-kyi lun rjes-gnañ dbaḥ khrid thob-yig gzhan phan rin-chen dbaḥ rgyal lhag bsam puñ-da-ri-kaḥi ḥphreñ-bas spud-pa*, p.58, but not traceable in the works of that Pan-chen edited at Tashilhunpo. The same form Nāñ is in the *Chos-ḥbyun* of Bu-ston.

very possibly, an ethnical name derived from the tribes originally living here. At least this is the sense that, as it seems to me, can be given to an allusion of the same text, namely that the people (*gduñ-rus*) settled along the river, i.e. the descendants of the disciples of Padmasambhava who had tasted that ambrosia, were called *myañ-myañ (ñañ-ñañ)*.

On the eastern side this land of Ñañ starts from the mountain Gañ-ba-bzañ-po (1) or Gañs-(because of contamination with Gañs-ri “snowy mountain”)-bzañ-po. By following the course of the Nyang-chu, it reaches the confluence of this river with the Tsang-po (Brahmaputra) north of Shigatse; this place where one river enters the other would be called Yu-ba-gdoñ (fol.12). The entire land known by the name of Ñañ is divided in three parts: the upper part Ñañ-stod, the middle Ñañ-bar, and the lower Ñañ-smad.

The division is only geographical and is based on the flowing of the rivers, and not on a political basis. The Tibetans use to distinguish every region of certain extent in this triple way. But the whole of Ñañ was also divided in many other minor zones, with their specific names: thus at least we read in the *Myañ-chuñ*, which gives important, though summary, information about the people, the bazars and the main products of the different parts of Ñañ. It should be specially noted that this text distinguishes the places of the H̄brog-pa from the inhabited centres; that is to say that it points out the pasturages where shepherds used to camp, underlining through this fact the natural ethnical differences surely existing among the settled

(1) The name of this mountain is not given on the map of the Survey which has the scale of a million, *India and adjacent countries*, fol.77 (edition of 1927); the mountain is between the Ralung and the Talung Dzong, *ibid.* C.4; but it is found in the map with a scale of an inch to four miles 77L., with the name Nodzin kangsa, i.e. Gnod-sbyin Gañ-bzañ = Yakṣa Pūrṇa-bhadra. See page 57 n. 1.

tribes and the nomadic tribes.

Ñañ-stod, which starts at the base of the Gañ-bzañ-po, arrives to the North (1) at Pango (Spañ-dkar, p.12 and 69) in the place of Ri-nañ and goes till the Śam-bu-rtse-dgu which according to my informants would be near Tsechen.

The main market place (*tshon - hdus*) of Ñañ-stod had been moving from place to place during the centuries; in the oldest times it was at Sa-ma in Rgyañ-ro, possibly corresponding to Samada. Later it was transferred at Gnas-rñiñ and today it is, as is well known, at Gyantse and precisely near its great monastery called Dpal-ḥkhor-chos-sde.

The Ḥbrog-pa have three main pasture zones which give their names to three different regions, namely Rgyañ-ro, Ñiñ-ro and Gañ-ro (2).

The exact delimitation of these zones is very difficult to establish: however according to the information which I have collected on the spot, Rgyañ-ro is vaguely the whole territory included between the Trumbayung chu (3) and the Nyera chu of the map.

Ñiñ-ro is between the Chulung chu and the river which flows into the Nyera chu at Gobshi and is called on the map Nyang chu. Gañ-ro is on the left of the Trumbayung chu, that the Tibetans, at least those I have met and questioned, know by the name of Rgyañ-ro chu, as I have said already.

The main products are perhaps three: hats (*zhva-mo*), drums (*rna-mo*) and pieces of woollen cloth (*sram-bu*).

(1) The text says: on high, *phu*.

(2) See the parallel with the suffix *ru* "division, district, wing", very common in Tibetan toponomy.

(3) Thus on the map; but people call it *Rgyañ-ro chu*.

Ñan-bar extends from Sa-ma-sa till Gab Phya-dkar: both these places are not far from Drojung: the market in early times was at Thugu, also near Drojung. Now it is at Drojung (the spelling oscillates between *ḥdu-chuñ* and *ḥdul-chuñ*). The seats of the Ḥbrog are three: Rgyañ, Dkyil and Mañ not identified. The products would be: woollen blankets (*sleḥu*), blankets (*grum-ze* 1) and felt (*phyin*).

Ñan-smad goes from Ḥkhor-stod, not identified, to the confluence of the Myañ-chu with the Tsang-po: the market has been moved from Gur-mo, not far from Zha-lu, to Zha-lu, near the monastery with the same name, and then at Bsam-rtse i.e. Shigatse. The seats of the Ḥbrog-pa are: Ṣgro-luñ, Lcags-pa and Ra.

The main products are: belts (*ske-rags*), thin woollen pieces (*ther-ma*, 2), and shoes (*ltar-zon = lham*).

The region along the Jomolhari (Chomolari in the map), in the vicinity of Phari, was called Mgos-yul, or according to other sources Ḥgos-yul. It was a big feoff, named after the family which according to tradition has been invested since the time of king Ral-pa-can. He in fact has given this region as feoff to his minister (Blon-po-chen-po) Ḥgos (Mgos) Khri-bzañ (3). This territory extends till Phag-ri (Phari) and was therefore called Mgos-phag-ri or Mgos-yul stod-gsum and it was included between the Mon-skyer chu (4), the lake Skar-la (Kala of the map) and Ḥbri-ḥtshams-rdza-smug perhaps between Dochen and Kampadzong.

(1) for *grum tse*.

(2) *Ther-ma* is a woollen piece, of the best quality, usually used to make the dresses of monks.

(3) Eulogy of Gnas-rñin p.3b. See *Padma-thañ-yig*, translated by Toussaint, *Le dict de Padma*, p.308.

(4) This is the name of the river flowing through Paro dzong in Bhutan which is more commonly called Paro chu.

It is clear therefore that Mgos-yul was south of Rgyañ-ro and it is possible that this region had taken its name from that of the powerful family which got it as feoff, as the tradition says.

The legend wishing to give glory to the country of Nñan narates in great details the miracles that Padmasambhava had performed here and it also brings back to the time of this apostle the beginnings of the civilization and of the history of Central Tibet. Thus many aboriginal traditions have been lost or have been modified according to the interests and the desires of the new schools. It is easy to imagine that the Bonpo communities in the region were many, and Buddhism has spread in these parts slowly, gradually taking the place of the primal beliefs. Both the Myañ-chuñ and the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ recall Bon-po cults, divinities and masters who hold out for a long time against Buddhist penetration. Possibly it is due to Bonpo beliefs whose list of the thirteen mountains of Nñan-stod in the Myañ-chuñ which Padmasambhava had transformed into sacred places, by vanquishing the evil influences previously emanated by them. This narration documents a new example of the transformation of aboriginal cults into Buddhist ones so often seen in Tibet. Specially in the period of time that takes its name from Padmasambhava, a phenomenon which always happens where Buddhism spreads, also repeated in Tibet: I mean to say the slow process of absorption of autochthone myths and traditions by adapting them to the new religion.

These thirteen inauspicious mountains (*ltas ñan*, p. 8b) are listed here. I have tried to identify them by resorting to the experience of people who know the country well and who

because of business or of pilgrimage, have travelled over all the places. Thus I could verify that there is a reasonable accord among all the facts given to me by my informants and that, therefore, the tradition they refer to is somehow reliable (1). We are dealing, therefore, with mountains which, although no longer so sacred as in the past, nevertheless still seem rather famous if the people of Gyantse know their names and can say with a certain degree of approximation where they are.

- 1) Nor-buñi khyuñ-rtse near Chorashika, left to the Nyang chu on the road Gyantse-Shigatse.
- 2) Ze-mo (for *sre-mon*) va-gdoñ in the valley of Drojung.
- 3) Hbron-rtse near Drongtse.
- 4) Drañ-mañi-ri between Tsechen and Drongtse.
- 5) Sbal-gdoñ near Tsechen.
- 6) Šam-bu-rtseñi dguñi ri in the valley to the west of Tsechen.
- 7) Rje-gri-gum-btsan-poñi ri, from the name of one of the mythical kings; it is the mountain where there is Tsechen.
- 8) Spañ-luñ-gi ri also near Tsechen.
- 9) Rtsa-ñkhor on the right side of the river, north-west of Gyantse, facing Tsechen.
- 10) Rgya-mkhar-rtseñi ri, the mountain where is the fort of Gyantse.
- 11) Btsas-rnams-kyi ri up to Treding near the road Gyantse-Lhasa. (on the map Treding is spelt Traring)
- 12) Btsas-rnams-kyi ri-che near the preceding.
- 13) Chu-rag-btsogs-poñi ri, above the village of Chure.

(1) This information has been verified by me during my visit in 1939.

This legend of inauspicious mountains later become propitious and sacred because of Padmasambhava, can only be understood as Buddhism taking possession of places which originally were sacred to the Bonpo tradition. Some of their names, as Khyuñ and Btsas, in fact remind of categories of divine beings of Bonpo mythology. Moreover, the Myañ-chuñ and even the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ still recollect celebrated masters and ascetics of Bonpo religion, whose fame had lasted till the time of the compilers of such books. Even a Bonpo temple is mentioned, that of Gyuñ-druñ ñi-śar near Stag-rtse (Takse of the map), where the school of one of the greatest Bonpo masters Bon bzhi-khyuñ-nag was continuing.

It seems that some great families, who passed into history for having given to Tibet both ministers or princes, and doctors, translators and ascetics, though not belonging originally to these lands had established themselves in these very regions since ancient times sometimes because of feoff given to them by the supreme political authority of Tibet.

Thus the upper portion of Hgos-yul and of Gyañ-ro, namely the portion of territory that reaches Phari (Phag-ri) from one side and starting from Gnas-rñiñ on the other and by skirting the group of the Jo-mo-lha-ri (Chomolhari), was given by the Hgos to the family of Rgya descended from Rgya Hjam-dpal-gsañ-ba chaplain and spiritual master of Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan (1). Ñañ-stod would have been possessed to a great extent by the Hbre (or Hdre) (2) and by the Khyuñ,

(1) See further page 142.

(2) The two syllables are homophone. The form Hbre is the true one. It is used by Bu-ston *History of Buddhism*, transl. Obermiller, p.206. The Hbre and the Khyuñ are also mentioned in the catalogue of the military divisions of ancient Tibet. See F.W. Thomas, *Tibetan Texts and Documents...*, p.277. Also according to the *Bkañ-than-sde-lña* ch.5 (Thomas p.277) Ñañ-ro was possessed by Hbre (Hdre).

families that have given a large number of Buddhist masters. In Nān-smad, instead, the Dpyal and the Lce had the lead. The latter family, having contracted a relationship with the Sa-skyā through marriage, had become very powerful during the XIII-XIV century, and obtained from the Sa-skyā hierarchy the investiture of Zha-lu and of the neighbouring lands. The family, wherein the prince who built the Kumbum of Gyantse was born, was originally perhaps from Cangra (Lcañ-ra) in the valley of Gyantse.

Little by little Buddhism prospered in the country of Nān; sects spread with a growing rhythm, marking the fortune of their prestige with temples and convents. Masters coming from India kept the faith alive and renewed its doctrine, by translating and commenting on the sacred texts. In the hermitages spread all over these mountains ascetics have relived the experiences of tantric esoterism and celebrated theologians have noted and interpreted the word of Lord Buddha and the subtleties of its dogmatics.

§17. *The monasteries of Nān-stod.* It is useful to give a list of the monasteries which had some importance in the history of Lamaism and are therefore celebrated by the local chronicles. The frills of the legend are usually copious; but generally the information contained in the Myañ-chuñ, which for the great part is derived from the chronicles and the eulogies of individual places, is so schematized and precise that it seems to be really genuine. Without going into too many details, I will content with listing these places and with summing up the main points of the traditions and records which were narrated to pilgrims by local monks. In this way I will bring a rather noteworthy contribution to the historical geography of these places, to the reconstruction of the orthography of the names, usually

wrongly written on the maps of the Survey, and also to a more precise identification of many places whose names often appear in the histories and in the biographies. But one has not to believe so quickly that the data so collected, though all of them have been verified at Gyantse with the help of intelligent informants, have a definitive value. The books out of which I took this information are eulogies whose scope is to celebrate the glories of the regions described: it is therefore not impossible that out of excessive zeal they have transferred to the province of Nñan and to its temples facts that have actually occurred elsewhere. A typical example of this is the fact that they tried to put in Rte-ra, a place near Stag-rtse, the council that Rtse-ldo had summoned at Tabo (1).

It is also possible that in order to enhance the prestige of one's own monastery, the authors of these eulogies -- which were used as basis for information, together with many other sources, by those who compiled Myañ-chun -- had imagined that famous figures of Tibetan Buddhism had preached and lived in that very monastery. Possibly they did not have any sure documentation of what they were telling nor did they have any special feeling about the historical reliability of the data so invented. But by doing so they have misplaced the geographical horizon where these very figures actually operated. This, however, rarely occurs. Normally, as I said, it seems that our sources are a good guide wherefrom we can start working safely. But we would need to return to these data in the future, when Tibetan literature would be better known and the country becomes more easily accessible.

Before talking about each place it is useful to note that tradition records some temples built in the first or second period

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* II.25 (where instead of Toling should be read Tabo) and page 30.

of the penetration of Buddhism, namely in those periods that Tibetans name respectively *sna-dar* and *phyi-dar* (1) “first and second introduction of the Law”

Tradition attributed to the more ancient period, precisely the times of Khri-sron-lde-btsan and of Ral-pa-can, a series of temples which have become famous in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, that is to say:

Under Khri-sron-lde-btsan:

Dgon-pa of Rte-re or Rta-ra in the land of Stag-rtse (Takse of the map).

Bde-bu in Btsas-phu (Saopu of the map)

Bye-mdah in the gorge (*ron*) between the previous place and the mountain overshadowing Gyantse. Now it is a district.

Rkyañ-phu in Rgyañ-ro (=Sāmada).

Ba-ḥug in Rgya-mkhar (south-west to Drontze, Bhadu Gompa of the map).

Under Ral-pa-can:

Lha-chuñ below Spos-khañ (in a valley north of Takse).

Lha-do Sbas-luñ near Drontze.

Rdo-rje-gdan (=Mag-dge-ldiñ p.166b).

Ḥjaḥ-luñ in Spos-khañ.

Ga-phud near Nor-bu-khyuñ-rtse (3).

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* II.

(2) But later on it is said that instead it is near Penam.

(3) See above about the mountain which gives its name to this place.

During the second spreading of the Law these temples were founded:

Rtse-chen

Śel-dkar rgyal-rtse = Gyantse

Lcañ-ra = Changra

Se-brag gyaḥ-luñ and Byañ-ri-se-brag (near Penam).

The description of the sacred places given in the Myañ-chuñ starts with the district of Rva-luñ near the mountain Gañ-bzañ (in some texts: Gañ-bzañ) (1), out of which arises the Ñañ-chu (2).

The first place west of this mountain that one encounters is Ga-mo-luñ and in its neighbourhood a cave is pointed out to the pilgrims where Padmasambhava is thought to have meditated and lived (*Padmaḥi sgrub phug*) and also a miraculous source Tshe-chu-ma. In the temple named Gu-ru lha-khañ, in Lho stod, a statue of Avalokiteśvara/ Spyan-ras-gzigs was kept which was originally found in the Señ-ge-phug sman-chu in the region of Sna-thod (=Napte of the map) in Ñiñ-ro (3).

Then comes Rva-luñ (Ralung of the map), on the road Gyantse-Lhasa, before the Kharo pass, at the extreme limits of a plain called Hom-thañ (p.19, 8).

(1) This mountain was called Ha-ḥo (Myan-chun p.14, 20); then, this name, possibly native and preBuddhist, was substituted by that of Pūrṇabhadra/Gañ-bzañ-po (Gañs-bzañ-po). This name was born with the legend which ascribes the name of Ñañ to the tasting of ambrosia by Padmasambhava and his disciples, and presupposes the identification of the mountain with the seat of the Yakṣa Pūrṇabhadra. The name of "auspicious mountain" (Gañs-bzañ) comes from the fact that it is from there that the Ñañ-chu is born, to which the region owes its fertility.

(2) As it has been seen above, on the map of the Survey the Nyang-chu does not pass through Ralung (Rva-luñ), but it is said to be parallel to the Trumbayung (= Rgyañ-ro-chu); this fact has no correspondence, neither in the tradition of the Myan-chuñ nor in the information that I could collect.

(3) Another cave that tradition says was occupied by Padmasambhava is perhaps to be found in the neighbourhood of the Kharo Pass (mkhaḥ-ro) on the road to Lhasa.

Before the foundation of Rva-luñ the entire region was inhabited by nomads (Hbrog) and was called Khu-le (1).

The monastery of Rva-luñ was always considered to be one of the most important centres of the Bkaḥ-brgyud-pa sect, and even today its glory is to have been the chosen seat of Gtsaṅ-pa Rgya-ras-pa that is the ascetic of the Rgya family (2), for a long time. The birth-place of this saint is called today Khruṅs-sa (Trungsa of the maps, on the road Lhasa-Gyantse 77, H, IX D). Below Lung-ma (Luñ-dmar), i.e. towards the west, the place indicated on the maps as Shuto corresponds possibly to Gzhis-stod (p.41b) in whose neighbourhood a famous Bonpo master was born, who was believed to be the incarnation of Samantabhadra/Kun-tu-bzaṅ-po. This place was visited by the Bon-po pilgrims of Khams.

The village labelled on the maps as Kekochutsen corresponds to Skyid-khud where was a temple founded by Dran-ston Mthaḥ-bral (3). In its immediate neighbourhood

(1) Tradition has it that there was the chapel of Rmog, which was founded by Yol Thog-ḥbebs.

(2) He is one of the most outstanding figures of the Hbrug-pa school. The tradition collected by the Myaṅ-chuñ (p.37.ff) says that he was a descendant of one of those wrestlers who at the time of Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po were sent to China in order to bring the statue of Jo-bo. They were called Lha-dgaḥ. Under Khri-sroṅ-lde-btsan the family was divided into two branches, of which one came from Sba Gsal-snañ who was a lotsava and abbot of Bsam-yas (*Chronicles of Western Tibet*, p.32: San gsal snañ). From the other brother Rgya-saṅ-si came Rgya Hjam-dpal-gsaṅ-ba who founded Gnas-rñiñ. A branch of the family was transferred to Stag-tshal and from it that Rgya Brtson-ḥgrus-sen-ge was born who requested Atiṣa to come to Central Tibet. Another branch went to live at Khu-le and here in the province of Gtsaṅ was born Gtsaṅ-pa Rgya-ras i.e. the ascetic of Rgya.

(3) On its walls were frescoes representing the life of an incarnation of his i.e. of the master Man-luñ in Ñañ-stod near Stag-rtse.

there is a hot water spring, *chu-tshan*. Little farther, always going towards Gyantse, there is the convent of Kha-mo-ze, residence of a disciple of Ka-rma ba-kṣi known as Zeḥu-ston (1).

After this comes Gobshi, namely Sgo-bzhi “the four doors” (Myañ-chuñ p. 49b) so called because in this place four roads open: to the east the road of Rva-luñ, called also the “road of Law” because it leads to Lhasa; to the south the road of Ñiñ-ro or “road of wood” because wood comes from Bhutan; to the north the road of Rdo-lcags or “road of iron”; to the west the road of Rgya-grags (Gyatrak of the map) or “road of barley”. The river flowing nearby marks the border of Ñiñ-ro which is found to its right. In the eastern zone, i.e. in Ñiñ-ro as such, the Bonpo religion seems to have been widely circulated. The apostle who brought in Buddhist doctrine was specially Khyuñ Khams-pa-chen-po, a disciple of Rin-chen-sñiñ-po of Stod-luñ, who founded there the monastery of Sdiñ-phu and therefore he was known also as Sdiñ-phu-pa. In the same region there are two dgon-pa, Ḥbras-mo dgon-pa (Myañ-chuñ 53) and Graḥu-luñ (Gra-bo-luñ). Coming back on the bank of the Ñañ-chu, one encounters the monastery of Ḥchad-mañ (Chak-mak of the maps) where Ḥbre-chen-po Śes-rab-ḥbar had his residence (ibid. 58). In its neighbourhood one finds Ze-thañ or Zeḥu-thañ (Setang of the maps) and Gra-thañ (2). This temple, founded by Yol-ḥbebs (ibid.57b, 58a) was in the plain to the west of Gyaridung of the map; to the south there is Ye-mdzod in Brgya-phyed (ibid.59). Then there is the dgon-pa of Chu-mig (ibid.59.), which tradition considers as one of its most sacred place

(1) Perhaps from the birth-place of Zeḥu-thañ (Setan of the maps).

(2) Probably the Gra-thañ where the Cāndra-vyākaraṇa-sūtra-vṛtti was translated, Bstan-ḥgyur, Mdo CXXXIII.6.

and one of the most active centres of ancient Tibetan Buddhism, if it has not been mistaken with Chu-mig near Snar-than, where a statue attributed to the Indian paṇḍita Smṛti kept.

The guide then goes on to describe Hban-gron in the valley of the river marked on the maps as Mra-chu, but whose name seems rather to be known by everybody as Ri-nañ-phug-chu, from the name of the Ri-nañ valley. This valley is famous in Tibetan legend because herein took place the main episodes of one of the most popular religious dramas in central Tibet, that of A-lce-snañ-gsal(1). The mountain which overhangs this place is known as Ri-bo-che (Myañ-chuñ 66b); to the north, on the right bank of the river, in a gorge, there is Nu-ma-chos-luñ, possibly the Nurshika of the maps. In its neighbourhood, towards the west, there is Glin-ras-kyi dgon-pa, and to its west is Rin-chen-sgañ (2). Another famous monastery, known as Las-drug dgon-pa, founded by Hjam-glin-mgon-po is in the valley above Tangan. At Spañ-dkar (Pango of the maps) there was the palace of the Lord of Ri-nañ, about whom the above-mentioned popular drama speaks. Spyān-luñ, in a valley of Ri-nañ, seems to be collapsing today, the same as Gser-phreñ and Rdzi-luñ known as Pho-luñ and Mo-luñ. My informants have told me that these crumbling temples are in the valley above Nurshika. Leaving aside a few places of minor concern, of which the guide gives only the names, at this point we reach a temple rather famous, namely the hermitage which,

(1) See Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, p.553 and above p. 46.

(2) Near Gyantse.

built in a little valley down the slope of the mountain called Gzhi-bdag, looks down to Gyantse from the north-east. This monastery is marked on the map with the simple name of Gompa. The valley where the monastery is situated is called Rgod-po-luñ (ibid.70) and the convent proper is called Ri-khrod-dgaḥ-ldan, according to the name given to it by Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa or also Rgyañ-dkar-goñ-ma.

It has been built again and it does not have things of any value, but it has a history of certain importance. It was perhaps founded by Hban-sna-bo, a lotsava contemporary of Atiśa and Brtson-ḥgrus-sen-ge, specially initiated into the mysteries of Vajrapāṇi/Phyag-rdor. The Ri-khrod is till today sacred to this divinity.

Immediately after comes the description of Gyantse (Rgyal-rtse), which the local tradition considers as having been the seat of the Chos-rgyal Dpal-ḥkhor-btsan (grandson of Glañ-dar-ma). It seems that originally it was called Śel-dkar-rgyal-rtse. As I have stated above, the Myañ-chuñ does not mention Sku-ḥbum; but the Myañ-chuñ speaks extensively about the Gtsug-lag-khañ, of which it gives a very useful and accurate description. Moreover it speaks at length of the royal palace, which was on the spot where now is the fort (rdzoñ) and it also speaks of the temple built by the Bdag-po-chen-po Nañ-chen Kun-dgaḥ-ḥphags-pa in the 34th year of his life (1390).

This temple has suffered badly and it is destroyed to a great extent: only some very carefully worked out capitals remain, but the frescoes have completely disappeared. It was called Bsam-ḥphel-rin-po-cheḥi gliñ and was dedicated to Śākyamuni.

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* II.17.

A big statue of his was adored in the temple. Today it is called Lha-khañ-ḥog. It also had eight stūpas/mchod-rten made of precious substances, possibly the same ones that are seen today piled up on the altar of the last chapel, on top of the mountain (known by the name of Rtse Lha-khañ). The frescoes are no longer visible. They represented the thirtyfive Buddhas invoked during confession, Mārīcī/Ḥod-zer-can-ma, Vaiśravaṇa/Rnam-thos-sras, Jambhala, the series of Sa-skya-pa masters; in the verandah Mthoñ-ba-don-ldan, Dīpañkara/Mar-me-mdzad, Maitreya/Byams-pa, Sukhāvātī, the paradise of Akṣobhya (Abhirati/Mñon-dgaḥ-ba), the Buddhas of medicine, the arhats, etc. and the history of Sudhana Kumāra/Gzhon-nu Nor-bzañ; in the Mgon-khañ is the image of Pañjara-Mahākāla/Gurmgon. In this temple was also kept a great painting (thañ-ka) on silk embroidered with many figures of deities by order of Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa.

Another banner was then made for Dpal-ḥkhor chos-sde and is possibly the same as that seen today during the grand processions of Gyantse (Myañ-chuñ 81).

Near Gyantse in a valley to the right of the river Ñañ-chu stands another celebrated monastery, already in ruins at the time of the author of the Myañ-chuñ: namely the Bye-mdaḥ dgon-pa constructed, according to tradition, in the reign of Khri-ral-pa-can at the suggestion of Rgya Ḥjam-dpal-gsañ-ba: in this temple should have taken place a council summoned by Ḥbre-chen-po Śes-rab-ḥbar and the Lotsava of Rva should have deposited here around a hundred manuscripts brought from India (ibid. 97ff). My informants place Bye-mdaḥ in a valley just to the north of Gyantse.

The author of the Myañ-chuñ goes to the extreme limit of Ñañ-stod and properly to the district of Rgyañ-ro. After having mentioned a temple of Ḥbri-mtshams in Ḥgos-yul, no longer

identifiable, described Rkyañ-phu, which we have seen to be Samada, and whose construction is attributed by him to Sron-btsañ-sgam-po: they follow Hbraṣ-khud about which we shall speak at length, Rgya-gnas (Gyani of the map) and then G.ye-dmar which corresponds to the gompa of Iwang.

Other places, some of which were already in ruins at the time of the author of the Myañ-chuñ are: Rgyañ-ro Gud-chuñ, Do-chen and Do-chuñ and then Mañ-luñ which corresponds to the Toktri Gompa of the map. One arrives at Zho-nañ (Shomang of the map); the gompa of Gser-ldiñ follows in a gorge to the north-east of Kangmar founded by Gzhon-nu-ḥod (ibid.106) and seat of Chos-sku-ḥod-zer (1) whom the tradition considers as an incarnation of Śākyaśrī.

In its vicinity, but on the other side of the river, about two miles from Nagon, where now is a small nunnery, was the monastery of Glañ-pa-phañ-thañ (ibid.110), seat of Khyuñ Rin-chen-grags, one of the most celebrated disciples of the Lot-sava of Rñog. Then follows Sa-phud whose foundation is attributed to Śākyaśrī; this gompa, now in ruins, stood about half a mile to the south of Sakang and there began the region of Luñ-nag which terminated in the vicinity of Gnas-rñiñ. In the valley of Glañ-pa-luñ, just to the west of Sakang, there was the monastery of Phar-ldiñ which probably corresponds to Porten of the maps, a dependency (lag) of Gnas-rñiñ (ibid.111). Another gompa in Luñ-nag, Glañ-pa-ser-ldiñ, which is named

(1) Chos-sku-ḥod-zer who was a disciple of Gzhon-nu-dpal (known also by the name of this place as Gser-ldiñ-pa Gzhon-nu) became chaplain of Öljaitü (1293-1307). See *Geschichte des Buddhismus in der Mongolei* (of Hjigs-med-nam-mkhañ) transl. Huth II.161, 162. See Pelliot, *Les systèmes d'écriture en usage chez les anciens Mongols*, *Asia Major* 1925:287.

just afterwards, is opposite to Sakang, visible even now from the road (1). Las-stod or Las-stod-dkon-mchog-mkhar, a monastery about which we often read also in the chronicles of Gnas-rñin, stood on the castle that overhangs the celebrated place; even today its ruins can be seen. In it was preserved a painting on cloth which represented Ye-śes-mgon; Maitripā was depicted with the blood of his nose (*śaṅs ḥtshal*). The author of the Myaṅ-chuṅ goes to Nenyng (Gnas-rñin) about which will speak at length later on.

Beyond Gnas-rñin, in the valley of the river, another place worth mention is Pas-khu where should have been born A-lce-snaṅ-gsal: in the maps it appears under the name of Pen-choka. Then comes Lcaṅ-ra(2) (Changra of the maps, *ibid.*134), a region belonging to Rgya Ḥjam-dpal-gsaṅ-ba in ancient times, and then donated (*ibid.*136) to the grandfather of Rab-brtan-kun-bzaṅ-ḥphags-pa by the emperor of Hor, that is by the Mongol dynasty. Evidently the cession of this feud should have been done by the Sa-skyapa abbots who dominated Tibet at that time but having themselves in their own turn received the investiture from the Mongolian kings, every privilege to their vassals had to be conceded in their name. Then Changra was ceded by that prince as dowry to the wife Padma daughter of sku-zhaṅ or a-zhaṅ of Zha-lu.

In this region the Indian paṇḍita Śāriputrapāda (3) stayed for some time who was invited to China by the emperor (*ibid.*

(1) Perhaps Langgnin.

(2) But on p.92a: *lcags-ra*. See fig.396, 397.

(3) Perhaps identical with Śāriputra. Śāriputra-svāmin author of Chinamuṅḍā-vajrayoginī-sādhana (Bstan-ḥgyur, Rgyud, LXXIV.3 and Ugra-tārā-pūjā-vidhi (*ibid.*LXXXII.25).

p. 79, 138) and seems to be a contemporary of Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa.

To the north of Lcañ-ra two gompas can be pointed out, that of Śeu near Gañs and that of Gañs-ro in Gañs.

One arrives at Rtse-chen (Tsechen) called also Śam-bu-rtse-dgu; it is a rocky hill that blocks to the north the valley of Gyantse and on which stand the ruins of a castle and of temples: the tradition attributes its foundation to king Gri-gum-btsan, one of the mythical kings of Tibet. The temple of Tsechen was founded by Ḥphags-pa-dpal-bzañ-po; according to our chronicles, on the occasion of the trip that Kar-ma ba-kṣi undertook to China, he made known his desire to construct a new temple to emperor Tho-gan ti-mur (Togon Temür 1333-1370). Since he gave the authorisation, Ḥphags-pa-dpal-bzañ-po, when he was 48 years old, began to erect the temple and the monastery. It hosted the celebrated Kun-dgaḥ-blo-gros (ibid.141f.) an immediate incarnation of Bu-ston. It contained, among many other valuables, a statue of Tārā/Sgrol-ma made by Paṇ-chen Śākyaśrī, earlier preserved in the gompa of Ḥbri-mtshams.

These temples are now destroyed, but the Myañ-chuñ contains their accurate description.

Then one goes to Ḥbron-rtse (ibid.148 pronounced Drongtse) a place known for the noble figure of a learned and realised abbot who helped Chandra Das during his exploratory trip to Tibet, but was cruelly punished by the authorities of Lhasa (1) for this enlightened condescension towards a stranger. One of its temples was constructed by Ḥbron-rtse

(1) On his death see Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, chapter 1. Drongtse is not marked on the map, but corresponds more or less to the place called therein Sangge, Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa* transcribes Dongtse.

Lha-btsun belonging says the tradition, to the royal family of Tibet.

In its vicinity the gompa of Lha-do, called also of Sbas-luñ, should have been founded by Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan (ibid.152), but reconstructed by an abbot of Gnas-rñiñ, Chos-rin-chen.

Then follows Khañ-mar always on the left side of the river, to the north of Drongtse, which the tradition identifies with the convent of the same name founded by Sgri-riñs-ljoñs-btsan minister of Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po (ibid.152b).

§18. *Nāñ-bar*. The Myañ-chuñ then goes on to describe another famous place Rtsis-gnas-gsar (1) (ibid.153a) which is to the north of Drongtse and comprises various temples. Besides the Mgon-khañ, the main chapels are two: one to the east and the other to the west. The one to the east should have been erected by Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan; at the times of the author of Myañ-chuñ it was also called Hor-phigs (2) but today is generally known by the name of Yum-chen-moñi lha-khañ from the image of the goddess that it contains and it should have been consecrated by Padmasambhava. The other to the west was founded by Khri-ral-pa-can and is called Rtsis-gnas-gsar namely “ Gnas-gsar where was counted (3)”, because in this

(1) Bacot, *Vie de Mar-pa*, p.8 translates erroneously *Rcis le Neuf*.

(2) But in the two manuscripts erroneously: *phig*. The other chapel is called *rgya phigs*; *phigs* means, as is known, pinnacle . *rgya-phigs* = pinnacle in Chinese style, *hor-phigs* = pinnacle in Mongol style. In the *Rgyal-rabs gsal-baḥi me-loñ* p.135 of my manuscript, is found instead the form *rgya-phugs*: *phigs* or *phugs*, at any rate, belong to the same root; compare *phibs* = dome.

(3) Also Gnas-rñiñ is called rtsis Gnas-rñiñ because the same account has been done there for the temple ordered to be constructed by Khri-ral-pa-can (see eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ p.3a). Very probably however we are faced by a learned etymology: *rtsis* is also the name of the valley near Gnas-gsar.

chapel should have taken place the count of the 1008 temples constructed by the same king, also known by the name of *rgya-phigs*. The main statue represents Vairocana/Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad, surrounded by acolytes who constitute the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, according to the system of the Kosalāṅkāra.

As important places after Dongtse and all in the village of Drojung (ibid.161) are mentioned Rgya-mkhar-luñ (1), Skyin-mkhar-luñ (that on p.158 is called skyil-mkhar in both manuscripts and on p.163 skyi-mkhar in both manuscripts) and Mag-dge-ldiñ. On the plane, A-rmo-ḥdul-chuñ (2) corresponds to Drojung Dzong of the maps; in its vicinity are pointed out four gompa, attributed to the most ancient period of the propagation of the faith. To the south Sbre lha-khañ, to the west Rkyañ-ḥdur lha-khañ, to the north Sa-skya lha-khañ, to the east Sbre lha-khañ (p.162b) (3); at Skyin-ldiñ and at Hgur-ldiñ (ibid.166b), two nearby places; lorded over by the family of Lha-rje-rgya-nag; Mag-lde-ldiñ in the valley of Drojung whose foundation, as seen above, was attributed to Ral-pa-can, on p.167, it said to have been constructed by Chos-sku-ḥod-zer, who in the Lamaist tradition is generally considered as an incarnation of Śākyaśrī. This monastery was also known by the name of Rdo-rje-gdan. A gompa was founded, on the invitation of Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa, by Pañ-chen Lhañi-dbañ-po: it was a custom of

(1) Sometimes the two manuscripts read Rgyal-mkhar: but Rgya-mkhar seems to be preferable, also because this spelling is found in the inscriptions of Gyantse.

(2) But sometimes also Ḥdul-byuñ.

(3) Thus it should have been Sbre lha-khañ, if the text is not erroneous: the first Sbre lha-khañ is also called Śbre-gdoñ-thañ dgañ-ldan lha-khañ: this perhaps corresponds to Dgañ-ldan lha-khañ, a small hermitage on the left side of the river, before reaching the valley of Drojung, coming from Gyantse. Sbre perhaps for Ḥbre on which see above p.53 n.2.

the princes of Gyantse to visit it every year.

Around Rgya-mkhar stood a temple called Ba-ḥug lha-khañ, Bhadu of the maps, constructed at the time of Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po. The gompa of Rkyañ-hdur, which was in its vicinity, was the seat of many celebrated lamas like Chos-sku-ḥod-zer (ibid.170). From this place begins Ñañ-smad i.e. Lower Ñañ.

§19. *The temples of Ñañ-smad.* More to the north, on the left bank of the river, there is Nor-khyuñ-stag-ro. Leaving aside minor places one reaches Cog-ro, Choroshika of the maps (ibid.174). That this Cog-ro, out of the three that are found in Tibet namely in Dbus, in Dbus, in Śaṅs and in Ñañ, is the birth place of the great lotsava Kluḥi-rgyal-mtshan (1) is given for certain by the author of the Myañ-chuñ and is admitted by everybody in these parts. Before Cogro is Nor-buḥi-khyuñ-rtse, in whose vicinity was a temple that went back to the early times of the propagation of the faith.

Then one comes back and goes to the other side of the river, where is Stag-rtse, Takse of the maps; in its territory was a locality called Stag-tshal where stood a castle known by the name of Mon-ḥgro. In it lived the Smon-gro lotsava, Mar-pa Rdo-rje-ye. At Stag-tshal and precisely in a village called Stag-tshal-yol-lcags were born the three Yol, Yol-ston-chen-po Chos-dbañ, Yol Drañ-sroñ, and Yol Thog-ḥbebs. Not very far there is gompa of Man-luñ, in the valley of the same name to the east of Stag-rtse, where Drañ-ston Mthaḥ-bral carried out the major part of his activities of a scholar and of a preacher;

(1) In the colophons of other works translated by him the spelling oscillates between Cog-gru, Lcog-ro, Cog-ro. On the following monasteries and their schools see Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism*, p.208.

then comes Brag-dmar to the south of the village of Rin-chen-sgañ, and that too goes back to the first propagation of the faith.

After a few hundred metres to the NE of Stag-rtse there is Nān-ḥtsho lha-khañ founded by Khri-ral-pa-can (ibid.181a); in this place Atīśa should have held a council. Out of the other convents in its vicinity is recorded Lhag-chuñ, about which the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ speaks and which should have been constructed by Ral-pa-can after having brought to a conclusion the 1008 temples he had projected (2). Only a few ruins of Lhag-chuñ exist near the village of Rin-chen-sgañ, almost at the entrance of the valley of Spos-khañ. Not far was the Bonpo gompa called G.yuñ-druñ ñi-śar where were transmitted the systems of Bon-bzhi-khyuñ-nag, the celebrated Bonpo master. Then follows Se-brag-gyah-luñ (ibid.188ff.), where Bu-ston passed some time of his very active life: it stood on the right bank of the river, below the present hermitage of Se-ra-sgrub-sde, on the rocky boulder to the NE of Gnas-gsar.

Then are recorded Chos-ldiñ in the vicinity of Pa-snam-zhol-po (Pennangshopu of the map), and on the right of the river (190b) Bsam-ldiñ; immediately after Pa-snam, where the popular tradition has localised some episodes of the life of Gesar. In it lived Pa-tshab Lotsava Tshul-khrims-rgyal-po and Rdo-rje-bdud-ḥjom known also as the two Pa-snam-pa (3). Pa-tshab Penam is on the left of the river, opposite Dgaḥ-sdon, in the map Gadong (ibid.204), a of Central Tibet:

(1) Disciple of Mdo-sde of Rñog. See *Chos-ḥbyuñ bstan-paḥi padma rgyas ñin-byed* of Pad-ma-dkar-po, p.140a.

(2) In this case too are we faced by a learned etymology? *Lhag* means remnant.

(3) In its vicinity, in the place called Rta-ra, the author of the *Myan-chuñ* erroneously puts the council called by *Rtse-lde*. See above p.55.

monastery specially famous for the study of the Guhyasamāja and later of the section of the canon containing the monastic rules (vinaya): it was the place for a major part of the activities of Pa-tshab Lotsava Śīladhvaja (1) who translated many works here together with Sañs-rgyas-gsañ-ba; afterwards stayed here the lotsava of Steñ, Tshul-khrims-ḥbyuñ-gnas, who spread the teachings received in India (ibid.210). In it was kept a statue of Maitreya/Byams-pa, made of pure bronze in eastern India. Then is mentioned Thar-pa-gliñ, founded by the lotsava of Dpyal, Chos-bzañ (ibid.218) and enlarged by his disciple Pad-ma-can, who had a new chapel constructed and consecrated statues of Byañ-chub-chen-po, whose halo had been brought from Nepal. Thar-pa is a few miles to the south of Zha-lu.

The monastery was important in the history of Tibetan Buddhism as a great centre of culture: Bu-ston too stayed here for a long time. Decayed and destroyed, it was reconstructed by Kar-ma-bstan-skyoñ (ibid.224b).

The temple of Gur-mo, ancient bazar of the region, in the homonymous village between Penam and Zha-lu, was founded by Lce (2) Lha-bzañ-grags minister of Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan (ibid.225) and was visited by Śākyaśrī; is destroyed today.

One arrives at Rgyan-goñ founded by Lo-ston Rdo-rje-dbañ-phyug (3), a few hundred metres from Zha-lu and then Zha-lu or Zhva-lu, one of the most celebrated places

(1) For the works of these lotsavas see the *Répertoire* by Mlle.Lalou, s.v.

(2) Born in a family that gave some ministers, Nan-blon, to the kings of Tibet under Sroñ-btsan, Khri-sroñ and Sad-na-legs (248b) and then several lotsavas. On this monastery see Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism*, p.203.

(3) See Bu-ston, ibid., p.205.

because here lived and wrote a great part of his works one of the greatest figures of Tibetan Buddhism namely Bu-ston rin-po-che. From this monastery the school of Bu-ston took its name by which it is known till today: namely that of Zha-lu-pa.

One of its main temples is the (Zha-lu) Gser-khañ, around which many chapels were constructed: the gtsañ-khañ called Mdañ-ḥbum which goes back to the time of Lo-ston and of his administrator (ñe-gnas) Lce-btsun Śes-rab-ḥbyuñ-gnas, who went to Bodhgayā and became a disciple of Abhayākaragupta, on return to Tibet brought with him a statue of Khasarpaṇa later deposited at Zha-lu. This statue is considered to be the main image of Zha-lu. In another chapel, that to the south, was venerated a statue of Mahākāruṇika/Thugs-rje-chen-po, tutelary divinity of Paṇḍita Smṛti.

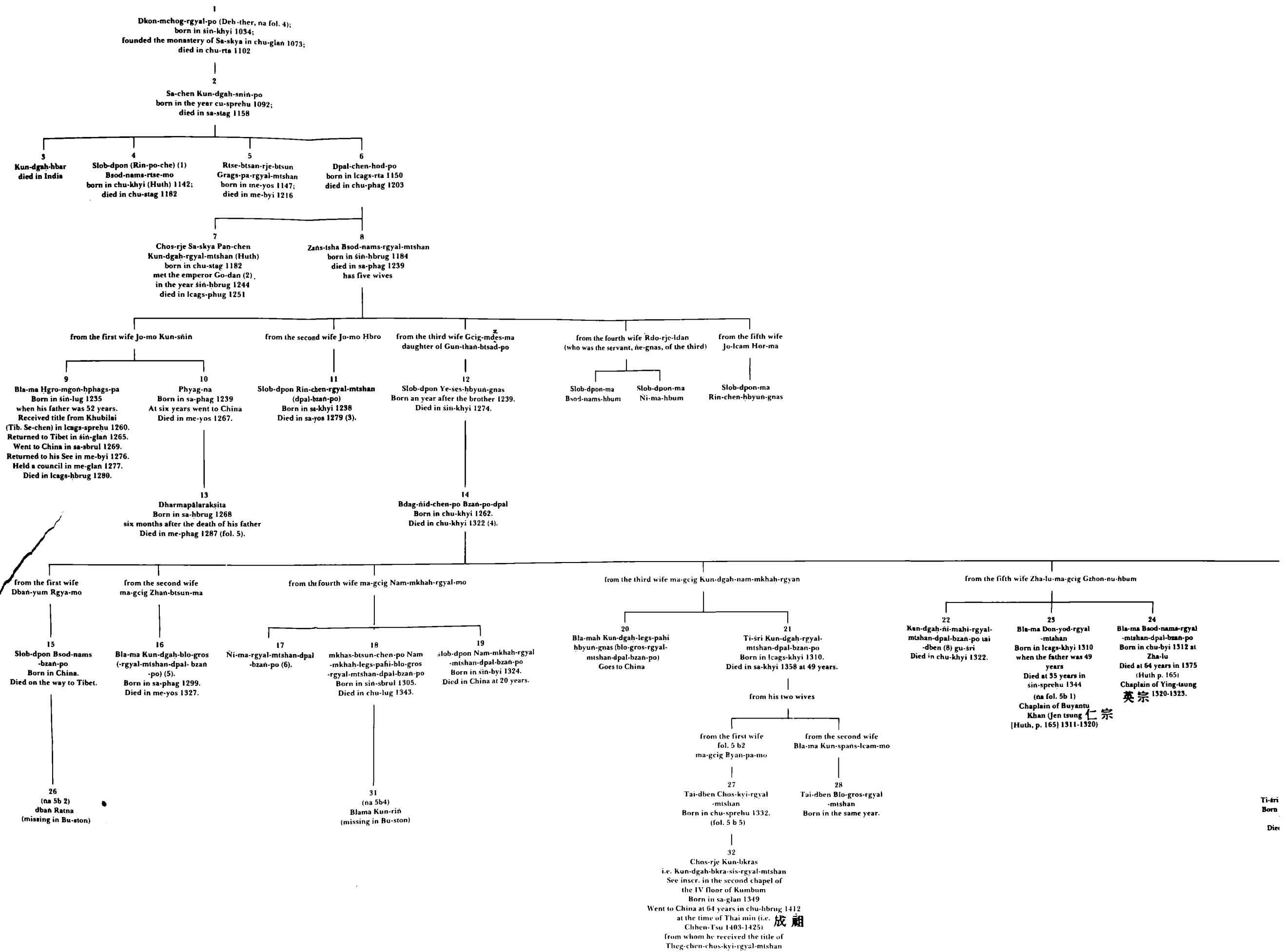
The place, as I have said above, belonged from ancient times to the family of Lce, which became even more powerful, when two daughters of Lce A-mes-chen-po Sañs-rgyas-ye-śes were married to the great abbot Sa-skya Ḥgro-mgon Phyag-na and his son Dharmapāla-rakṣita; it was after this relationship that the title of A-mes was changed to that of Sku-zhañ.

The temple was completely re-built and embellished by order of Sku-zhañ Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, according to the advice of Bu-ston: for that occasion he brought Mongolian and Chinese artists (ibid.257) (1).

(1) Bu-ston dictated the inscriptions of this chapel, later collected in a chapter of his work already quoted above, vol.TSA: *Zha-luḥi gtsug-lag-khañ-gi gzhal-yas-khañ nub-na byan-ma śar-ma lho-ma-rnams-na bzhugs-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor sogs-kyi dkar-chag.*

One of the most important temples out of the many that are admired at Zha-lu, is the Bstan-ḥgyur lha-khañ in which are found the texts which after an accurate revision, Bu-ston compiled in the collection called Bstan-ḥgyur and it was the first exact redaction due just to the great doctor of Zha-lu.

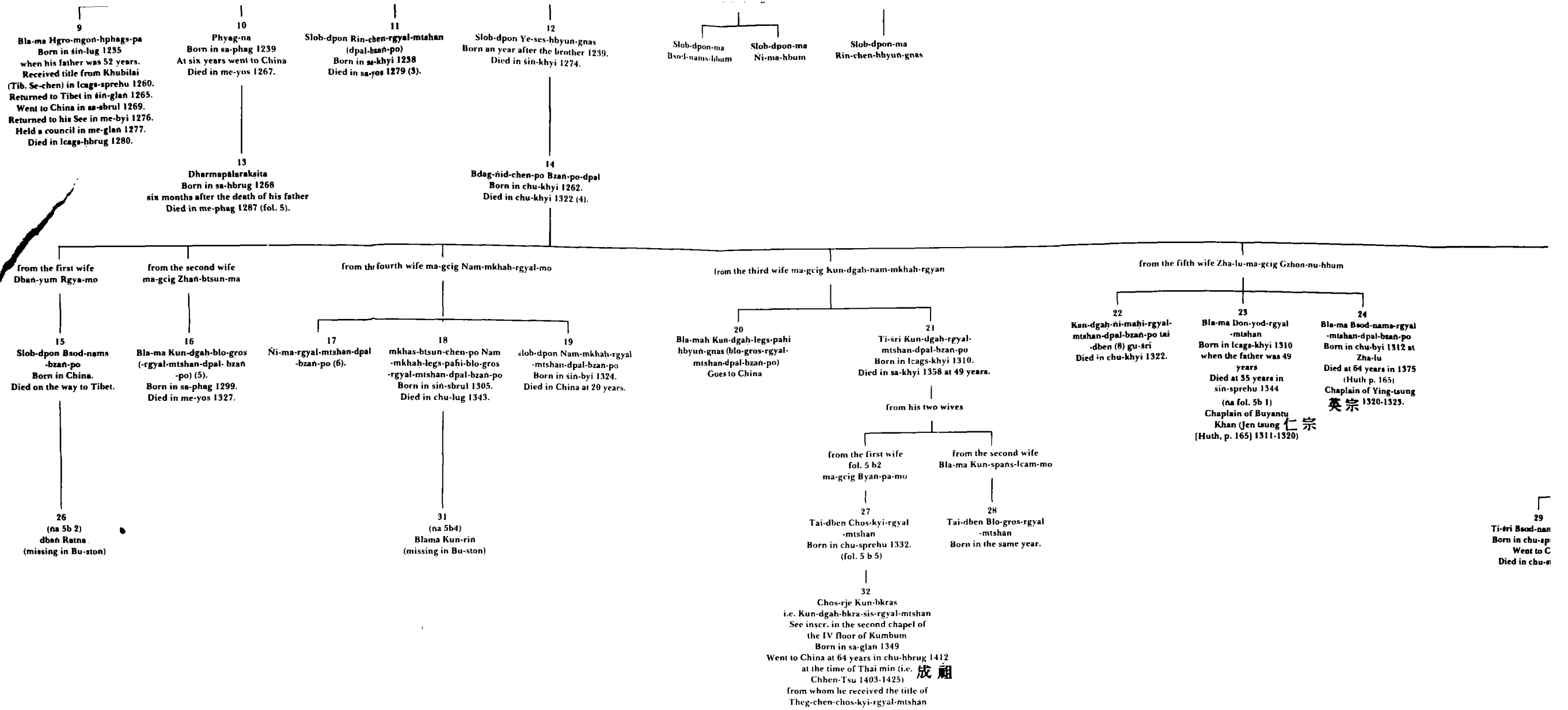
The author of the Myañ-chuñ passes on to Bsam-sgrub-rtse, near the Sgrol-ma-ri, on which is built Tashilhumpo (273, 323a) and which originally belonged to Rñiñ-ma and Bkaḥ-rgyud-pa. Here ends his geographical description of this part of central Tibet, full of legends and digressions, but undoubtedly in its entirety, one of the richest sources of information on the historical and religious vicissitudes of such an important part for the political and spiritual life of Tibet.



(1) The elements of the names in brackets are missing in the Deb-ther, but are found in Bu-ston.
(2) In Huth p. 133, year : me-rta 1246. About the Lama see Pelliot, Les systèmes d'écriture en usage chez les anciens Mongols, Asia Major 1925: 284.

The children of Nam-mkhah-legs-pa (no. 18) were:

The descendants of Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (no. 23)



(1) The elements of the names in brackets are missing in the Deb-ther, but are found in Bu-ston.
(2) In Huth p. 133, year : me-rtu 1246. About the Lama see Pelliot, Les'systèmes d'écriture en usage chez les anciens Mongols, Asia Major 1925:284.

(3) His sister from the same mother was Slob-dpon-ma Mde-sde.
(4) According to the Deb-ther, na5, he had twelve children : Bu-ston 2b4 speaks of thirteen children, but enumerates only twelve.
(5) According to the fifth Dalai Lama, op.cit, p.58b he is the son of Kun-dgah-hbum.
(6) According to the Deb-ther, which does not give his name, he died young.
(7) In the text 15 it is expressly said that he is born after the death of the father, but having been an entire year of interval, one cannot

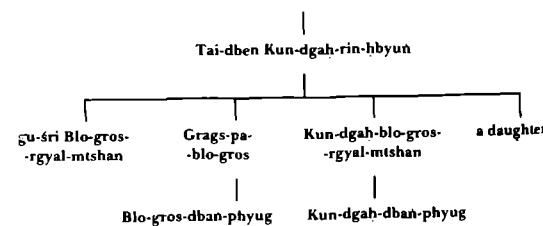
understand the attribution of his paternity.
(8) Tai-dben or Ta-dben of Tibetan corresponds to the Chinese Ta Yuan 大元 ; in fact we know from Gzhon-nu-dpal p.26b in his list of Mongolian kings, that this dynasty is called in Tibetan hor and in Khams : tai dben; hor-gyi rgyal-khams-la tai-dben zer zhes-pa.

(9) He had a sister : Slob-dpon Kun-dgah-hbum with whom ends the list of Bu-ston.
As I have said above there are notable discrepancies between the list of the fifth Dalai Lama and those reproduced above especially regarding the sons of Bdag-chen Bzan-po-dpal and also in the number of wives which excluding the one that he already had in China, are counted as seven, all married in Tibet (thus in this case it is in accord with the Myan-chun 254b).

From a wife perhaps Chinese or married in China he had Bsod-nams-bzan-po (no. 15) who died young.
From the first wife Kun-dgah-hbum he had : Kun-dgah-blo-gros (no. 16).
From the second wife ma-gcig Yon-bdag-mo he had : the eldest son who died as an infant, Kun-dgah-legs-hbyun (no. 20),
Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 21).

From the third wife ma-gcig Nam-mkhah-rgyal-ma he had : Nam-mkhah-bhes-gnen, Nam-mkhah-legs-pa (no. 18) and
Nam-mkhah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 19).

The children of Nam-mkhah-legs-pa (no. 18) were:



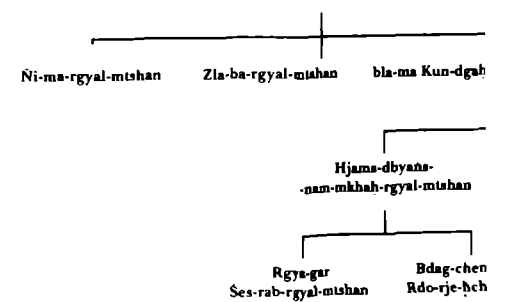
From the fourth wife ma-gcig Gzhon-nu-hbum he had : Kun-dgah-ni-ma (no. 22), Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (no. 23), Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan-dpal (no. 24), Kun-dgah-legs-rgyal (no. 25) (11).

From the fifth wife ma-gcig Ni-ma-rin-chen he had : Ni-ma-dpal, Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 21).

From the sixth wife Kun-spans-icam-mo (13) he had : Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan.

From the seventh wife Khan-gsar-dpon-mo he had : Bsod-nams-blo-gros, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.

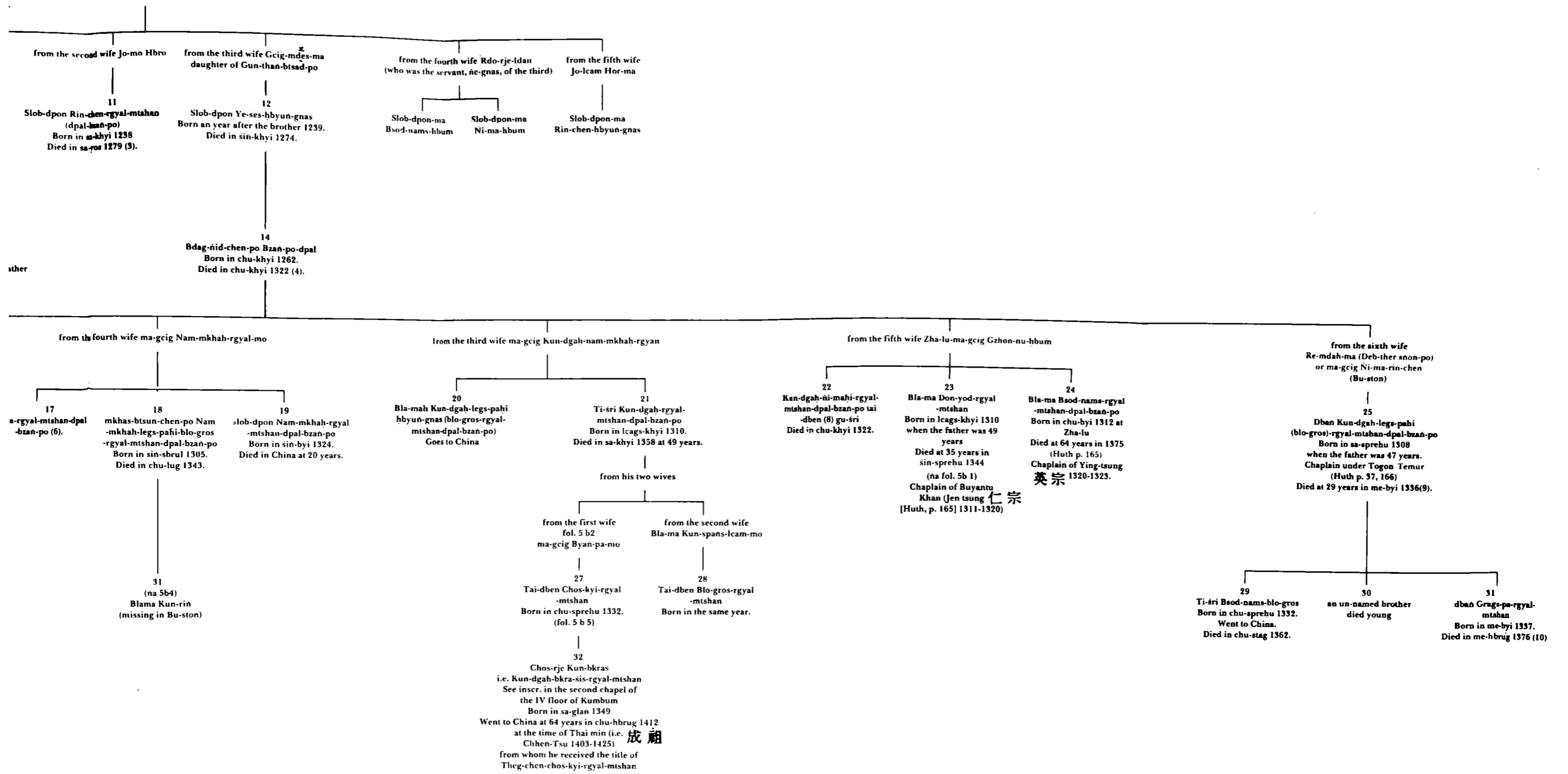
The descendants of Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (no. 23) were :



Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 21) had two sons : Tai-dben Ch
(10) The text says that he died at 44, but this is perhaps a mistake
(11) This is contradicted by Bu-ston who mentions only a son an
(12) He is 公哥監藏巴藏卜 Kung ko kien t

with the Tibetan monk 答力麻八刺 Ta li mi pa la/Dh
1374. see Ming shi, ch. 30 p. 2

(13) But according to the Deb-ther, she is the wife of Kun-dgah-



Deb-ther, but are found in Bu-ston.
 Elliot, Les systèmes d'écriture en usage chez les anciens Mongols, Asia Major

1e.
 Bu-ston 2b4 speaks of thirteen children, but enumerates only twelve.
 son of Kun-dgah-hbum.
 he died young.
 death of the father, but having been an entire year of interval, one cannot

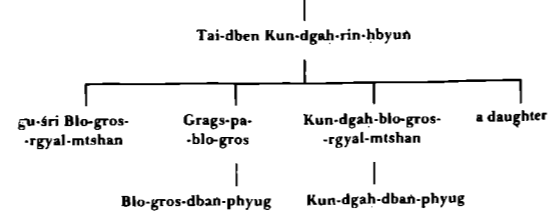
大元 大元 in fact we know from Gzhon-nu-dpal p.26b in his list of
 Khams: tai dben; hor-gyi rgyal-khams-la tai-dben zer zhes-pa.

adds the list of Bu-ston.
 then the list of the fifth Dalai Lama and those reproduced above especially
 number of wives which excluding the one that he already had in China, are
 is in accord with the Myan-chun 254b).

Bsod-nams-bzan-po (no. 15) who died young.
 Blo-gros (no. 16).
 eldest son who died as an infant, Kun-dgah-legs-hbyun (no. 20).

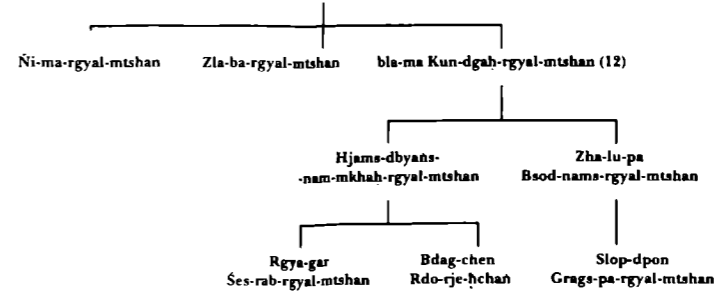
1: Nam-mkhah-btsun-gñen, Nam-mkhah-legs-pa (no. 18) and

The children of Nam-mkhah-legs-pa (no. 18) were:



From the fourth wife ma-gcig Gzhon-nu-hbum he had: Kun-dgah-ni-ma (no. 22), Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (no. 23), Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan-dpal (no. 24), Kun-dgah-legs-rgyal (no. 25) (11).
 From the fifth wife ma-gcig Ni-ma-rin-chen he had: Ni-ma-dpal, Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 21).
 From the sixth wife Kun-spans-lcam-mo (13) he had: Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan.
 From the seventh wife Khan-gsar-dpon-mo he had: Bsod-nams-blo-gros, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.

The descendants of Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (no. 23) were:



Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan (no. 21) had two sons: Tai-dben Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan and Tai-dben Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan.
 (10) The text says that he died at 44, but this is perhaps a mistake for 41.
 (11) This is contradicted by Bu-ston who mentions only a son and a daughter from this wife.
 (12) He is 公哥監藏巴藏卜 Kung ko kien ts'an pa tsan pu descendant of Pa si pa (Hphags-pa), Ti-se of Yuan, who together with the Tibetan monk 塔力麻八刺 Ta li mi pa la/Dharmapala sent envoys to the Ming court in the seventh year of Hung-wu 洪武 1374, see Ming shi, ch. 30 p. 2
 (13) But according to the Deb-ther, she is the wife of Kun-dgah-rgyal-mtshan: that the fifth Dalai Lama is mistaken is demonstrated by the

CHAPTER IV

CHRONOLOGY OF THE MONUMENTS AND SPECIALLY THAT OF THE KUMBUM

§20. *Chronology of the Sa-skya abbots.* Is there a possibility to determine with some degree of approximation the time which can be assigned to the Kumbum and to the bigger temple of the Dpal-ḥkhor chos-sde of Gyantse? In other words, are we in a position to know when Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa lived, the person under whose government or by whose initiative these edifices were constructed?

To answer these questions we have first of all to reconstruct the hierarchy of the great Lamas of Sa-skya and try to determine their chronology within the limits allowed by uncertainty. We need to go into the lineage of Sa-skya Lamas because for a long time the region we are describing was under the dependance of the Sa-skya abbots; even its princes got invested of their territories through the same Sa-skya monks. This task is possible because -- although the chronicles of Sa-skya monastery are not yet accessible to me (1) -- the Deb-ther-sñon-po has conserved a schematic but very useful list where the year of birth and death of each Lama is reported according to the

(1) During my travel in 1939 I found these chronicles of Sa-skya. They will be the object of a detailed study in a future work.

sexagenary cycle. Some such dates are already known, as that of the foundation of the Sa-skya monastery (1073), of the birth of Kun-dgaḥ-sñin-po (1092), of the death of the Sa-chen (1158) and that of the birth of the Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182). These in fact are in the Vaidūrya-dkar-po and were published by Csoma de Kőrös (1).

The control on the Chinese sources is possible in some cases and this allows us to verify the exactitude of the dates established with the help of Tibetan sources.

We know from the *Fo tsu li tai tun tsai* 佛祖歷代通載 ch.21 (Nanjo 1637, Taisho vol.49 p.707) that Sa-skya Hphags-pa passed away on the 22nd day of the 11th month of the 17th year of the Chih Yüan 至元 era, namely in 1280 (2), as in the Tibetan sources. The only difference concerns the year of birth since according to the Chinese source he died at 42, he would have been born in 1239 (3) instead of 1235 as stated by the Deb-ther. Besides this, other correspondences make clear that for the Chinese the date of his birth was the year 1239. For instance, he received from the emperor the title of 國師 Kuo-še (4) (rendered regularly by the Tibetans as Gu-śri) when he was

(1) I inform that the dates of Csoma have always to be lowered by two years.

(2) As already stated by Pelliot, *Les systèmes d'écriture en usage chez les anciens Mongols*, *Asia Major* 1925:287.

(3) The count is made according to the Chinese system, namely including also the year from which one starts counting. Compare 郭氏稽古略續集 *Se še ki ku liö siu tsi* by Huan Lun, Taisho vol.49 p.906.

(4) See Pelliot, *Les Kouo che ou maitres du Royaume dans le Bouddhisme chinois*, *T'oung Pao* 1911: 671

bit 22 years old, namely in the first year of the Chun-thun era, 中統(1260), and this leads us to the same date of birth.

The same Chinese source points out that in the 4th year Thai-tin 泰定 1327 (op. cit. p.734) Kuñ-ko-lo 公哥羅 died. He is the same as 公哥羅古羅思監藏班藏卜 Kuñ-ko-lo-ku-lo-si-ts' an-pan-tsañ (1)-pu, namely Kun-dgaḥ-blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po (no.16 of my list) and it is said of him that (p.730) already in the third year of the Yen-yu era 延祐 (1316) he had received the title of 帝師 Ti-še “master of the emperor”, a title that the Tibetans regularly rendered as Ti-śri (2).

On the other hand Kuñ-ko-lo-chuñ-na-si-kien-ts'an-pan-tsañ-pu 公哥羅亦中納思監藏班藏卜(3) namely Kun-dgaḥ-bloḥi-ḥbyuñ-gnas-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po, nominated Ti-še in the fifth year of the T'ai-tin era (Fo tsu li tai t'un tsai, p.734), i.e. in the year 1328, is possibly the same as Bla-ma Kun-dgaḥ-legs-paḥi byuñ-gnas-blo-gros-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po (no.20 of my list) about whom the Tibetan sources tell us only that he went to China. In such a case, namely if he is not another lama not mentioned in the Tibetan sources, he should then be identified with the 衞噶伊實巴綱喇實嘉勒擦巴勒藏布

(1) This character has two pronunciations: *tsann* & *ts'ann*, but as it can be seen in the present transcription it is used here both for *mtshan* (*tshan*) and for *bzañ* (*tsaṅ*). From the transcription it seems that in those times the *s* of *blo-gros* (today pronounced as *lotrö*) was pronounced.

(2) In the Śe-še-ki-ku-liu-siu-tsi, *ibid.* p.911, his name is Kun-ko-lo-pan-tsañ-po: Kun-dgaḥ-blo-dpal-bzañ-po, as on p.913. In the Tibetan transcription of the Chinese titles Kuo-še and Ti-še, Gu-śri and Ti-śri, the second syllable is because of contamination with the Sanskrit śrī.

(3) It is the same as 公哥卜 Kuñ-ko-pu mentioned by the Śe-še-ki-ku-liu-siu-tsi p.913 and elected after the death of no.16.

Kun-ko-i-si-pa-kiuñ-la-si-kia-le-ts'an-pa-le-tsañ-pu, and his name, inserted in the glosses of the 30 chapter, p.10 of the Yüan-shi 元史 (公哥列思巴沖納思監藏班藏卜 Kun-ko-lie-si-pa-ch'uñ-na-si-kien-ts'an-pan-tsañ-pu) reproduces the Tibetan exactly. In the Yüan-shi it is said that in the fourth year of T'ai-tiñ 1327 he was nominated Ti-še by T'ai Tiñ-ti (1). This would mean that when in the same year Kun-dgañ-blo-gros (no.16) died, the title of Ti-še was given to his brother, of a different mother, Kun-dgañ-legs-ḥbyuñ-gnas-blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po (2).

Thus, also the Suo-no-mu-tsañ-pu 索諾木藏布 (唆南藏卜 Suanan-tsañ-pu) referred to in the Yüan-shi (ch.27 p.15 col.17) corresponds to (Kun-dgañ-)bsod-nams-bzañ-po (no.15 in my list), who died during his trip to Tibet.

Following in an ascendant line the series of Sa-skyapa Lamas, it does not seem to me that there is any doubt that the 藏布班巴兩 (藏不班入) Tsañ-pu-pan-pa-lian (Tsañ-pu-pan-pa) mentioned by the Yüan-shi in the first year of the Huan-ch'ün era 皇慶 1312 in order to mention his nomination as Ti-še corresponds to no.14 of my list: that is to say, Bzañ-po-dpal. 公哥兒監藏班藏卜 Kun-ko-eul-kien-ts'an-pan-tsañ-pu, to whom Togon Temür (Shun-ti) confers the same title of Ti-še in 1333 (see Fo tsu li tai t'uñ tsai, *ibid.* p.736) and of whom there is an edition published by Chavannes (3), cannot be no.21 of my list Kun-dgañ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po.

(1) Then if the person is, as it seems, the same, the difference is of one year.

(2) 年扎克策喇實 Nien-cha-k'o-ch'e-la-si named under the year 1330, first year of the Chih-Sun era 至順 in ch.33 p.16 of the same Yüan-shi, because elected Ti-še, is perhaps Nam-mkhañ-legs.

(3) Inscriptions et pièces de Chancellerie Chinoises, *T'oung Pao* 1904:442. Compare Še-še-ki-ku-lio-siu-tsi etc. p.914.

On the other side, 綽理哲瓦 C'o-li-c'o-wa whom Khubilai wanted to have near him, since he had heard about his great fame, and whom he sent to Godan (Fo tsu li tai t'un tsai p.725), although without any result because he had already entered nirvāṇa, he cannot but be Sa-skya Paṅ-chen. He in fact, as we know from Tibetan sources, had gone to Godan in 1244. But as it is said that C'o-li-c'o-wa was the uncle of Hphags-pa, C'o-li-c'o-wa cannot but be the Chinese transcription of Chos-rje-ba (1).

It is possible therefore to reconstruct a list and a chronology, which the Tibetan historians must have taken from the very chronicles of the Sa-skya monastery. The cyclical years given by the Deb-ther are easily checked because normally in each case the age of the deceased abbot is given. The list has then been compared with the Sa-skya genealogy composed by Bu-ston (2). This genealogy has the great advantage to have been written by a contemporary who, living as he was at Zha-lu near the princes related to the Sa-skya, surely had the opportunity to collect precise data. Some other complementary information can be found in the history of the Mongols by H̄jigs-med-nam-mkhaḥ translated by Huth (3), in Sum-pa mkhan-po, and in a work very important for Tibetan history, namely *Bstan-paḥi sbyin-bdag byuṅ-tshul-gyi-min-gi grans* by Kloṅ-rdol bla-ma (complete works, HA fol 12b). Besides, last

(1) The regular form is *Chos-rje-bo...*; pa, ba: but as it is seen from the inscriptions and from texts of this time, *palba* were often used where now they are not: *bzan-po-pa*, *rgyal-mtshan-pa*, etc.

(2) *Sa-skyaḥi gdun-rabs*, complete works, vol.SA.

(3) *Geschichte des Buddhismus in der Mongolei*, 2 vols, Strasburg 1892. The dates in the translation of this text are generally mistaken by a year. Cf.P. Pelliot, Le cycle sexagénaire dans la chronologie Tibétaine, *Journal Asiatique* 1913: 655.

but not least there is the *Rgyal-rabs* of the fifth Dalai Lama (1), which however, as it will be my concern to point out later, shows some divergences from the lists of Bu-ston and of Gzhon-nu-dpal. But in both cases we cannot follow him, because on one side, Bu-ston was contemporary to those sons of the Bdag-ñid-chen-po Bzañ-po-dpal, about whom there are divergences in the book of the fifth Lama; and on the other, Gzhon-nu-dpal is so well informed and so exact that his authority gives more weight, if at all it would be necessary, to the data given by Bu-ston. In any case the work of the fifth Dalai Lama, although first rate for the study of Tibetan history, sometimes appears to be less authentic than the Deb-ther and surely influenced more than this work by its literary motifs.

§21. *The princes of Zha-lu and of Gyantse.* The other coordinate that we will use to fix some definite chronological points is represented by the genealogies of the princes of Zha-lu. They were related both with the Sa-skya, and with the family in which the Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ñphags-pa was born. They are usually designated by the title of *sku-zhañ*, which they received from the Chinese emperors.

The list reconstructed by me is taken from the Myañ-chuñ (fol.253).

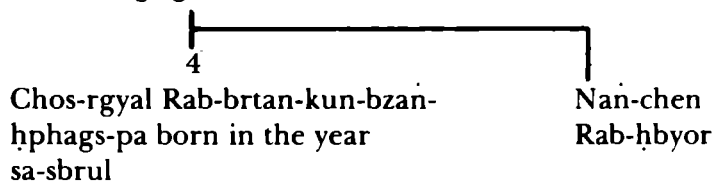
(1) *Gaṅs-can-yul-gyi sa-la spyod-paḥi mtho-ris-kyi rgyal blon gtso-bo brjod-paḥi deb-ther rdzogs-ldan gzhon-nuḥi dgah-ston dpyid-kyi rgyal-moḥi glu-dbyaṅs*, complete works, DZA.

Following the indications given in the Myaⁿ-chuⁿ, the genealogy of the Chos-rgyal of Gyantse of the families which we have to determine now, can be reconstructed as follows.

1	2	3
Nan-chen Hphags-pa-dpal (his mother was called ma-gcig Lha-mo, see Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama, p.100). In the year <i>šin-sbrul</i> he founded the palace of Gyantse, at the age of 33 he married Pad-ma-nor-bskal.	Nan-chen Hphags-pa-rin-chen, his brother	Ma-zans-dar-po (Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama p.100).

↓
3

Bdag-po-chen Kun-dga^h-hphags-pa (his mother was called ma-gcig Dpal-mo *ibid.*p.100), at the age of 34 in the year *lcags-rta* he built the temple of Gyantse, married Byan-sems-bzan-mo-dpal also called Yum-ma-gcig Bzan-mo (1).



We know therefore from the same source (136b) that Hphags-pa-rin-chen, brother of the Nan-chen Hphags-pa-dpal, invited Bu-ston at Lcaⁿ-ra (Changra of the maps) whose administrator (*gñer-pa*) he was named by his brother.

On the other hand, the Myaⁿ-chuⁿ lets us know that the wife of Nan-chen Hphags-pa-dpal, whom he married when 33 years old, was Pad-ma-nor-bskal, daughter of the sku-zhaⁿ of Zha-lu Kun-dga^h-don-grub (no.15 of the preceding list). She, as known by the guide and description dictated by Bu-ston, had the temple of Zha-lu built. Now always according to the same source, Bu-ston arrived at Zha-lu at the age of 31, that is to say in the year 1320, since he had been born in 1290 (2), during the reign of the prince Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan. His

(1) Often mentioned in the inscriptions of the Sku-*h*-bum.

(2) In the year *lcags-stag*. Besides the chronology published by Csoma de Körös also see the biography by Bu-ston *Chos-rje thams-cad-mkhyen-pa Bu-ston-*

younger sister is married to Bdag-ñid-chen-po Bzañ-po-dpal i.e. the Sa-skyā Lama corresponding to no.14 of my list and living from 1262 to 1332. She is the mother of Kun-dgaḥ-ñi-maḥi-rgyal-mtshān-po who died in 1322 and of two other sons (= nos. 22, 23, 24 of my list). One of the daughters of Grag-s-pa-rgyal-mtshan, i.e. a younger sister of Kun-dgaḥ-don-grub, got married to the Sa-skyā Lama no.23 of my list, namely Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan 1310-1344: also the Nañ-chen Ḥphags-pa-dpal, therefore, who married a daughter of Kun-dgaḥ-don-grub, and was given high posts by Don-yod-rgyal-mtshan (p.135a) must have lived around this time. Therefore, since we know from the same Myañ-chuñ (p.75b) that he was 48 years old when he had the palace of Gyantse constructed in the year śiñ-sbrul, it is almost certain that this cyclic year corresponds to 1365. This would give the year 1318 as his year of birth and the year 1350 as the date of his marriage with the daughter of Kun-dgaḥ-don-grub.

These dates are confirmed by some correspondences with those of the Mongolian emperors. In fact on page 256 of the Myañ-chuñ we learn that the father of Kun-dgaḥ-don-grub, i.e. Grag-s-pa-rgyal-mtshan, obtained from Oljadu, as in the manuscript, i.e. Oljāitü (1294-1307) the investiture of his feud. At the same time on p.140b it can be read that at the age of 48, namely in the year 1365 according to our calculations, Ḥphags-pa-dpal received the diploma of Nañ-chen from Togan Temur (Togon Temür) who in fact began to rule in

lo-tsa-vaḥi rnam-par-thar-pa sñiñ-poḥi me-tog published in his complete works, vol.SA fol.4b. He visited, at the age of 62, that is in 1351, Sa-skyā Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan. In the same text p.23a he is said to be a contemporary of "Togan Tumor great Cakravartin by virtue of his strength" (cf. Sanang Setsen in Schmidt, *Geschichte der Ost-mongolen* p.113, 115) in China, and "Puṇyamala king of the Law" in India. He is perhaps one of the kings of the Malla dynasty of Nepal.

1333 and died in the year 1370.

But then it would be easy to fix the date of birth of Kun-dgaḥ-ḥphags-pa, son of the Nan-chen Ḥphags-pa-dpal. From the Myañ-chuñ p.76 we know in fact that he had the temple of Gyantse constructed in the cyclic year lcags-rta corresponding to the year 1390. This gives 1357 as the year of his birth. Since we know from the same source (p.75b), that he became father at 34 years of age, the date of birth of his son the Chos-rgyal Rab-brtan-kun-bzañ-ḥphags-pa, i.e. sa-sbrul (ibid. p.77b), cannot but be the year 1389. If this date as it seems is correct, it follows that the foundation of the Gtsug-lag-khañ of Gyantse, stated by the Myañ-chuñ to have occurred in the year sa-khyi, must be fixed in the year 1418, while the zhal-yas-khaii-chen-po, namely the highest portion of the temple where the maṇḍalas are painted, was completed in the year śiñ-sbrul 1425, when the king, according to the Myañ-chuñ, was 37 years old. The Kumbum, instead, was founded, according to the author of the eulogy, when the king was 39 years old, that is to say in the year me-lug, namely in 1427. A confirmation of this chronology can be found in yet another passage of the Myañ-chuñ (p.138) where is recorded an invitation sent by the Nan-chen Ḥphags-pa-dpal, i.e. by the grandfather of the Chos-rgyal to the Chos-rje Bla-ma Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po, who lived just between the years 1312 and 1375. To this chronology does not seem to be opposed even what can be read in the inscriptions of the fourth chapel of the second floor of the Kumbum, namely that it was built by Sa-kya-ye-śes in order to fulfil a desire of Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po, because it is not said there that this should just be the lama Sa-skya of the same name (1310-1358, no.20 of my list). The name of such a great dignitary as him would have been

accompanied by the usual titles Chos-rje or in his special case by Ti-śri.

But if it be granted that the honorific epithet *druñ* prefixed to his name could lead to the supposition that we are faced by a great person, and therefore may be induced to identify this Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po proper (1) with the Sa-skyā abbot (no.20 of my list), nevertheless it is possible to admit that the donors of these chapels had accomplished an old vow made by that master when still alive, but only achieved when the Chos-rgyal brought to completion his pious desire. With this chronology, which I think is certain, also agrees the fact that the thirtysecond Sa-skyā abbot Kun-dgaḥ-bkra-śis-rgyal-mtshan went to China to Ch'en-tsu of Ming, is recorded in the second chapel of the fourth floor.

The founder of this local dynasty that ruled over Gyantse for some generations was Hphags-dpal-bzañ-po. According to the Myañ-chuñ (p.79) he received from the Theg-chen Chos-rgyal-po—but according to the fifth Dalai Lama (p.100) from the Mongolian emperor — several diplomas (*hjah-sa*) namely those of *nan-chen*, *thus-dkon* and *si-tu*, at the age of 30, that is to say $1318 + 30 = 1347$. He entered the service of Sa-skyā Lamas very young and worked in their palace Bzhi-thog bla-brañ (2) since the age of sixteen (ibid. 134ff.) discharging various functions and distinguishing himself especially by this ability in writing, so that finally he was elected Dpon-yig

(1) A son of the Nan-chen Hphags-pa was a celebrated lama called Kun-dgaḥ-blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po.

(2) The palace though modernized still exists at Sa-skyā.

(1); but we do not know what this role was exactly. Most probably this job corresponded to that of chancellor, or chief of the secretarial offices, which considering the great power just then acquired by the Sa-skyas, would have risen to a noticeable development. To this function his qualities, specially mentioned by the fifth Dalai Lama, matched perfectly. According to the latter, he was an expert specially in three things: *gtam*, *yig*, *rtsis* namely, narrating, writing and calculating. His first virtue, i.e. his ability in speaking and in composing, would specially recommend him for particularly delicate missions and ambassadorial representations. In fact, according to the narration of the same source, he was sent twice to the court of the Mongolian emperors. The first time he received the diploma investing him with lordship over the territory included between H̄bri-mtshams and Gañs-dkar, namely the mountain Gañ-bzañ we had spoken about before, and the second time the title of Nañ-chen. To his personal name Dpal-bzañ-po he prefixed h̄phags-pa, in remembrance of his master Dpyal-ston-chen-po H̄phags-rgyal-ba, according to a system very frequent in Tibet where the student takes the name of his preceptor (2). Nañ-chen was a very high position at the Sa-skyas court, modelled as it was on that of the Nañ-blon of ancient Tibetan kings mentioned in the chronicles. The major dignitaries of the court (*Bla-brañ-nañ*) of the great Sa-skyas were four: Gon gyo, Glin-tshañs, Śar-kha (1), and H̄don. Their superior, who pro-

(1) That is, because of the correspondance between Dpon and druñ, *druñ-yig-pa*; this word nowadays means "secretary".

(2) This way of uniting the two names of the master and the disciple is called *mtshan-gyi zur-bcug*.

bably worked as supreme major domo and counsellor, was called in fact Nan-chen (see Myan-chun p.135b).

This family added more prestige to what it already had by relating itself to the house of the sku-zhan (2) of Zha-lu who seem to have been very powerful in these times.

§22. *The Sa-skya monks and the Mongol court.* This power of the princes of Zha-lu derives from various reasons. First of all, as we are going to see shortly, Zha-lu was one of the thirteen territories which Sa-skya Hphags-pa was invested with by Khubilai. For this very reason its chiefs, in their own turn, were invested with supreme authority over the territory belonging to them, or on which they were preeminent. Then, they did not fail in increasing their prestige by contracting bonds of kinship through frequent marriages, both with the Sa-skya abbots and with other equally powerful families. Among these families we may mention here, as an example, that of the Tshal-pa in which a sister of Rdo-rje-dban-phyug was married, while Gags-pa-rgyal-mtshan married Dpon-mo Hdzom-hbum-dpal of Tshal. The Tshal-pa, so called from their original place in Dbus, were also chiefs of a khri-skor, namely of one of those thirteen territories in which Mongols divided Tibet. They were therefore Khri-dpon that is to say vassals who were elected or confirmed in their power when Hphags-pa received the investiture of Tibet from Khubilai with the title of Rje-bo. The date of this investiture is fixed by the Vaidūrya-dkar-po, and reported

(1) One of them married the sister of Rdo-rje-dban-phyug of Zha-lu.

(2) *Sku* is honorific prefix, cf. *sku-yon* = *yon bdag* in the documents published by Thomas, *JRAS* 1927: 832, 838: *zhan* is the same as in *zhan-blon*.

by Csoma, in the year 1253. This information, however, is possibly mistaken because in that year Hphags-pa would have been, according to Tibetan sources, only nineteen years old, and according to the Chinese sources even fifteen years. On the other hand, other sources connect his investiture with his first return from Tibet in the year 1265.

It was then that Khubilai invested him with the thirteen Khri-skor which do not correspond at all to the total extension of Tibet, but which included only a portion of the territory of Dbus and Gtsañ. The list of these Khri-skor is transmitted to us, for example, by the fifth Dalai Lama; he enumerates them as follows (1):

In Ġtsañ:

Lho (south of Ralung)

Byañ (north of Ralung)

Gur-mo (between Shigatse and Zha-lu)

Chu-mig (near Narthang)

Šaṅs (north of Shigatse on the opposite side of the Tsangpo)

Zhalu (a day's walk to the south of Shigatse) (2)

In Dbus:

Rgya-ma

Hbri-guñ (NE of Lasa)

Tshal-pa (eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ: mtshal) to the west of Lhasa.

(1) Besides the treatise of Klon-rdol quoted below, compare also the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ KHA fol.27.

(2) According to the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ the division is rather different: Mnaḥ-ris is a Khri-skor (this means that the division in Khri-skor is confused with that in Chol-kha); Lho and Byañ are two other Khri-skor; Chu-mig and Zha-lu other two; the sixth one would have been made up by the districts of Sbra, Ber and Khyuñ.

Thañ-po-che-ba (Talung)

Phag-gru in the part SE of Dbus

G.yas-bzañ (1) (near Lho-brag)

Between Dbus and Gtsañ:

Yar-Hbrog (Yamdruk Tso).

As it can be seen from this list the territories given to Hphags-pa corresponded only to a portion of the two provinces of Central Tibet (2).

These territories however were increased in a considerable way when, on the verge of coming back again to Tibet after his second trip to the Mongolian court, Hphags-pa received from Khubilai the *chol-kha gsum* i.e. the three districts having a much vaster geographical area:

Dbus and Gtsañ or Province of the supreme Law,
the upper part of Mdo (Mdo stod) or province of humans,
the lower part of Mdo (Mdo smad) or province of houses.

According to other traditions (3): Mar-yul, Guge and Pu-hrañs form the first Chol-kha, namely that of Mñah-ris skor gsum; the two districts (ru) of Gtsañ, i.e. that of the right and

(1) Instead of Thaṅ-po-che-ba and Gyas-bzañ, Kloṅ-rdol writes: Bya-yul and Stag-luṅ. The eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ agrees with him, but says that the last two khri-skor were constituted from Bya-yul, Stag-luṅ and Lha-sa.

In literature there are divergences with respect to this list. Thus, for instance, in *Dam-paḥi chos-kyi byuṅ-tshul legs-par-bśad-pa bstan-paḥi rgya-mtshor hjug-paḥi gru-chen* of Sañs-rgyas- phun-tshogs fol. 162 reads: Lho, byañ, chu-(mig), zha-(lu), lha-(sa), śans, for the region of Gtsañ. In Dbus, Thaṅ-po-che-ba is substituted by Stag-luṅ.

(2) In fact Kloṅ-rdol also says on p.5a, that the Khri-skor were limited to Dbus and Gtsañ only. Hjigs-med-nam-mkhāḥ (Huth p.147 transl.) also distinguishes the two donations.

(3) *Dam-paḥi-chos-kyi byuṅ-tshul legs-par-bśad-pa bstan-paḥi rgya-mtshor hjug-paḥi gru-chen*, fol.163.

that of the left (gyas-ru and gyon-ru), and in the country of Dbus, those of Dbu-ru and Gyo-ru form the second Chol-kha; then the Mdo-dkams, namely eastern Tibet, forms the third Chol-kha (1)

This vast territory given to the Sa-skya laid down the difficult problem of how to rule it, that is to say how to impose a central authority on the chiefs of monasteries or on the various princes who had become autonomous after the fall of the royal dynasty.

The Mongolian emperors had resorted to the feudal system. I say the Mongolian emperors because the Sa-skya applied the scheme already adopted by them. And this is recognized also by the Chinese sources (2). We find proofs of this even in the Myan-chun (257a). This text makes us notice that the prince of Zha-lu Grag-s-pa-rgyal-mtshan, named lord of the Khri-skor of Zha-lu, received the title of hu-śri i.e. "Gu-śri", from Oljaitü, while before him Se-chen, i.e. Khubilai, had given to his family the Khri-skor of Zha-lu (257b). But if the Sa-skya were bestowing titles, as they did with the princes of Gyantse, they could have done it as vicars of the emperor. This is clear also from the titles and diplomas, bestowed by them, of *si-tu* (3) or *thus-dkhon* which were taken from the Mongolian chancellery. At any rate this investiture, in the majority of cases, rather than creating a new aristocracy, aimed at confirming a status quo already existing and at recognizing or at extending with the seal

(1) On this word *chol-kha* which entered into Tibetan from Mongolian, see Pelliot in *T'oung Pao* 27:20-21.

(2) 律藏圖識 Wei tsang t'u che translated by P. Hyacinthe and Klaproth in *Journal Asiatique* 4(1829): 117.

(3) Situ or Tai situ from the Chinese 大司徒 about which see *T'oung Pao* 1907:397 and Laufer, *Tibetan loan-words* no.302.

of Imperial authority the privileges already acquired by some important families. These feuds therefore were the patrimony of small local dynasties and were inherited from father to son.

Thus we see that Hmes-chen-po leaves to his second-born the Khri-skor of Zha-lu, while to his first son the stoñ-skor of the same Zha-lu, that is to say possibly to the second son the whole of his dominion and to the first one the city or the capital of the district of his command.

This new partition of Tibet, having evidently a military scope, soon caused the necessity of a census (*sde-rtis*) (1). This was carried out by Hphags-pa evidently on behalf of the Mongolian emperors who had the habit of taking a census of the newly conquered lands (2).

The monasteries were not excluded from much census, but since some of them had assumed a military character and were more and more involved in politics, it is natural that the Mongolian emperors wanted specially to have an account of the convents, of their monks, and of their riches. In fact, in the census conducted at that time, both the ecclesiastical goods (*lha sde*) and the secular goods (*mi sde*) of every Khri-skor were counted (Myañ-chuñ p.253 and 257). The results are preserved in the little treatise of Kloñ-rdol p.5a already quoted.

in La smad, south, 1999 families (*dud grans*) (3)

in La stod, north, 2250 families

(1) See chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama fol.60.

(2) See Vernadski, The scope and contents of Chingis Khan's Yasa, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 3 (1938): 353.

(3) About this expression see Chandra Das s.v.

in Chu-mig 3350 (1) Mongolian families (*hor dud grans*)
in Zha-lu 3892 families
in Byañ Ḥbrog and Yar Ḥbrog in the region called “16 Leb”
(2) 850 Mongolian families
in Ḥbri-guñ and its Ḥbrog 3300-3600 families
in Tshal-pa 3700 families
Phag-mo-gru 2438 families
in Gyaḥ-bzañ 3000 families
in Rgya-ma and Bya-yul 5980 families
in Stag-luñ 500 families.

Thus the country was administered by a hierarchy of officials or notables. First the *Bcu-dpon* decurions, who are mentioned in the *Sku-ḥbum*, then the *Rgya-dpon* centurions, then the *Ston-dpon* chiliarchs, then the *Khri-dpon* or chief of 10,000, presiding over a *Khri-skor*. The subdivision of the three provinces in the thirteen *Khri-skor* “the 13 territories of the 10,000” was evidently based on the Mongolian administrative system (3), and had, as the latter, specially a military scope. The Mongolian army was also divided in units of 10, 100, 1,000, and 10,000, thus the territorial division of Tibet would possibly be determined by the military resources of each and every region and by the number of soldiers that they could provide in case of war. This means that the various officials just scheduled had essentially a military function. By applying this administrative system to Tibet, the Mongolian emperors put into use again,

(1) In the inscriptions of the Kumbum also Mongols are recorded in the lists of donors, e.g. Tshañ Timur in the dome.

(2) *Leb ni bcu-drug zer-pa yod hor dud phyed-dan-brgyad-bryaḥo.*

(3) See Vernadski op.cit. p.350 and 353.

although modifying and supplementing them, the ancient territorial divisions used in Tibet at the time of the royal dynasty, also for military purposes. They are mentioned in the Pad-ma than-yig (1) in a very interesting chapter where the territorial distribution of the Tibetan army is described and listed. In this case as well we are faced by a census carried out for military purposes in order to have an approximate estimation of the troupes that the various patricial families or the various districts were obliged to furnish in case of need.

As chief to these dignitaries there was at the time of the Sa-skyas, the supreme chief or *Dpon-chen* on whom the thirteen Khri-skors depended. He was not elected for life, but only for a given period. He could however be confirmed again, as it can be desumed from the list given in the footnote (2).

(1) Book 5. This portion has been translated by F.W. Thomas, *Tibetan texts and documents*, p.276ff. A memory of this remains in the *ru* or districts in which both Dbus and Gtsan are divided till today.

(2) Here is a list of the Dpon-chen according to the Deb-ther (na p.6a) and to the fifth Dalai Lama (p.60)

Sa-skya-bzan-po
Kun-dgaḥ-bzañ-po, murdered by the Hor
Zhañ-btsun
Phyug-po-sgañ (5th Dalai: Bañ) dkar-po
Byañ-(chub-)rin-(chen)
Kun-(dgaḥ-)gzhon-(nu)
Gzhon-dbañ

There begins the fight
with the Ḥbri-guñ-pa

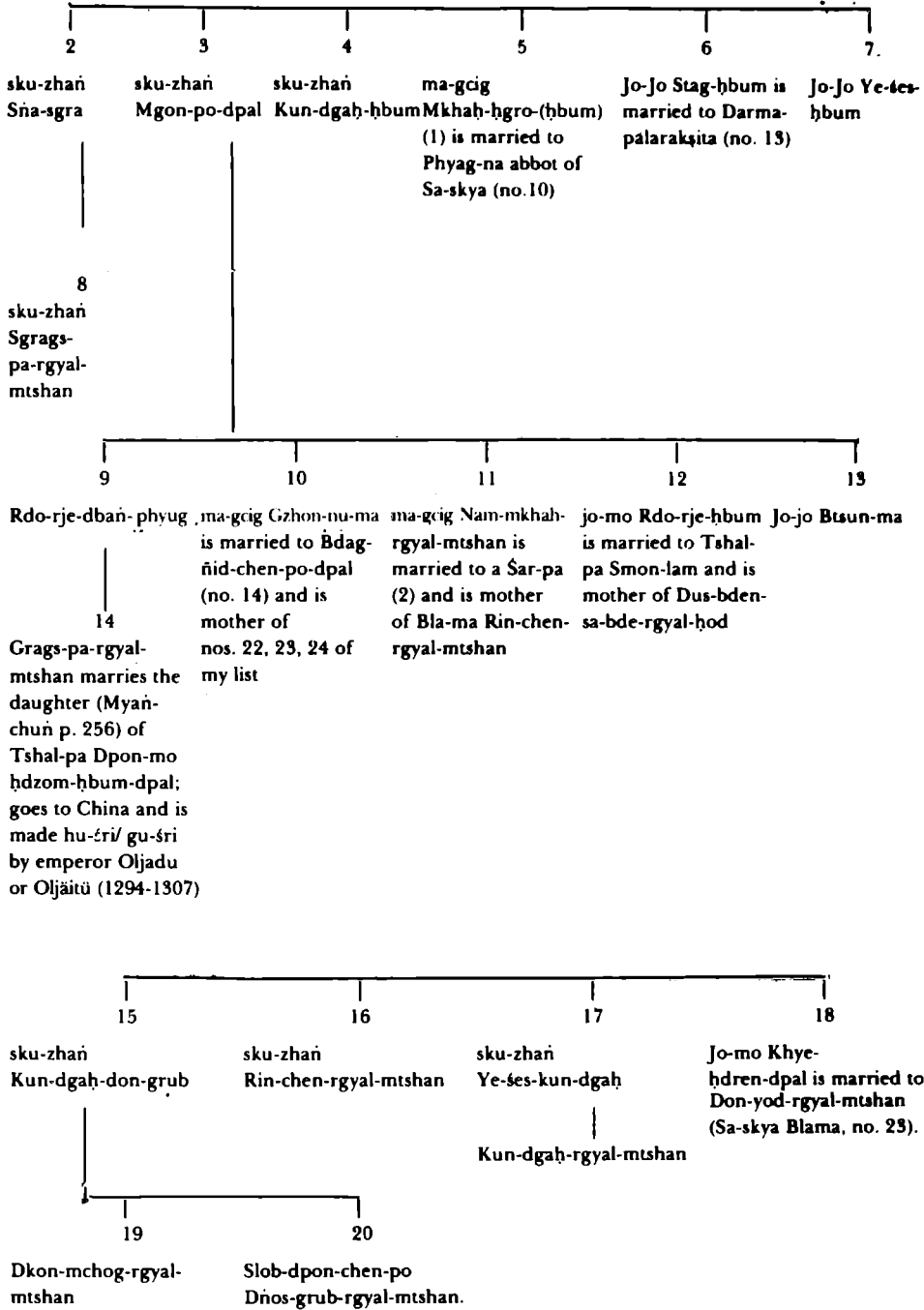
Byañ-(chub-)rdo-rje
Ag-len (Bu-ston is born); burns
the monastery of Ḥbri-guñ

again Gzhon-dbañ
 Legs-pa-dpal
 Sen-ge-dpal
 Ḥod-zer-sen-ge
 Kun-dgaḥ-rin-chen
 Don-yod-dpal
 Yon-btsun

LIST OF THE PRINCES OF ZHA-LU

1

A-mes-chen-po Sañs-rgyas Ye-śes marries Jo-mo-tsha-tsha-btsun-mo



(1) Thus in the quoted work of the fifth Dalai Lama 58a.

(2) Śar-pa is the name of the second son of the Sa-skya.

This means that the cession of the three chol-kha was rather nominal and that the hegemony of the Sa-skyas was limited, and lasted for the short period from Hphags-pa to Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, almost exclusively to the provinces of Dbus and Gtsaṅ (1). It cannot be missed either that in this way a diarchy was formed: on one side the Sa-skyā abbot, nominally the chief of the country but actually only busy in his religious duties (*bla-mas bla-maḥi bya-ba mdzad*, as said in the Deb-ther sṅon-po, p.6a), and on the other the Dpon-chen concerned with political and military affairs (*dpon-chen rims-su bskos-pa-rnams-kyis hjig-rten-gyi bya-ba mdzad-de*). Thus the power that the Sa-skyas received from the Mongolian emperors was rather poor, notwithstanding the precious titles which they received. Moreover, the Dpon-chen, as it appears from the Deb-ther, received their seal or investiture directly from the emperors.

Thus the conflict between the two authorities, which could not but be there, did not allow the formation of a strong central power able to take away Tibet from the influence of the Mongols. The aspirations and ambitions of the vassals, taking

again Hōd-zer-seṅ-ge

Rgyal-ba-bzan-po mentioned in the Yüan-shi (ch.34, p.2, col.10 Kia le wa tsan pu 嘉勒斡藏布) according to which he was invested with the title of Siuen wei se tu 宣慰使都 of Dbus and Gtsaṅ, in the first year of Chih Sun 1330.

Dban-phyug-dpal

Bsod-nams-dpal

again Rgyal-ba-bzan-po

Dbaṅ-brtson(defeated by the Tai si-tu Byaṅ-chub-rgyal-mtshan)

Nam-mkhaḥ-brtan

Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan

Dpal-hbum

Blo-chen

Grags-dban-po.

(1) And in fact the first Dpon-chen is invested precisely with Dbus and Gtsaṅ; see Deb-ther sṅon-po p.6a. So also the title given to Rgyal-ba-bzan-po is limited to Dbus and Gtsaṅ.

advantage from the bad behaviour or from the weakness of the various Dpon-chen, favoured the coming up of rival dynasties, as the one of Byañ-chub-rgyal-mtshan of Phag-mo-gru (1), or that of the Hbri-guñ-pa, or that of the Tshal-pa or that of the Kar-ma-pa. Some of them, encouraged in turn by the last Yüan or by the first Ming, succeeded in obtaining an effective although ephemeral supremacy over Tibet (2).

It seems therefore clear that the politics of Khubilai with respect to Tibet and to the Sa-skya monks was not dictated by mere devotion. By naming Sa-skya monks as his preceptors and giving them Tibet, he actually included in the orbit of his great empire this country as well; he managed to avoid the formation of a force which would be able to take it away from his absorption and his supreme predominance.

This politics does appear also from the repeated bestowing of the coveted title of Ti-še, Ti-śri “imperial Master”, and Kuo-še, Gu-śri “Master of the realm” on the more powerful monks. In this way rivalry of the various sects was fomented, and this rivalry reached its extreme crisis towards the end of the Yüan and during the beginning of the Ming.

The princes of Gyantse do not seem to have entered in the orbit of the thirteen Khri-skor, nevertheless they could not avoid the political influence of the Sa-skya monastery, from which in fact started their prestige, with Hphags-pa-dpal-bzañ-po.

(1) On this see Schulemann *Die Geschichte der Dalai Lama*, p.560.

(2) According to a passage in the Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama the various Mongolian princes tried to capture the feelings of the chiefs of the major and more important monasteries to attract Tibet in the field of their interest: p.61. Mon-yor (Mongka) favoured the Hbri-guñ-pa; Se-chen (namely the descendants of Khubilai) the Tshal-pa, and Hulagu the Phag-mo-drug-pa (mistake for the same sound *gru*. Sometimes instead it is written *grub* as in the inscriptions of the Kumbun IV. 5; but its exact and more ancient form seems to be *Phag-mo-gru* as it is in the Deb-ther).

CHAPTER V

THE TEMPLES OF SAMADA

§23. *General characteristics.* The first monastery we meet on our way particularly worth mentioning is the monastery of Samada, or we could rather say the monasteries of Samada: one of them rises about 1500 metres from the village at the left side of the road for one who is coming from India; the other one is situated right on the road itself at half a kilometre down from the bungalow in the direction of Gyantse.

The Survey map is wrong here because it inverts the sites of the two monasteries. It collates the monastery of Kyangphu on the road, and that means on the very site of the Riku monastery: in reality it is exactly the contrary which is true. But let us now begin with Kyangphu.

It is recorded in the chronicles, for Kyangphu is nothing but the Rkyañ-phu spoken of by the Myañ-chuñ as well as by the eulogy of Gnas-rñiñ. This temple is one of the oldest in Tibet, although very wavering about its founder (1), the tradition is nevertheless unanimous in so far as it considers this temple as being one of the oldest monuments of the country. In any case,

(1) The author himself of the Myañ-chuñ folio 7b ascribes this sanctuary to Khri-sron-lde-btsan, whereas on folio 100 he says that it had been erected by Sron-btsan-sgam-po. The second attribution is very improbable.

nothing remains of the oldest sanctuary; the building which we admire presently and whose details we will examine must date to the XIV century, the period of the diffusion of the religious and political power of the Sa-skyapa sect, as its abbots succeeded in giving a strong impulse to Lamaism.

The construction presents all the characteristics of the oldest religious buildings; it is surrounded by a high wall which encloses the chapels, the temples and the cottages of monks; this wall is the *lcags-ri* of which I have spoken in a preceding volume. Instead of having been made from sun-dried earthen blocks, this wall appears as being a firm homogeneous construction of clay kneaded with water, strengthened by inserting stones and big boulders into the mass of the wall as such (1). Inside the wall rise the houses of servants and guards. As for the monks, at least at the time of my visit, there was but one of them providing ritual ceremonies, although he too did not even belong to the local community.

In fact this monastery belongs to the entire village, which is its guard and takes care of it. Nevertheless its property is claimed by the Yellow Sect which is leading in the province. But the fact that the monastery belongs to the Sa-skyapa is proved by some inscriptions to be read on blocks of stone fixed on the inside of the surrounding wall. These inscriptions contain invocations to Virvapa i.e. to Virūpā, and to Chos-rje Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po. Virūpā, one of those ascetics who belonged to the school of the eightyfour siddhas, is considered as the very first master of Sa-skyapa esoterism. The tradition of this school considers him indeed as the spiritual father of its mysteriosophic revelations, because he

(1) This system of construction is called *skya, gyan*.

had directly received from Bdag-med-ma/Nairātmyā the mystical doctrines that the goddess had been entrusted with by Vajradhara. Therefore the triad of Vajradhara, Nairātmyā and Virūpā nearly always appears in all the Sa-skyā temples, which through the symbol of these three names, has to signify the doctrine of redemption in its essential form, in its revelation and in its terrestrial apophasia. With Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshandpal-bzañ-po we are no longer in India, but in Tibet, for as a matter of fact he has been one of the patriarchs of the Sa-skyā school and the twentyfirst of the abbots figuring in my list (1310-1358).

The plan of the sanctuary of Samada shows clearly that here too we find the same scheme we have already met in Western Tibet: there are just a few variations in the proportions, an increasing number of buildings within the surrounding wall of the sanctuary, but the plan is the same.

§24. *The mgon-khañ.* Entering through a small narrow gate on both sides of which we see the openings of the small cellas for the protective divinities (*mgon-khañ*) one arrives immediately in the inner court: some flowers, a small wall with engravings of the usual prayers on stone plates and an arcade on the right and on the left. At the back rises the temple, in the proper sense of the word, with two floors, a big solemn and elegant balcony divided into arcades by wooden pillars surmounted by artistically carved capitals. The small cellas for the patron divinities of the temple do not contain anything notable: they have statues of stucco which are neither ancient nor artistically interesting. Such statues of terrifying deities are either real works of art, having consequently the immediate efficacy of demoniacal evocations, or they are like these raw and hasty castaways, and in this case they become awkward and grotesque.

Each temple possesses its own mgon-khañ, a mysterious and awful *sanctum sanctorum*, which is difficult to enter into: inside it are the patrons of the sect and the custodians of the sacred edifice. In our case we see in the cella on the left Mgon-po-beñ/Daṇḍa-Mahākāla surrounded by four custodians of the doors (dvārapāla): only three of them remain, the fourth has been destroyed or taken away. Mgon-po-beñ is one of the appearances of Mgon-po/Nātha who although remaining still an emanation of Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla, takes three main aspects in the Lamaistic pantheon with many particular manifestations: Ye-śes-mgon-po/Jñāna-Nātha, Las-kyi-mgon-po/Karma-Nātha, and H̄jig-rten-mgon-po/Jagan-Nātha. Mgon-po-beñ belongs to the second category and he is also known under the name of Legs-idan/Bhagavat. He is a brother of Duñ-skyoñ/Śaṅkhapāla, but he is considered as being the general (*dmag-dpon*) of the divine armies. In his main form he is represented with a key of sandal-wood in his right hand and a skull full of blood in his left. From the key he holds derives his name, because Beñ corresponds exactly to Be-chon; thus he is Be-chon-chen-po/Mahādaṇḍa (1).

The other cella on the right is consecrated to one of the many forms of the Tibetan interpretation of Kālī and more precisely to Dpal-ldan Lha-mo rdo-rje-rab-brtan-ma: one of the manifestations of Dpal-ldan-lha-mo/Śrīmatī, which means precisely Kālī.

(1) About the cycle of this god we can find a lot of information in *Ye-śes-mgon-po-beñ-dmar-gyi bsñen sgrub las gsum-gyi rnam-par-bśad-pa bdud-sde rab-tu-hjoms-paḥi gnam lcags ḥbar-baḥi ḥkhor-lo* of Khri-chen H̄chi-tu no-mon-han-chen-po, vol.GA.

Because I have already spoken of the Tibetan denominations of the Great Goddess of India in the third volume of this series (1), I might refer here to what has been said there.

Let us then start our walk around the court following the ritual circumambulation from left to right.

§25. *The chapel of the victory over Māra.* The first chapel we meet in the court is known as Śa-skya-thub-pa lha-khañ, which means the chapel of Śākyamuni. Narrow and tall, this chapel transfers us into a world of fancy and nightmare. On the central wall there is a stucco figure representing precisely the Saint of the Śākyas lost in meditation and in the very moment he is reaching the point of enlightenment: one sees him indeed in the symbolic attitude of his hand touching the earth in order to ask it to bear witness to his conquest of that wisdom. An answer to that invitation the Earth-goddess herself comes out of the soil shaken up by an earthquake.

All around there is an excited turbulent and monstrous crew of demons: unthought of junctions of human and animal forms, chuckling faces on the bellies and breasts of terrified or terrifying beings. The sources that have inspired these artists are the biographies of Buddha delighting in the description of even this main moment of the life of this Saint: however, the phantasy of the writers has so to say nourished the natural tendency of the Tibetans to translate their vague intuitions about the laws of nature and the turbid play of passions into monstrous and awful symbols.

One can not deny that the artists have succeeded in representing in their works all the terror that overwhelmed them, by evoking as it were, yet before representing it, this turbulent of

(1) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.96ff.

beings that comes to light out of the depths of chaos and out of the hidden fundament of their subconscious.

Within the frame of a single work they wanted to represent two different moments: the moment of the assault by the demons, and the moment of the proper and definite conquest of enlightenment immediately after victory over the demons. In this way they obtain a remarkable contrast in their composition, with a gain of artistic value for the latter: on the one hand the grim fury of this multitude of monstrosities, and on the other the placid smiling Buddha, express, with all the evidence plastic arts can give us, the drama of liberation by which the perfect man has been carried beyond the tumult of passion and the whirlwind of life as a context of tribulations and fears.

In Tibetan hagiography the generic name of the scene described is *Bdud-kyi tsho-hphrul* “the magic apparition of the demons” (figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Another small chapel follows inside which Akṣobhya is represented with his traditional cycle (fig.8).

§26. *The atrium and the first chapel.* Now we have arrived at the main temple. Before entering into its chapels we will stay a little while in the atrium which for the present serves as a storehouse for the village. Inside this atrium, which opens majestically with tall columns surmounted by finely fashioned capitals and trusses (figs. 9, 10), one sees still highly remarkable vestiges of the frescos which once adorned its walls (figs. 11, 12). The grandiosity of the composition equals the perfection of design and the harmony of colours. The artists have not indulged in superfluous ornamentation. The gigantic and majestic Buddhas occupy the major space of the wall with the solemn

presence of their figures. They rise nearly up to the ceiling with their jewelled diadems. They look down with quiet concentration: they seem to be reflections descended from heaven and fixed on those walls by some arcane game of light: all around a kneeling and praying choir of divine creatures: smiling Bodhisattvas surround the central figure with devotion and with the refined harmony of colours. These frescoes go back to one of the most fortunate periods of Tibetan art. They recall to mind the manners and the style of India, or at least, in order to stay in Tibet, the paintings of Mañ-nañ, and this to such an extent that it looks as if they had been created in the period of the closest cultural contact with India. And this indeed finds its confirmation in the historical sources which ascribe the first foundation of our temple to Chos-kyi-blos-gros, a disciple of Rin-chen-bzañ-po, and which also establish a contemporaneity between these works of art and those discovered in Western Tibet.

Iconographically they do not give us any new elements: their importance is exclusively artistic.

Above the door of the first chapel the last figure of the lama painted there represents, as the inscription says: Chos-rje Kun-dgañ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po.

But let us go into the temple.

The first chapel is called *Gtsaṅ-khañ (1) lho*, which means: the southern chapel. This name derives from the orientation of the temple itself. The paintings, if they ever existed at all, have either disappeared or are hidden behind the rough bookshelves in which have been piled up without any order different copies of the *Bkañ-ḥgyur*: all of them handwritten on thick

(1) *Gtsaṅ-khañ* = *dri-gtsaṅ-khañ*, *gandhola* = *gandha-kutī*.

paper and in ancient spellings (*brdah rñin*). The volumes of the Bstan-ḥgyur, which one recognizes easily because of the smaller size, that has been used also for the xylographic editions, respecting the tradition, are very few. That is understandable. One always needs several copies of the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur, because this book has become a specifically ritual collection: during the religious offices one reads out of the collected chapters, which is recited in the temple as well as outside in the country, when it is a case of imploring for rain or of averting some epidemic, whereas the Bstan-ḥgyur on the other hand is a book for learned people only.

The altar is replete with statues, some of which are certainly of Indian origin. Such for instance is the statue we reproduce in figure 13 and the manufacture of which has much likeness to that of another that has been conserved in the following chapel; it is probably due to the same artist.

The small statue represents Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva. It is of bronze: the legs have been broken and have again been put together by means of a rough copper ring.

The chapels give the impression that they were plundered; the statues were broken to pieces in a blind excess of vandalism or taken away, so that only pedestals have remained. This happened in all likelihood during one of those raids of Hor, or Tartar tribes, often recalled to mind by the Tibetan chronicles.

On a large basement behind the altar stands a magnificent stūpa/mchod-rten (figs.14-18) which most likely contains the relics of some lamas. It is of gilded bronze which in its subtle elevated relief embraces the whole cycle of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala with its thirtyseven main divinities. One of the bigger figures

representing the four Buddhas who accompany Vairocana has been taken away.

The work has been executed with extreme finesse. The metal bends ductile under the artist's skilful hand; we see meandering vine-tendrils girding on the slender figures of divinities who emerge out of lotus-blossoms.

One is inclined to think here less of a Nepalese work of art, even of the very first period, but rather of a work of Bengali art of the late Pāla period which came to Tibet through Nepal.

§27. *The inscriptions of Chos-blos (2) and the foundation of the temple.* The other chapel which follows immediately to the left side is called *Gtsaṅ-khaṅ-chen-mo byaṅ* "the big chapel to the north". On the wall in front we see three statues i.e. in the middle Mar-me-mdzad/Dīpaṅkarā, to his right Byams-pa/Maitreya and to his left Śā-kya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, that means the Buddhas of the three times, past, future and present (*dus-gsum saṅs-rgyas*) symbolic expression of the eternal revelation of the law. All around, tall upright figures (figs. 19-20) represent the ideal procession of the divine emanations which once they have become the operative compassion within the world, make revelation upon revelation which is active in the conscience, thus leading mankind to its final emancipation.

These figures are the eight Bodhisattvas (*byaṅ-sems brgyad*): who synthesize the series of the bskal-bzaṅ/bhadrakalpa, that is to say of Bodhisattvas who are active in the cosmic age we are living in now. Instead of comprehending 1000 or 996 divinities, this cycle can, if necessary, also be shortened and reduced to sixteen or even to eight Bodhisattvas (1).

(1) See the following pages 149, 235 and 242.

(2) Chos-blos is the shortened spelling of Chos-blo-gros.

On both sides of the door there are two big images of the god of fire and of the god of water: Me-lha/Agni and Chu-lha/Varuṇa deriving from the cycle of the eight or ten Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpāla.

The image reproduced in fig.21 merits being looked at with attention, because it is very different from the usual statues of mgon-po or protecting deities, such as seen in the temples. Charging, or exaggerating the colours, the Tibetans have very often created awful figures which have nothing human and seem to be elementary forces which do not succeed at all in putting themselves together in some kind of harmonious form. In these statues of Samada, however, one notices some humanity. This god, such as he has been figured out, is no longer a disordered elementary force, and on the other hand he is not yet human, but his form is engaged in humanizing. Although being an expression of demoniacal power, he has revealed himself in appearances which are accessible to us. This image has not so much to be connected with the Indian mgon-po but rather with the classical type of the Chinese dvārapāla, whence it finds its direct inspiration.

But the most interesting objects conserved in this chapel are three basements of statues (fig.22): two of the statues have disappeared and probably they have been taken away or destroyed during some of the ravages whose traces the monastery still bears.

So remains a sole image, that of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara (fig.23) (1); from the epigraphs adorning the upper part of the basement we know that the other two statues represented Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi and Hjam-dbyaṅs/Mañjuḥṣa. In the three statues consequently had been represented the three protectors, *rigs-gsum mgon-po* "the protectors of the three mystic families", that are the most popular and venerated holy triad in Tibet up to our days.

(1) During my journey of 1939 I noticed that the statue was no longer in this monastery: it seems to have been taken to that of Riku.

The statue has a certain hieratic rigidity, which is disadvantageous for expression: we have to do with an Indian work, but certainly not one of the best period. At the time of the execution of this work the splendour of the Pāla was already a distant record. The face is the least significant part of the whole image: and this lack of expression has been stressed further because of the kind of yellow paint which makes it look pale and contrasts with the nice bronze colour of the other parts of the statue. But it is a custom with the Tibetans to coat the face of their principal gods every year with a yellow or gold paint, which in technical terms is precisely called *zhal-gser*.

I have already said that the capital of each basement has been adorned with a metrical inscription (fig.24) which is very interesting in so far as its spellings remind of archaic orthography (*da-drag*, the group *my* etc.) and because its text records the name of the monk who ordered the statue and as well as that of the artist who made it. The monk, as is said in the artificial style of the epigraph, bears the name of Chos-blos "law - intelligence", that is to say Dharmamati: he was bearer of the honorific title of *btsun*.

Together with the indications we read in the *Myaṅ-chuṅ* and with other dates we can find elsewhere, this indication allows us to identify the person recorded here and to put in its right light the importance of this inscription. As I have had the opportunity of reconstructing the life of the famous translator, I have written that between the pupils of Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po, the history of Gzhon-nu-dpal mentions also a certain Chos-blos, i.e. Chos-blo-gros, who studied the *Vajrodaya*, the *Kośalālāṅkāra* and so on in the school of Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po (1). Well then, as for this Chos-blos or Chos-kyi-blos-gros, who has nothing to do

(1) According to the *Myaṅ-chuṅ*, p.100 and 101 he met Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po twice, after this travels in Kashmir, and besides the quoted texts he also studied other texts in the same school, as for instance *Dpal-mchog*. Then he learnt other mystic systems too from Lo-chuṅ Legs-śes. See *Indo-Tibetica* II.32.

with Chos-blos of Mar, the master of Milarepa, one knows where he is born. He hails from Speḥu-dmar, in that of Rgyañ-ro in Ñañ-stod. Ñañ-stod is precisely the region we are dealing with, and Rgyañ-ro is, as we saw, the country around the monastery of Samada. According to the testimony of the Myañ-chuñ, Speḥu-dmar is the most ancient name of the monastery of Samada. According to these sources Chos-blos was the founder of the temple of Speḥu-dmar in Rgyañ-ro, which has been identified with this Rkyañ dgon-pa, or Rkyañ-phu, of which we are speaking right now.

This notice seems to be in contradiction to the tradition according to which Rkyañ-phu should have been built up by Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan. If this tradition were true – but there is not one document to make us believe it – we would be obliged to think that in Samada once existed two temples, one built by that king and another rebuilt by Chos-blos. In any case there is no trace of such a primal temple and even the temple of Chos-blos has been reconstructed during the Sa-skya period; except the bronze statues and the figures of the atrium not a single other piece of the temple can indeed, as it seems, be dated to the XI century. All that has remained belongs almost certainly to the XIV century, that is to say to the period of the highest power of the Sa-skya, and in any case during or immediately after Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po.

As for this place where the translator of Zañs-dkar Hphags-pa-śes-rab should have come in order to compile his commentary on the Vajraśekhara-tantra and where two other prominent figures of the renaissance of Tibetan Buddhism Gzhon-nu-bum-pa and Pañḍita Thugs-rje-chen-po should have stayed for a while, the tradition believes that the famous

The convent grew into an important centre of studies and, because of the monks and masters who lived there, it contributed to the diffusion of the mystic schools and of their doctrines all over the province of Gtsañ.

Kashmiri paṇḍita Śākyaśrī, one of the most active apostles in these regions, also lived here and wrote his “summary of the way to salvation” *rgyal-sras lan-rim bsdus* (1).

Later Kun-dgaḥ-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po too settled down here, as is recorded in the inscriptions which are engraved on stone within the sacral domain of the monastery and on the door of the first chapel as well. There was even a school of interpretation for some texts and especially for Tantras of the Yoga class and of the Guhyasamāja according to the comments of Jñānapāda/Ye-śes-zhabs: this school was known as the school of Rkyañ (Myañ-chuñ p.101).

Consequently the inscriptions we have discovered in this chapel become very important, not only because now we are able to determine at least approximately their age (XI - XII century) but because they refer to a group of persons who are at the origin of the Buddhist renaissance and of that intensive collaboration with Indian thought which has been so great a contribution to the civilization of Tibet. In one of these inscriptions is also recorded the name of the artist: Mati; we know nothing else about him. At least we do not find him mentioned elsewhere. We know only that he came from Pan-tso-ra, although I can not say where it is; probably in Nepal.

The other two chapels on the gallery to our right hand are respectively dedicated to Avalokiteśvara with eleven faces (Bcu-gcig-zhal) and to Sgrol-ma ḥjigs-brgyad-skyob, i.e. to the eight forms of Tārā, which protect from the eight terrible things. This cycle has already been discussed in the preceding volume (2).

(1) Bodhisattva-krama-mārga-saṅgraha; but the colophon in Bstan-ḥgyur Mdo XXXII.15 says that it was redacted at Salu.

(2) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.161.

§28 *The mudrā of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana.* Let us pass to the first floor. Here also there are two chapels: presently the chapel to the right (when looking towards the temple), according to the local tradition, is called Kun-rig lha-khañ, that is to say that it should be dedicated to the cycle of Sarvavid Vairocana, we have met so many times already. The central deity, with the biggest proportions, stands in the centre (figs.25). Along the wall, sitting on lotus-blossoms and lost in meditation, the series of the other thirtysix deities who complete the cycle (figs.25 bis-31); they are disposed in a group around the four Buddhas who, with Vairocana in the centre, constitute the holy pentad, the symbol of the fivefold splitting up of the supreme principle in the multiplicity of things.

But is the cycle of Kun-rig/Sarvavid really the one to which the chapel has been consecrated? Just as in Tabo, here too the central god has four faces, and the two hands assume the attitude of that particular mudrā the Chinese call 知印 or 知拳 [:] i.e. the mudrā of knowledge, and the Tibetan sources *byañ-chub-mchog* i.e. Sanskrit *bodhyagrī*, as one often finds in the *Sādhanamālā* (1). Bu-ston describes it as follows: “the left hand closed in the adamantine fist points out the forefinger; the left hand closed also in the adamantine fist crooks the forefinger at the height of the heart, holding the opening (of the same hand) upwards (2)”. It has been said that this form of Vairocana is very rare in Tibet (3) and indeed the statues representing this kind of Vairocana are not as frequent in this country as they are in Japan. It means however that in Tibe

(1) By mistake *bodhyāṅgī* in the text edited by B. Bhattacharyya.

(2) In *Dkyil-hkhor gsal-byed ñi-mahi hod-zer zhes-bya-bahi skabs-dan-po-las rtsa-rgyud de-ñid-bsdus-paḥi dkyil-hkhor-gyi bkod-pa* complete works, vol.TSA p.8.

(3) Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p.32, C. Pascalis, *Musée Louis Finot, Collection Tibétaine*, p.52.

the cult of Vairocana limited itself more and more to some particular types of this divinity, and that here only certain determined interpretations of the mystic cycles symbolized by that god have had a greater fortune. Although up to this moment our knowledge of the religious horizon of modern Tibet is very limited, but to judge by the simple types of Vairocana one generally meets today, it would seem that the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala has little by little yielded its place to the cycle of Sarva-vid/Kun-rig, which had the possibility of having a greater diffusion and success because of its eschatological character.

Generally the different aspects of the divinities are distinguished according to the different attitudes of the mudrā. The mudrā is always the symbol of a spiritual level, a seal (*Gk. sphragis*), of achievement of the mantra, which means the formula by putting which into correlation syntonizes the mind of the mystic with that determined sphere he wants to ascend to. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, on the other hand, is the visible representation of a level of intricate experiences, the level that is expressed by the multitude of maṇḍalas each of which reproduces the active relation that is going on between the divine levels and the phenomenological reality, indicating also in a symbologic manner a particular process of evasion from becoming into being. Sometimes Vairocana is the symbol of moral purification and consequently of liberation from the dreary forms of existence (*ñan-son sbyon-ba*) for which a bad karma prepares us; at other times he is considered under his active aspect (*las*), i.e. as conscience in its creative process; yet at other times, finally, as the pure symbol (*dam-tshig*) of supreme truth, the visible image of the absolute, an image leading through meditation to the consubstantiation with the latter.

In other words, the figure of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana is the symbolic expression of different spiritual realities and hence it can be represented in the most different ways, each of which is always distinctly indicated by its particular mudrā.

Several times indeed we have already met with the cycle of Vairocana in earlier volumes. One could even say that the more ancient the temples, the more frequent is the presence of this cycle. Among the chapels from Spiti and Kunavar to that of Tsaparang and these of central Tibet we could add also Thöling, which we will study in another volume. In order to describe the maṇḍala of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana I have referred several times to Sanskrit and Tibetan sources describing its various cycles and explaining its liturgy. Now the information I have gathered and which derives from different texts has to be summarized in order to get some more clarity. So I will also have the opportunity of correcting some errors I made in the II volume of *Indo-Tibetica* because of an erroneous reading of the Tibetan word for the mudrā of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana. Well then, there exists no word like bodhyaṅgī mudrā attributed by me Vairocana; instead one should always read *byañ-chub-mchog* i.e. bodhyagrī mudrā.

§29. *Scheme of the maṇḍala of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana described in the preceding volumes.* The maṇḍalas of Vairocana we have already met can be summarized as follows:

1. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (*Indo-Tibetica* III/1.79)
 - one face
 - two arms
 - mudrā: explaining the Law
 - colour: white
 - symol: wheel

- II. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (*Indo-Tibetica* III-1.71
one face
two arms
mudrā: samādhi
colour: white
symbol: wheels with eight beams.
- III. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-chen-po/Mahāvairocana (Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi and Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad mñon-par-byañ-chub-paḥi cho-ga phan-bde kun-ḥbyuñ-las bdag-bskyed of Blo-bzañ-dpal-ldan-ye-śes)
one face
two arms
mudrā: samādhi
colour: yellow
symbol: *rdo-rje/vajra*.
- IV. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, like no.IX.(1) (Vajradhātu-maṇḍalopāyikā in the Bstan-ḥgyur ŚI. 32)
- V. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (*Indo-Tibetica* III/I.72 (2), from the commentary to Paramādi-tantra, Bstan-ḥgyur RI.78),
one face
two arms
colour: white
symbols: *rdo-rje/vajra* in the right hand, and *rdo-rje/vajra* in the left at the level of the breast.
- VI. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (*Indo-Tibetica* III/I.72, from the commentary to Paramādi-tantra, Bstan-ḥgyur RI. 283).
one face
two arms
mudrā: byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī
colour: yellow
- VII. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (*Indo-Tibetica* III/I.72, from the commentary of Candrakīrti on Guhyasamāja).
one face
two arms
symbols: wheel and bell

(1) Therefore it is necessary to correct that which has been said in *Indo-Tibetica* III/I, which is as in Kun-rig/Sarvavid.

(2) Bstan-ḥgyur RI.78.

- VIII. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (Kun-rig/Sarvavid, according to Durgati-pariśodhana, see *Indo-Tibetica* III/I. 32-39).
four faces
two arms
mudrā: samādhi
colour: white
- IX. Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (Tattvasaṅgraha, Tattvālokarī of Ānandagarbha, Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, *Indo-Tibetica* III/I.39 (1); *ibid.* 43 family of the gem and p.46 family of the lotus *ḥgro-ba-ḥdul-baḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/ Jagadvinaya-maṇḍala* (2).
four faces
two arms
mudrā: byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī
colour: white
symbols: rdo-rje/vajra with five points. .

§30. *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala and Mahākaruṇāgarbha-maṇḍala.*

Thus is the synthesized summary of the maṇḍalas of Vairocana deriving from different sources, all of them we have already met with in the course of the *Indo-Tibetica*. These schemes are very elementary and they do not give even a pale idea of the so many interpretations which, visibly expressed in the symbols of the maṇḍalas, the schools have given to us, of the mystical experiences indicated by the name of Vairocana, as being the essential nature of the pentad of Buddhas, the quintessence of the five gnozes, *bde-bar-gśeḡs rigs-lṅaḥi sku-yi ṅo-bo-ñid-gyur-pa, ye-śes-lṅaḥi rañ-bzhin* (3). These schools have based their liturgy on a group of fundamental texts, that is:

Tattvasaṅgraha-tantra; Vairocanābhisambodhi-tantra;
Vajradhātu-maṇḍala); Durgati-pariśodhana-tantra;
Vajraśekhara-tantra; Paramādi-tantra.

(1) In ZI (132 and not 131 as written on that page) is the description of Vairocana in *byañ-chub-mchog phyag-rgya/bodhyagrī* mudrā.

(2) Here also instead of *bodhyaṅgi-mudrā* one has to read *bodhyagrī/byañ-chub-mchog*.

(3) Bu-ston in *Dkyil-ḥkhor gsal-byed ṅi-maḥi ḥod-zer zhes-bya-baḥi skabs dan-po-las rtsa-rgyud de-ñid-bsdus-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*, complete works, vol.TSA folio 1.

The Tattvasaṅgraha— which Tibetan tradition divides in three parts namely: the fundamental Tantra (*rtsa rgyud*), the supplement (*rgyud phyi-ma*) and the supplement of the supplement (*rgyud-phyi-maḥi phyi-ma*)— is closely tied up with the Vajradhātu-maṅḍala, which is generally considered as a section of the former (1). Its rites and its mystic schemes have been interpreted by four great masters of Indian Tantrism: Ānandagarbha, Buddhagupta, Abhayākara and Śākyamitra.

The Vajraśekhara, which has been studied in a particular manner by the lotsava of Zaṅs-dkar, is tied up with the same mystic orientation. The whole group of this Tantra and liturgy evolves around a central symbolism which is, as a matter of fact, just that of the Vajradhātu-maṅḍala, the maṅḍala of the adamantine sphere, the very first revelation of which we find in the Tattva-saṅgraha; then it has diffused into a series of secondary texts and manuals, all of them, of course, inspired by the primitive source.

On the other hand, the Vairocanābhisambodhi-tantra insists especially on the Mahākaruṇāgarbha-maṅḍala, that means on the maṅḍala of primordial compassion.

These currents are living not only in Tibet. Both orientations still have followers in Japan, where the Shingon sect bases its mystic experience precisely on the Vajradhātu-maṅḍala according to the Tattvasaṅgraha, or on the Mahākaruṇāgarbha-maṅḍala according to the Vairocanābhisambodhi. The head of the Japanese school is Kōbōdaishi (774-835), who transplanted into his country the Chinese mystic tradition, that had been particularly inspired by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, whereas the Tibetan school, on the contrary, has to be connected above all

(1) On Tattvasaṅgraha also see Indo-Tibetica III/2.38ff.

with Rin-chen-bzañ-po, Atiśa, the lotsava of Zañs-dkar and their followers (1).

The very fact that these maṇḍalas have been known in the western world especially by way of Japanese Buddhism, should not make us forget that the one as well as the other go back to some of the oldest Tantric texts of India, for which reason they necessarily had to be found in Tibet too.

The Durgati-pariśodhana-tantra, in Tibetan called the cycle of Kun-rig i.e. of Sarvavid Vairocana, is tied up with the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, although as one sees the mudrā of Vairocana is quite different.

In the Paramādi-tantra have been finally exposed several maṇḍalas of Vairocana, in which the latter is above all represented in the form of Vajrasattva.

These then are the main texts, acknowledged as being the highest revelations by the schools which saw in Vairocana the symbol of truth, considering him in liturgy as the beginning of the way of redemption. Many other texts were then considered as kindred or derived texts, that is as parallel or subordinate revelations (2).

(1) On the two maṇḍalas in Japan see:

Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, II edition, 1938, p.32ff.

R. Tajima, *Étude sur le Mahāvairocana*, Paris 1936.

Omura Seigu, *Mikkyō-hattatsu-shi* (密教發達志).

Togano, *Mandara-no kenkyū* (曼荼羅乃研究).

Togano, *Himitsu jiso-no kenkyū* (秘密事相乃研究).

(2) *Cha-mthun*. In the same way as one considers the Nāmasaṅgīti as kindred to the Tattvasaṅgraha, it was interpreted in four different ways by four commentators who originated four schools, namely Hjam-dpal-grags-pa, Byaṅ-chub-mchog, Hjam-dpal-bśes-gñen, and Avadhūti i.e. Urgyan slob-dpon, the ācārya of Uddiyāna (Padmasambhava).

§31. *Why the maṇḍalas of a single cycle can be many.* One should not think, however, that all the liturgies belonging to these groups of texts, or rather – if we may put ourselves into the mind of the schools in which they were going around – to those revelations, can be reduced to two and only two fundamental maṇḍalas, that is Vajradhātu and Mahākaruṇāgarbha. Although these two maṇḍalas are the most important of them, the Tantric liturgy presented in the commentaries I have quoted know a lot of other maṇḍalas.

By its teaching the means not for knowing but for coming in possession - through an immediate experience of that supreme truth defined by dogmatics - the Tantric revelation met a psychological problem of the greatest importance, namely: how to make accessible to all persons the same principle with all the clarity of its overwhelming luminosity, when it is but too evident that each creature has a quite different moral and intellectual preparation? Men have determined tendencies, leanings, aversions, which are either instinctive or produced by a preceding karma, and that is the reason why it is impossible that each man arrives at the same experience by the same way. Therefore Buddhism has been convinced that the liberating doctrine has not to be revealed definitely and in the same way for all people but in a way adapted to each of its hearers, to their intellectual maturity and their moral preparation. Therefore the Tantric schools insist so much on that inner difference of the creatures and hence also on the necessary difference of the religious revelations; it is not only necessary to adapt the truth to different inclinations and aversions of the individuals, but also to take advantage of their particular psychological complexes in order to make the conversion of the initiated from a normal to mystic existence easier and smoother.

These schools made a major use of the principle of transference: they did not deny and suppress the passions, but directed them to religious life, transferred them from the human to the divine level, in one word sublimated them. Therefore Tantric liturgy which has to prepare, to lead and favour the spiritual palingenesis of the initiates, and to reproduce in their souls the drama of cosmic evolution and involution, uses a complicated system of maṇḍalas; these are as many as are the possible categories of individuals wanting redemption.

Thus imagining the many and multiple maṇḍalas, which serve to express visually the essential truth which is adumbrated in Tantric literature and to make them actually operative in the mind, the masters of these schools use this division into fundamental categories which classify, according to Buddhist Tantrism, all reality, things and individuals, according to their essential and inner affinities. The first type of classification has been given by the division of creatures into five families, in which is accomplished a differentiation of reality already potential towards the absolute and which on the level of the mystic is represented by the supreme pentad. In such a way one obtains a fivefold classification, i.e. a family of Tathāgata (Vairocana), one of the vajra (Akṣobhya), one of the gem (Ratnasambhava), one of the lotus (Amitābha) and one of the operative activity (Amoghasiddhi). The neophyte must, with the help of the master, determine above all the mystic family he belongs to, in order to be able to choose the corresponding maṇḍala. Generally each family has its own particular maṇḍala: but some schools accept also the possibility of representing symbolically all these five families in a single synthetic maṇḍala, which includes them and holds them together (*bsdus*).

On other occasions the choice of the maṇḍala was determined by the mystic level the devotee wanted to be syntonized with, that means with one of the three or four essential aspects of reality beyond its phenomenological appearance: the physical aspect (*kāya, sku*), the verbal aspect (*vāc, gsuñs*), and the mental aspect (*manas, thugs*), to which many schools also add the aspect of action (*karma, phrin-las*).

Otherwise the choice of a maṇḍala can also be inspired by the intrinsic qualities of the persons who are to be guided by that maṇḍala, as soon as they are able to read its mystic sense, to the revelation of the supreme truth symbolically reproduced in its diagrams and figures. There are persons who are not able to understand the sense of a doctrine if not explained to them by somebody in all its parts, detail by detail, in a patient way; another grasps it at the very first glimpse of it, and one needs only to give him a few essential outlines, in order that he may grasp the entire significance. Finally there is a third category of men who stay between the aforesaid categories: these people are not quick enough to understand even at the very first suggestion and not as slow-witted as to need a patient explanation of each detail. This kind of distinction between the possible disciples, or better said of the persons the master would have to guide towards the right understanding of truth, is found already in dogmatics. In his commentary to the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, Haribhadra often alludes to it: the Tantric masters use it by drawing that visible summary of mystic truths that the maṇḍala is. For the first category of persons there is the extensive maṇḍala (*rgyas-pa*); for the third category the shortened or concise maṇḍala (*bsdus*), and for the intermediate category the intermediate maṇḍala (*bar-ma*).

Then we must make allowance for the fact that some people are so dominated by certain inclinations, as we have seen above, that one cannot even think of rooting them out with one single movement: one is rather constrained, as one says today in psychoanalysis, to transfer them onto another plane, directing them to other activities.

Some persons are governed by passion (*hdod-chags, rāga*), others by anger (*krodha, khro-ba*), others by mental confusion (*moha, gti-mug*) and still others by avarice (*mātsarya, ser-sna*). A special maṇḍala will be indicated for each of these four groups of persons, according to the moral propensities by which the disciple seems to be dominated. Neither does one neglect the particular devotion some people may have to some divinities: it does not matter if these are not the same as those of the Buddhist pantheon, and if therefore they have not the same soteriological value. The Tantras are not afraid of accepting also the divinities of profane people (*hjig-rten-pa*), be it the eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas, Viṣṇu, Rudra, or even the planets and constellations. What matters is that there is a belief: this is the sentiment one has to work on; its presence in the soul of the neophytes, in order that they may slowly and gradually ascend to supreme salvation. Let them be inferior forms of religious experience; but they indicate a kind of spiritual sensibility which is only waiting to be educated and refined; they are after all the very first step of a high ladder, the starting moment of a progressive purification and sublimation. No wonder, hence, that by drawing the maṇḍalas also one makes allowance for the inner capacities of certain persons for being guided on the way to religion through their devotion to certain particular divine manifestations, which at first sight are not very orthodox.

Other classifications are determined by the mudrās. Recently Przulski (1) wrote about the mudrās and their varied meanings; but it is evident that there is still much more to say, from the moment one passes from the philological discussions to the symbolic meaning and to the psychological reality represented by the mudrās for the initiated. Without examining the whole question here to which I will return later, I may recall to mind that in all these sects, mudrā is not only a particular attitude of the hands which stabilises a spiritual syntony between the mystic and a determined divinity, which is represented in the same position and which therefore completes in a way the esoteric formula (mantra) directed to that divinity and expresses its essence. Mudrā is also the name for a determined psychological preparation, accompanied by a special liturgy, which in some cases enables us to take part in several of those spiritual levels through which one ascends to the supreme truth; mahāmudrā, dhāraṇī-mudrā, dharma-mudrā and karma-mudrā belong precisely to this kind. Mudrā is also a synonym of emblem in the proper sense of the word, just as instead of a person we put his signs (*mtshan-ma*): for instance, in the maṇḍala the figure of Akṣobhya as the centre of irradiation and emanation of the mystic family of the Vajra, can be substituted by the drawing of a vajra. But when the sign acquires the value of a symbol and expresses an esoteric sense, which has value only for the initiated, then mudrā becomes a synonym of samaya, which means precisely a symbol. Mudrā designates finally the śakti, the divine power, the energy by means of which god is working and multiplying,

(1) *Indian Culture* II/4.

himself in the world of things and which Tantric schools imagine as a feminine figure; which embraced by and coupled with that god expresses through the symbol of amplitude the creative process out of which sprouts that mystic level which is called illumination.

No wonder, if we are aware of all those things that the maṇḍalas which have Vairocana or his symbols as the very centre of their diagrams, are much more numerous than those already quoted. Now and at this place it certainly is not my task to describe them all, enumerating the many divinities they contain and indicating the exact place of each of them. But, while describing the Kumbum of Gyantse we will meet many maṇḍalas of Vairocana we did not meet till now, it will be useful to draw up a summary list of maṇḍalas with Vairocana in the centre contained in the Tantric texts.

If these maṇḍalas arise from organic texts, each part of which is synthesized in a particular maṇḍala, I have also alluded to other maṇḍalas described in these treatises. In this way one will have a general, even if necessarily summarized, view of the liturgical schemes by means of which the Indo-Tibetan schools have summarized the Tantras; and so, when in the context of this work or of other works, one has the opportunity of identifying a maṇḍala with any of those described in this list, one will be able to connect it immediately with the special mystic orientation to which it belongs. In this way it will be possible to understand more easily the significance and the value of the various maṇḍalas and to realize more or less which kind of experiences the maṇḍalas wanted to express through the symbols of their figures. Our guide will be volume TSA of the complete works of Bu-ston, where we find indeed a description of several hundred maṇḍalas,

each of them described in details according to the text which explains it (1).

§39. *The maṇḍala of Samada represents the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala.* Although Vairocana is represented in so many maṇḍalas and in so many forms, it follows from the above-published schemes that in addition to the common type of Vairocana who figures in the cycle of the supreme pentad (with one head, of white colour, in the attitude of explaining the law) we must distinguish at least three other fundamental figurations of Vairocana:

1° type: Vairocana (predominantly white, with four faces and two hands in the mudrā byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī) as characteristic of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala and of the maṇḍalas which are connected with the Tattva-saṅ graha.

2° type: Yellow Vairocana with one face and hands in samādhi-mudrā, as characteristic of the Karuṇāgarbha-maṇḍala as exposed in the Vairocanābhisambodhi.

3° type: Vairocana with four faces, white, two hands in samādhi-mudrā: this is characteristic of the cycle of the Durgati-pariśodhana and specifically known under the name of Kun-rig/Sarvavid.

So it is evident that the cycle of the Tattvasaṅgraha or of the Vajradhātu (2) has been reproduced in Samada.

(1) I have thought it useful to indicate for each maṇḍala the page of the corresponding treatise of Bu-ston where it is described.

(2) Consequently what I have said in Indo-Tibetica III/I.30ff. has to be corrected, because the cycle which has been represented in Tabo is that of Vajradhātu, although the divinity with four faces is divided into four persons.

The chapel which follows in the upper floor, namely that to the left, is called Rta-mgrin lha-khan “the chapel of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva”. But this name is of recent origin because the temple, as it is seen from the central statues, is dedicated to another deity: and every chapel takes its name from the cycle represented in it which is unfolded around a fundamental symbol placed at the centre or on the main wall. In this case it is clear that the temple was dedicated to the Great Mother “Yum-chen-mo” that is to “Sophia” (fig.31) around which are placed along the walls, five for each part, ten large and solemn standing figures (fig.32). They are the Buddhas of the ten cardinal directions (*phyogs bcu sañs-rgyas*) invoked in almost all the preparatory rites also for protection from malefic influences (*bgegs*).

Whether these images plastically reproduce a given cycle exposed in some special text it is difficult to say.

The cycle of the ten Buddhas is in fact too common to serve as a sure element of judgement for identifying a maṇḍala.

In any case the entire dogmatics of Mahāyāna is implicit in this representation: the Prajñāpāramitā, no longer the revelation in which the Buddha has taught men, for their redemption, the fundamental insubstantiality of things; it becomes the very truth, not in a gnosiological sense but in an ontological sense, the luminous cosmic elementary conscience, absolute, from which the Buddha emanate and in which the one who becomes Buddha is merged. A conception that Diñnāga had already stated in a famous verse of his:

§32. Rtsa-rgyud: Tattvasaṅgrāha/De-ñid-bsdus, in four sections (*dum-bu*). The names of maṅḍalās derive from that of their central divinity.

(A) *Dkyil-ḥkhor gsal-byed ñi-maḥi ḥod-zer zhes-bya-baḥi skabs dan-po-las rtsa-rgyud de-ñid-bsdus-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*

Section I dedicated to Vajradhātu-maṅḍala which serves to purify the passions by means of passions.

(1) detailed maṅḍala to the benefice of persons who are converted following a detailed explanation.

1 (a) fundamental (rtsa-ba) maṅḍala essentially based on the grand seal. In centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, four faces, byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī mudrā, fol.2a.

2 (b) gzuñs/dhāraṇī, or dam-tshig-dkyil-ḥkhor/samaya-maṅḍala, maṅḍala of symbols: instead of figures: emblems. The symbols of synthetic formulas gzuñs/dhāraṇī or of dam-tshig/samaya, fol.12a.

3 (c) maṅḍala of law (chos) based essentially on the seal of the law (dharma-mudrā), in the centre of a vajra: five Buddhas in samādhi-mudrā, fol.13a.

4 (d) maṅḍala of act based essentially on the seal of act (karma-mudrā), like 1a: but on the four sides of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana four mtshan-ma/goddesses, Lha-mo, fol.13b.

(2) Intermediate maṅḍala of the four seals (mudrā), for those who are converted following a medium explanation.

5 (a) maṅḍala of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, in the centre: Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, in bodhyagrī mudrā, surrounded by the four goddesses (śakti), fol. 14a.

6 (b) maṅḍala of Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, fol.14a.

7 (c) maṅḍala of Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava, fol.14b.

8 (d) maṅḍala of Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, fol.14b.

9 (e) maṅḍala of Don-yod-grub-pa/Amoghasiddhi, fol.14b.

(3) Concise maṅḍala of a single seal (mudrā), for persons who are converted following a concise explanation.

10 maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, fol.14b.

Section II dedicated to Khams-gsum-rnam-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya of the grand family of vajra: serves to purify anger by means of anger.

A. Maṇḍala of the grand family of the vajra.

(1) Perfect or detailed maṇḍala.

11 (a) fundamental maṇḍala based essentially on the grand seal, in the centre: Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, four faces, bodhyagrī mudrā with rdo-rje/vajra, fol.15ā.

12 (b) gzuñs-dkyil-ḥkhor/dhāraṇī-maṇḍala, based essentially on the symbol/dam-tshig, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.20a.

13 (c) maṇḍala of law, based essentially on the seal of the law, in the centre: Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/ Vairocana in samādhi-mudrā with rdo-rje/vajra, fol.20b.

14 (d) maṇḍala of action, based essentially on the seal of action, in the centre: Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad sems-ma, fol.21a.

(2) Intermediate maṇḍala.

15 (a) maṇḍala of four seals of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana. In this case mudrā=śakti: Rdo-rje-sems-ma/ Vajrasattvī, etc., fol.21a.

16 (b) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-Hūm-mdzad/Vajra-hūmkāra, fol.21b.

17 (c) maṇḍala of Rin-chen-Hūm-mdzad/Ratna-hūmkāra, fol.21b.

18 (d) maṇḍala of Chos-kyi-Hūm-mdzad/Dharma-hūmkāra, fol.21b.

19 (e) maṇḍala of Las-kyi-Hūm-mdzad/Karma-hūmkāra, fol.22a.

(3) Concise maṇḍala, maṇḍala of one seal.

20 maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-Hūm-mdzad/Vajra-hūmkāra.

B. Grand maṇḍala of the three worlds for one who believes in the mystic family of the exoteric vajra. The mystic family of

the exoteric vajra (*phyi-rol-gyi rdo-rje-rigs*) is the term for non-Buddhist divinities absorbed in the Buddhist olympus and arranged in the external part of the maṇḍala.

21 (a) grand maṇḍala, based essentially on the grand seal, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/ Vairocana, fol.22a.

22 (b) gzuñs-dkyil-ḥkhor/dhāraṇī-maṇḍala, based fundamentally on symbols/dam-tshig, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.23a.

23 (c) maṇḍala of the law, based essentially on the seal of the law, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.23b.

24 (d) maṇḍala of action, based essentially on the seal of action, in the centre Rdo-rje-drag-po/Vajrarudra with his śakti, fol.24a.

Section III based essentially on the mudrā of law that is the supreme mystic gnosis (*prajñā-pāramitā*) which serves to purify creatures of spiritual ignorance (*gti-mug/moha*). It explains the maṇḍala called Ḥgro-ḥdul-baḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/Jagadvinaya-maṇḍala to convert creatures who belong to the mystic family of the lotus (*padmaḥi-rigs/padma-kula*).

(1) Detailed maṇḍala

25 (a) as in other sections; variations in acolytes and their disposition, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.25a.

26 (b) as in **25**, in the centre a stūpa, fol. 28b.

27 (c) as in **25**, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana in samādhi-mudrā, fol.29b.

28 (d) as in **25**, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.30a.

(2) Intermediate maṇḍala, a-e as in other sections.

29 (a) Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/ Vairocana with four mudrās. Here mudrā=symbol: rdo-rje/vajra contrasigned by a lotus, gem, lotus, double lotus, fol.30a.

30 (b) Ḥgro-ḥdul/Jagad-vinaya, with four hands: vajra, hook,

lotus-fist (padmaḥi-khu-tshur), bow: all contrasigned by a lotus, fol.30a.

31 (c) Gtsug-phud-saṅs-rgyas/* Cūḍa-buddha, fol.30a.

32 (d) Padma-tiñ-ñe-ḥdzin/Padma-samādhi, fol.30.b.

33 (e) Padma-ñes-paḥi-dbañ-phyug.

(3) Concise maṇḍala.

34 as in other sections, in the centre: Ḥgro-ḥdul/Jagad-vinaya.

Section IV based essentially on the mudrā of action which serves to convert creatures who belong to the mystic family of the gem: has the goal to oppose avarice (*ser-snal mātsarya*).

(1) Detailed maṇḍala, as in the section of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, variations in acolytes and their disposition.

35 (a) fol.31a.

36 (b) fol.33a.

37 (c) fol.34a.

38 (d) fol.34a.

(2) Intermediate maṇḍala, as in the section of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, variations in acolytes and their disposition.

39 (a) fol.34a,b

40 (b) fol.34a,b

41 (c) fol.34a,b

42 (d) fol.34a,b

43 (e) fol.34a,b

(3) Concise maṇḍala.

44 maṇḍala of Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi, fol.34b.

(B) Rgyud phyi-ma/Uttaratantra.

(a) Rdo-rje-dbyiṅs sgrub-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor (37-deity maṇḍala).

45 Rnam-par-snañ sgrub-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre the symbol of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana as in gzuñs dkyil-ḥkhor/dhāraṇī-maṇḍala.

46 Mi-bskyod-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/Akṣobhya, symbol.

47 Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava, symbol.

48 Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, symbol, fol.34b, 35b.

49 Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi, symbol.

50-81 Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva and retinue ending with Rdo-rje-ḥbebs.

(b) Khams-gsum-rnam-rgyal sgrub-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor.

82 as in the gzuṅs dkyil-ḥkhor/dhāraṇī-maṇḍala of Khams-gsum-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya, symbol in centre, fol.35b.

(c) Phyi-rdo-rje-rigs-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor, mystic family of the exterior vajra has non-Buddhist divinities adopted in the Buddhist olympus and arranged in the external part of the maṇḍala.

83-103 In the centre Rdo-rje-rig-pa/Vajrakula and from Mchog-chuṅ-ma to Rgyu-ma-rdo-rje etc., 21deity maṇḍala, fol.35b.

(b) Ḥgro-ba-ḥdul-baḥi sgrub-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor.

104 in the centre Ḥgro-ḥdul-ba/Jagad-vinaya (similar to gzuṅs dkyil-ḥkhor/dhāraṇī-maṇḍala of the maṇḍala of Ḥgro-ḥdul), fol.36a.

105-141 Saṅs-rgyas-pa-dma upto Padma-ḥbebs, 37deity maṇḍala, fol.36a.

(e) Don-grub-kyi dkyil-khor/Amoghasiddhi-maṇḍala.

142-173 in the centre Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi, with Rin-chen-ḥbebs and his retinue, fol.36a.

§33. Vajraśekhara/Rdo-rje-rtse-mo (bśad-rgyud or explanatory tantra), according to the tract of Bu-ston entitled: *bśad-rgyud rdo-rje-rtse-moḥi dkyil-ḥkhor bkod-pa*.

(A) rtag-pa thams-cad byuñ-ba rigs bsdus-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor (maṇḍala inclusive of five mystic families, taken together)

174 185 main divinities divided in five maṇḍalas in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (four faces, bodhyagrī mudrā with vajra), fol.1a.

(B) rigs so-soḥi dkyil-ḥkhor (maṇḍala of the five families taken separately).

(á) maṇḍalas of the mystic family of Tathāgata intended to purify passions by means of passions.

Detailed maṇḍalas (175-178)

175 (a) large maṇḍala, based essentially on the great seal/mudrā of the physical plane (sku phyag-rgya-chen-po), in the centre Rnam-snañ/Vairocana with rdo-rje/vajra, fol.13a.

176 (b) gzuñs dkyil-ḥkhor, based essentially on the seal of symbols (dam-tshig phyag-rgya), in the centre Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-dbañ-phyug-ma/Vajradhātviśvarī.

177 (c) maṇḍala of law, based essentially on the seal of law, the central divinity differs slightly from the corresponding one of the Section I of the De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha, fol.15a.

178 (d) maṇḍala of action, based essentially on the seal of action, fol.15a.

Intermediate maṇḍala

179-183 as in De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha, fol.15a.

184 Concise maṇḍala, as in De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha, fol.15a.

(b) maṇḍalas of the mystic family of Vajra intended to purify anger by means of anger.

185-188 detailed maṇḍala, four classes as above, generally like the preceding, fol.15b, 16b.

189-193 Intermediate maṇḍala, as above, generally like the

preceding, fol.16b.

194 Concise maṇḍala, esoteric maṇḍala of letters, synthesis of all maṇḍalas; in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana with sixteen letters, fol.17a.

§34 From Śrī-paramādyā-tantra (Toh.487), Dpal-mchog, from Bu-ston's *Dpal-mchog rig-bsdus-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*.

Section I of supreme knowledge (prajñāpāramitā), symbolised in the great seal, which means essentially the mystic knowledge called ādarśajñāna and serves to counter all subjective constructions of the psyche (ālaya-vijñāna).

(a) the other-worldly or esoteric (ḥjig-rten-las-ḥdas) maṇḍala.

(aa) for a single mystic family taken in particular.

195 (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ dbugs-ḥbyuñ, to counter all passions, in the centre Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, fol.2a.

196 (2) De-bzhin-gśegs-pa dbugs-ḥbyuñ, to counter mental states derived from analogous karmas accumulated in previous lives, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, yellow, in bodhyagrī mudrā, fol.6a.

197 (3) Khams-gsum-rnam-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya, to counter anger, in the centre Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, fol.6b.

198 (4) Ḥgro-ḥdul/Jagadvinaya, to counter spiritual ignorance, in the centre Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, fol.8a.

199 (5) Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, to counter avarice, in the centre Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, fol.9b.

200 (6) Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajramuṣṭi, based essentially on the moral energy unifying the three mystic bodies of all Buddhas, in the centre Vajramuṣṭi, fol.9b.

201 (7) Ḥjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, based essentially on supreme knowledge, in the centre the letters a ra pa ca na, fol.10b.

202 (8) Rdo-rje-ḥkhor-lo/Vajracakra, introduction to maṇḍalas of all mystic families, in the centre Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tu-ḥkhor-lo-skor-ba/Cittotpād-ānantara-cakravartin, fol.11b.

203 (9) Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja who perfects the double accumulation of moral and intellectual merit, in the centre Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja, fol.12a.

(ab) for the mystic family taken together

204 (10) Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, who consists essentially of liturgy intended for protection, in the centre Vajrayakṣa, fol.13a.

205 in the centre Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, fol.13b.

(b) worldly or exoteric (h̄jig-rten-pa/laukika) maṇḍala.

206 (1) Maṇḍala of peaceful deities, contrasigned by a short lance (*zhi-ba mthun-thun mtshan-pa*) which serves to convert creatures convertible by Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara, in the centre Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/Maheśvara, fol.14a.

207 (2) maṇḍala of Ma-mo/Mātrkā, to convert creatures convertible by Ma-mo, in the centre Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla, fol. 14b.

208 (3) maṇḍala of three Miñ-po for creatures convertible by the three Miñ-po, in the centre Rgyal-bar-byed-pa, fol.15a.

209 (4) maṇḍala of four Srin-mo for creatures convertible by Srin-mo, fol.15b.

Section II consecrated to esoteric formulas (ñags/mantra), based essentially on the mudrā of symbol (dam-tshig phyag-rgya/samaya-mudrā) which has for essence the mystic knowledge of the identity of creatures and of Buddha (samatā-jñāna) and serves to counter the sinful mind.

(a) derived from the fundamental tantra

210 (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, to counter the passions by passions, in the centre Vajrasattva, fol.16a.

211 (2) maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gśegs-pa/Tathāgata, to counter the state eventually derived from analogous karmas accumulated in previous lives, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana as Vajrasattva, fol.16b.

212 (3) maṇḍala of Rab-tu-khro-bo, to counter anger by means of anger, in the centre Rab-dgaḥ-baḥi-rdo-rje.

213 (4) maṇḍala of H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, to counter erroneous doctrines, in the centre Lokeśvara, fol.17b.

214 (5) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha to

counter avarice, in the centre Ākāśagarbha, fol.18a.

215 (6) maṇḍala of the mystic family to obtain power, realisation, initiation, introduction into esoteric and exoteric maṇḍalas, in the centre Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, fol.18a.

216 (7) maṇḍala of the three Miñ-po, in the centre as in the preceding section, fol.18b.

217 (8) maṇḍala of the four Srin-mo, in the centre as in the preceding section, fol.18b.

218 (9) maṇḍala of Lha-ma-yin/Asura for creatures convertible by Asura, in the centre Viṣṇu, fol.18b.

219 (10) maṇḍala of Klu/Nāga, in the centre Śeṣa, fol.19a.

220 (11) esoteric (gsaṅ-ba) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva to realise the power which has not yet been realised, in the centre Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ-bde-ba-chen-po/Mahāsukha-vajrasattva, fol.19b.

(b) Maṇḍalas derived from Rtogs-pa-thams-cad-bsdus-paḥi rtsa-baḥi rgyud/Sarvakalpa-samuccaya mūla-tantra

(ba) maṇḍala derived from Rtog-pa-thams-cad-bsdus-pa rtsa-baḥi rgyud

221 (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ /Vajrasattva, as above in the centre Vajrasattva, fol.19b.

222 (2) maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gśegs-pa /Tathāgata, as above in the centre yellow Rnam-snañ/Vairocana in bodhyagrī mudrā with rdo-rje/vajra, fol.21a.

223 (3) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-me-ltar-rab-tu-ḥbar-ba, as above in the centre Rdo-rje-me-ltar-rab-tu-ḥbar-ba, fol.21b.

224 (4) maṇḍala of Ḥgro-ḥdul/Jagadvinaya, in the centre Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, fol.25b.

225 (5) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, as above in the centre Ākāśagarbha, fol.26b.

226 (6) maṇḍala of three Miñ-po, in the centre Rgyal-bar-byed-pa, fol.27b.

- 227** (7) maṇḍala of four Srin-mo, fol.27b
228 (8) maṇḍala of Klu/Nāga, in the centre Séṣa, fol.27b.
229 (9) maṇḍala of Bgegs-rnam-par-gzhon-pa, fol.27b.
230 (10) maṇḍala of the mystic families taken together, in the centre Rdo-rje-sems-ma rab-bzhag-ma, fol.28a.

(bb) esoteric (gsaṅ-ba) maṇḍala to realise the power which cannot be realised by magic rites.

- 231** (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, in the centre Vajrasattva, fol.28a.
232 (2) maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gségs/Tathāgata, in the centre Saṅs-rgyas dkon-mchog/Buddha-ratna, fol.30a.
233 (3) maṇḍala of Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala, in the centre Rdo-rje-ñi-ma Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Vajratejas Jvālānala, fol.30b.
234 (4) maṇḍala of Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba phra-mo, in the centre Khro-bo Me-ltar-ḥbar/Krodha-Jvālānala, fol.31a.
235 (5) maṇḍala of Hgro-ba-ḥdul-ba/Jagadvinaya, in the centre Hjug-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, fol.31b.
236 (6) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, in the centre Ākāśagarbha, fol.32b.

Section III dedicated to the Law and based essentially on the seal of the Law which has as essence the knowledge of distinction (pratyavekṣā-jñāna) and serves to counter all false imaginings of conscience (yid-kyi rnam-śes/manovijñāna).

- 237** (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva as above but difference in the disposition of each divinity, fol.33a.
238 (2) maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gségs/Tathāgata, as above, fol.33a.
239 (3) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Vajra-Jvālānala, as above, fol.33a.
240 (4) maṇḍala of Hgro-ba-ḥdul-ba/Jagadvinaya, as above fol.33b.
241 (5) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, as

above, fol. 33b.

242-245 (6-9) four maṇḍalas of H̄jig-rten-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, as above, fol.33b.

246 (10) maṇḍala of the mystic families all taken together (rigs bsdus), as above, fol.33b.

247 (11) esoteric maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, as above, fol.33b.

248 (12) esoteric maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gśegs/Tathāgata. as above, fol.33b.

249 (13) esoteric maṇḍala of Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala, as above, fol.33b.

250 (14) esoteric maṇḍala of H̄gro-ba-ḥdul-ba/Jagadvinaya, as above, fol.34a.

251 (15) esoteric maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, as above, fol.34a.

252-261 (16-21) = nos.10-15 revealed in the liturgy of the secret maṇḍala, as above with slight differences, fol.34a.

Section IV based essentially on the seal of action and on the mystic consciousness of realising activity (bya-ba grub-paḥi ye-śes/*kr̥tya-sādhana-jñāna), which counters all the five knowledges of the senses.

262 (1) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, generally equal to that of the II section, fol.34b.

263 (2) maṇḍala of De-bzhin-gśegs/Tathāgata.

264 (3) maṇḍala of Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala.

265 (4) maṇḍala of H̄gro-ḥdul/Jagadvinaya.

266 (5) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha.

267 (6) maṇḍala of the three Miṅ-po.

268 (7) maṇḍala of the four Sñiṅ-mo.

269 (8) maṇḍala of Klu/Nāga.

270 (9) maṇḍala of Sdug-bsñal-las-ḥdon-pa.

271 (10) all-inclusive (rigs bsdus) maṇḍala.

272 (11-12) esoteric mandalas.

§35. Maṇḍalas from the Nāma-saṅgīti/Mtshan-brjod (Toh.360) as per *Mtshan-brjod-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa* of Bu-ston.

273 (1) maṇḍala called: the essence of the absolute (chos-kyi-dbyiñs-kyi sñiñ-po) or from the name of the commentary according to Hjam-dpal-grags-pa: nam-mkhaḥ-dri-med-dkyil-ḥkhor-chen-po. Probably from the commentary on the Nāma-saṅgīti called Mantrārth-āvalokinī, in the centre Hjam-dbyañs/Mañjuḥosa, fol.1.

Every main maṇḍala includes many secondary maṇḍalas.

274 (2) esoteric maṇḍala (gsaṅ-ldan dkyil-ḥkhor) according to Dpal-ldan-byaṅ-chub-mchog, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-chen-po/Mahāvairocana, white, four faces, two hands in the bodhyagrī mudrā, in the centre of his heart ādibuddha with five faces, fol.12a.

275 (3) maṇḍala called by the name of the commentary according to Hjam-dpal-bśes-gñen, Nam-mkhaḥ dri-med chuñ dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre of the main maṇḍala Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-chen-po/Mahāvairocana, four faces and two hands in the bodhyagrī mudrā, fol.17b.

276 (4) maṇḍala called “net of māyā”, māyājāla, sgyu-ḥphrul dra-ba dkyil-ḥkhor according to Avadhūtipā, in the centre of the main maṇḍala Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, four faces, in bodhyagrī mudrā, fol.19b.

§36. From the Vairocanābhisambodhi (Toh.494) and affiliated texts.

From the Spyod-paḥi rgyud Rnam-par-snañ mñon-par-byañ-chub/Vairocanābhisambodhi-caryātantra. According to the *Skabs gñis-pa spyod-paḥi-rgyud-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod* by Bu-ston.

277 (1) Sñiñ-rje-chen-po-can-gyi dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Mahākāruṇika; benediction of the inexhaustible spread of the physical (*sku*) plane, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, yellow, in samādhi-mudrā, fol.1a. The text corresponding to these sections in the Vairocanābhisambodhi is referred to and commented upon by Bu-ston. This text in Chinese and Tibetan has been edited and translated into Japanese by Togano in *Mandara-nō kenkyū*, p.68. We refer to this book of the Japanese scholar for further details.

278 (2) yi-ge ḥkhor bskoñ-baḥi dkyil-ḥkhor; benediction of the inexhaustible display of the verbal (*gsun*) plane, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana or symbol or letter, with mystical letters around him, fol.9b.

279 (3) gsañ-baḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/esoteric maṇḍala/guhya-maṇḍala, benediction of the inexhaustible display of the spiritual (*thugs*) plane, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, with mystic letters around him, fol.10a.

From the Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad mñon-par-byañ-chub-paḥi rgyud phyi-ma/Vairocanābhisambodhi-uttaratantra.

280 (1) Maṇḍala that reveals the apparition of the Buddha in the three worlds without Buddha, in the centre yellow Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana in samādhi-mudrā, fol.16a.

From the Khro-bo Gśin-rje-gśed khro-bo rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi rgyud of the mystic family of the spiritual plane (Toh.604).

281 (1) Yi-dvags phal-mo-cheḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre Gśin-rje-gśed nag-po/Black Yamāntaka, fol.18a.

282 (2) Mi-ro dmar-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre Gśin-rje-gśed nag-po/Black Yamāntaka, fol.18a.

- 283** (3) Thod-pa mañ-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre Gśin-rje-gśed nag-po/Black Yamāntaka, fol.18a.
284 (4) Mduñ-thuñ mañ-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre Gśin-rje/Yama with six faces, fol.18a.
285 (5) Śu-la mañ-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor, in the centre Gśin-rje-gśed nag-po/Black Yamāntaka, fol.18b.
286 (6) Be-con mañ-poḥi dkyil-khor, in the centre Gśin-rje-gśed nag-po/Black Yamāntaka, fol.18b.

From the Bkaḥ-nañ mi-g.yo rtul-phod-paḥi rgyud (Toh. 495)

(a) family of Tathāgata

- 287** Khro-bo-rgyal-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Krodharāja, in the centre yellow Śākya-mgon-po/Śākyanātha with two hands in samādhi-mudrā, fol.19a.
288 Gsañ-baḥi-bdag-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Guhyapati, in the centre Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, as above fol.24a.
289 Khro-bo-chen-poḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Mahākrodha, in the centre Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, as above, fol.24b.
290 Ḥjam-dpal dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Mañjuśrī, in the centre Mañjuśrī, fol.24b.

(b) family of the word, lost.

(c) family of the spiritual plane

- 291** Rdo-rje dkyil-ḥkhor-chen-po/maḥāmaṇḍala of vajra, in the centre Rnam-snañ/Vairocana, yellow, in samādhi-mudrā, fol.26a.
292 Ḥjam-dpal dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala of Mañjuśrī, in the centre Ḥjam-dpal-dbyaṅs gzhon-nu/Kumāra Mañjuśrīghoṣa, fol.30b.
293 Rdo-rje-sa dbaṅ-skur, in the centre wheel, fol.31a.
From Phyag-na-rdo-rje dbaṅ-skur-baḥi rgyud
294 Ye-śes-chen-poḥi dbaṅ skur-baḥi dkyil-ḥkhor/maṇḍala for giving empowerment of Mahājñāna, in the centre yello-phyin/Prajñāpāramitā or her symbol, fol.31b.

§37 From Śrī-vajramaṇḍ-ālaṅkāra (Toh.490), Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po rgyan rgyud (its major part explains the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā). From the Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po rgyan-gyi rgyud-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi rnam-gzhag by Bu-ston.

295 (1) great esoteric maṇḍala of all the Tathāgatas, ornament of the essence of the great vajra in the sphere of the absolute, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/ Vairocana in samādhi-mudrā, fol.1a.

296 (2) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po/ Vajramaṇḍa, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.10a.

297 (3) maṇḍala of Dbañ-chen, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.11a.

298 (4) maṇḍala of Chu-lha/Varuṇa, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.11a.

299 (5) maṇḍala of Me-lha/Agni, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.11b.

300 (6) maṇḍala of Rluñ-lha/Vāyu, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.12a.

301 (7) maṇḍala of Śes-rab-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa/Prajñāpāramitā, in the centre yellow Prajñāpāramitā, fol.12a.

302 (8) maṇḍala of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-chen-po/Mahāvairocana, in the centre white Vairocana in samādhi-mudrā, fol.12b.

303 (9) maṇḍala of the baptism in which identity with all the Tathāgatas is realised, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.13a.

Maṇḍalas of the khro-bo/krodhas (304-309)

304 (10) maṇḍala of H̄jig-rten-gsum-las-rnam-par-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.13b.

305 (11) maṇḍala of Heruka, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.13b.

306 (12) maṇḍala of Gsin-rje-gsed/Yamāntaka, in the centre

divinity of the same name, fol.14a.

307 (13) maṇḍala of Khro-bo-gzogs-ma, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.14a.

308 (14) maṇḍala of Khro-bo rta-mgrin/Krodha Hayagrīva, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.14b.

309 (15) maṇḍala of Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.14a.

310 (16) maṇḍala of Hgro-ba-ḥdul-ba/Jagadvinaya, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.14a.

311 (17) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.14b.

312-3 (18) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.15a.

314 (19) maṇḍala of Hjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.15a.

315 (20) maṇḍala of Chos-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/ Dharmacakra, in the centre Rdo-rje-rgyu/Vajrahetu, fol.15a.

316 (21) maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzöd/ Gaganagañja, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.15b.

317 (22) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayaksa, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.15b.

318 (23) maṇḍala of Don-yod-rgyal-po/Amogharāja, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.15b.

319 (24) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16a.

320 (25) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16a.

321 (26) maṇḍala of Legs-pa/Sādhu, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16a.

322 (27) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid/Vajratejas, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16b.

323 (28) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-rgyal-mtshan/Vajraketu, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16b.

- 324** (29) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-bzhad/Vajrāhasa, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.16b.
- 325** (30) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-smra-ba/Vajrabhāṣa, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17a.
- 326** (31) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-bsruñ/Vajrarakṣa, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17a.
- 327** (32) maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17a.
- 328** (33) maṇḍala of Dbañ-phyug-chun-po/Maheśvara, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17b.
- 329** (34) maṇḍala of Dgañ-byed-dbañ-phyug/Nandikeśvara, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17b.
- 330** (35) maṇḍala of Miñ-po gsum, in the centre divinity of the same name, fol.17b.
- 331** (36) maṇḍala of Gtum-bu-ru, in the centre divinity of the same name. fol.17b.
- 332** (37) maṇḍala of Byañ-chub/Bodhi, in the centre Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, fol.18a.

§38. From the Sarva-durgati-pariśodhana (Toh.483); Kun-rig/Sarvavid, included in Nan-son-thams-cad yons-su-sbyon-baḥi gzi-brijid-kyi-rgyal-poḥi brtag-pa; according to Bu-ston and the tradition accepted by him he has emanated from De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha. This list is taken from the *Kun-rig dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa* by Bu-ston.

I. fundamental maṅḍala of Kun-rig/Sarvavid revealed in the first chapter.

333 in the centre White Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, four faces, hands in samādhi-mudrā, fol.1.

334 (1) maṅḍala of Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni for the benefit of creatures born in the evil forms of existence, in the centre Yellow Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, fol.17b.

335 (2) maṅḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by Tathāgatas, for the benefit of those who have short life and little fortune, in the centre Vajrapāṇi, fol.18b.

336 (3) maṅḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika, for the benefit of those who can be converted by the Caturmahārājika, in the centre Vajrapāṇi, fol.18b.

337 (4) maṅḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by the ten Phyogs-skyon/Dikpālas, for the benefit of those who can be converted by the Dikpālas, in the centre Vajrapāṇi fol.19a.

II. maṅḍalas revealed in the supplementary (*phyi-ma*) chapter

338 (5) maṅḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by the eight planets and constellations for the benefit of those who can be converted by them, in the centre Ḥjig-rten-gsum-rgyal-ba/Trailokyavijaya, fol.19b.

339 (6) maṅḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by eight great Klu/aṣṭamahānāga for the benefit of those who can be converted by them, in the centre Vajrapāṇi fol.20a.

340 (7) maṇḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by eight Ḥjigs-byed/Bhairavas for the benefit of those who can be converted by them, in the centre Khro-bo Ḥjig-rten-gsum-rgyal-ba/Krodha Trailokyavijaya, fol.20b.

341 (8) maṇḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi surrounded by eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas for the benefit of those who can be converted by them, in the centre Ḥjig-rten-gsum-rgyal-ba/Trailokyavijaya, fol.21a.

342 (9) maṇḍala of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus to obtain long life in this existence and to be liberated from the evil forms of existence after death, in the centre red Amitāyus, fol.22a.

343 (10) maṇḍala of the four Ḥkhor-los-bsgyur-ba/Cakravartins who serve to augment the efficacy of mystic formulas, in the centre the figure of a rdo-rje/vajra, fol.22b.

344 (11) maṇḍala of Khro-bo Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala who serves to purify from wrath by means of wrath, in the centre Jvālānala, fol.23a.

“The gnosis is that particular knowledge in which there is an identity of subject and object: it is the Buddha himself; the word for it (gnosis) also means the text which contains the revelation and the way leading to salvation, because the reality which has to be obtained and that which serves as a means for it are closely connected with each other”(1).

Further, the ten Buddhas who correspond to the ten cardinal points represent the image of the truth revealed in infinite space and in eternity, because within that infinite space revelation is going on eternally (*h̄das ma-hoñ h̄byun-ba*).

We find the image of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, who gives name to the chapel beside the door, at the left of one who enters. At the right there is a statue of Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala.

This sanctuary of Samada was probably founded at the time of Chos-kyi-(blo-) gros, in the XI century, and it stands as restored by the Sa-skyas, when Kun-dgañ-blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan took its possession, enlarged and restored it: from the first period remain some bronze statues, mural paintings of the atrium and of the chapel on the first floor. But the plaster statues on the second floor of the central temple and in the four chapels of the surrounding gallery of the court cannot be ascribed to so ancient a period: they have abandoned the primitive hieratic simplicity to assume a more decorative aspect: the clothes come down in sumptuous bell-shaped enlarging folds, which are in contrast to the nude adherence of the monastic robes on the figures of the Buddha as we see in the other images. In brief, there is an undeniable influence of

(1) *Prajñāpāramitā jñānam advayam sa Tathāgataḥ/sādhyā-tādārthya-yogena tācchābhyam granthamārgayoḥ*, in *Abhisamayālaṅkāraḥ*, ed. Tucci, p.28.

other currents, for instance in the statues of the ten Buddhas which surround the image of the Prajñāpāramitā; the analogies between them and the techniques and ornamental motifs of Central Asia are evident. Instead of keeping the perfectly round shape, which is characteristic of the low Indian style, the upper top of the halo is extended by a slightly curved prolongation.

One has the same impression looking at the mural paintings here and there between the different statues. They are partly destroyed and partly replaced by more recent paintings where always appears the inevitable Tsoñ-kha-pa. The remaining ones on the other hand represent Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and monks, in which figures in Central-Asiatic style, as it seems to me, cannot be denied. The making of this connection is not arbitrary at all; as I have already indicated in the introduction, the temple of Iwang will demonstrate in an irrefutable way the impression we had in Samada, which I could also easily explain with the help of comparison of style, is documented by facts.

§40. *The cycle of Mon-bu putra in the temple of Dregun (Samada).* Following the road to Gyantse, half a kilometer further down after having left the village of Samada, we encounter another monastery (fig.33) to our right. Greatly destroyed during the Anglo-Tibetan war, it has been reconstructed in the course of these last years. Its name is Dregun gonpa (1) and today this monastery is administered by the Yellow Sect. I will not speak of the new part, which cannot be in the least interesting for us:

(1) Presently the lamas write *hdre-gun dgon-pa*, whereas the orthography adopted by the Myañ-chuñ is *hbras-khud*. On the map Riku, see above p.93. .

in the cella one sees the figure of Śākyamuni, surrounded by sixteen arhats sitting in niches; the mural paintings on the other walls represent the thirteen forms of Vajrabhairava we studied in the preceding volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* (1). A few paintings which escaped the renewing fury of the monks can at best be ascribed to the XVI century; one of the best preserved paintings represents Akṣobhya surrounded by his 108 emanations. On the opposite wall we have Maitreya.

The most ancient part of the Gompa is the Mgon-khan, that means the cella which is consecrated to the protecting divinity, precisely Gur-mgon, the patron of the Sa-skyapa school: all around the patron on the altar have been put small figures of the lesser divinities of his cycle, that means the Pu-tra miñ-sriñ, which are pretty common among the Sa-skyapa, but scarcely diffused in the other schools. The triad contains the Mon-bu pu-tra or more simply *putra*, the Bha-ta or Bha-tra or the Sriñ-mo; in pu-tra one easily recognizes the transcription of the Sanskrit word *putra* "son", which is accompanied by its Tibetan translation (2): *bu*. Bha-ta or Bha-tra is indeed *bhrātar*/brother. The triad is called miñ-sriñ, brothers and sister, because as we will see, all three of them are born from the same divine couple. In the Sanskrit formulās which accompany the liturgy, we find Rakṣa-putra, Ruṭa-bhaṭa = Rudrabhrātā, Ru-lu rāk-ṣasī; they are demons accepted, as the word Mon says, by the people living in the frontier provinces. The name Mon, by which the Tibetans have designated them, is generic and therefore does not allow any closer geographical determination.

(1) Vol.III/2.96.

(2) Mon-bu "son of Mon".

However, the fact that one of the oldest liturgical texts ever consecrated to this cycle bears the name of Byañ-chub-ḥod, the famous king and apostle of Buddhism in Western Tibet, allows us to suppose that these divinities have been introduced into the lamaistic pantheon by the work of the masters of Western Tibet, that is to say: in the province of Guge or in another neighbouring region. This seems to find confirmation in the fact that the liturgy of the Mon-bu often mentions the cemetery Ma-ru-rtse, put by Tibetan tradition between Chamba and Zanskar in the valley of the Chandrabhaga or its neighbourhood (1).

The cycle of the *pu-tra miñ-sriñ* (2) forms a part of the larger cycle of the Mgon-po, protector of the sect of Sa-skyā-pa, i.e. of the Gur mgon.

It is not easy to determine the origins and the significance of this god. In Tibetan Gur means tent; so one could translate Gur mgon very well by “the protector of the tent”. But one should not forget that the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur includes a *Hphags-pa mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma rdo-rje-gur zhes-bya-baḥi rgyud-kyi-rgyal-po-chen-po brtag* (Toh.419, compare 1321, 1322, 1195) i.e.

(1) Compare *Dpal Sa-skyā-paḥi bstan-sruñ Mgon-po che-chuñ mkhan lcām-dral dur-khrod-bdag-po dañ-bcas-pa-rnams-la gtor-ma ḥbul-baḥi cho-ga ḥphrin-las myur mgyogs-kyi pho-ña* by the fifth Pañ-chen Chos-kyi-grags-pa-bstan-paḥi-dbañ-phyug, fol.15ab (no.1161).

Besides the works quoted in *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.68 (where one has to read ÑI instead of TI), other works on Mon-bu putra are *Dpal Sa-skyā-paḥi yab chos yañ phur thun-moñ-gi bkaḥ-sruñ dkar bdud lcām-dral-gyi thabs rjes-gnañ dañ-bcas-pa* and *Dpal rdo-rje-nag-po-chen-poḥi las-byed Pu-tra miñ-sriñ gsum-gyi gtor cho-ga rjes-gnañ dañ-bcas-pa glog-gi spu-gri* in the Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, ÑI (very similar to the treatise of the Pañ-chen); *Gur zhal pu-tra gsum-gyis bzlog mdos gon dkar rdor-gdan-gyi zhe sol nag ḥgros-su-bkod-pa* by Nag-dbañ Hjam-dpal-dbe-legs-rgya-mtsho (no.1128)

(2) Miñ-sriñ is an abbreviation of Miñ-po and Sriñ-mo in some of the maṇḍalas whose scheme we have given above.

Ārya-ḍākinī-vajra-pañjara-mahātantrarāja-kalpa nāma.

It is a Tantric text, diffused especially in the Sa-skyapa schools, that describes experiences which are symbolized by the five ḍākinī. In translation its title sounds like: “The title of the king of the great tantras named: of the adamant cage of the noble ḍākinīs”. Thus, although signifying “tent” in Tibetan, in the translations Gur corresponds to the Sanskrit word *pañjara*, which means exactly “cage”, sometimes however also cage of bones, i.e. a skeleton. The liturgical tradition preserved in Tibet and above all in the Sa-skyapa school, proves that precisely this must be the meaning given to the word *pañjara*/Tib. *gur* in the esoteric schools. It means that Gur mgon originally is a chthonic divinity, which is very near to Mahākāla; and in the ritual texts indeed he is called Rdo-rje nag-po-chen-po gur-gyi-mgon-po, Vajra-mahākāla-pañjara-nātha (1). As such he is the God of the cemeteries, or, symbolically, the God who helps destroying the corporal cages in which ignorance keeps us prisoners.

Very probably, little by little, new elements have been inserted into the maṇḍala of this god on Tibetan soil, some of which do not seem to be Indian, nor to have originally belonged to the liturgical texts which had been inspired by the fundamental tantra.

Lamaism has not taken all things from India, but as we had several opportunities of noting in the course of these studies, it has accepted demons and ghosts from the autochthone religion,

(1) See for instance *Gur-mgon-pohi khro-bcuhi bsruñ-ḥkhor rdo-rjeḥi brag rdzom bar-chad kun sel* of Kun-dgaḥ-rin-chen.

transforming and adapting them to Buddhist conceptions. That is the reason why, in the chapels we are dealing with, we find the cycle of Mon-bu pu-tra: they too were chthonic divinities which have been associated with Gur mgon. The Sanskrit formulas of the liturgy call them Yakṣa. Through the symbol of their image they reveal that world of terror in which Tibetans had always been living, and that had nourished their phantasy. Little by little however they lose their original character and they get mixed up with the multitude of the Bstan-sruṅ and of the Bstan-sruṅ-ma, protecting divinities of the Buddhist teaching, which contain a large number of preBuddhist elements that have survived in the lamaistic pantheon. This new function they got is clearly indicated by the texts quoted above and especially by the liturgical treatise of the fourth Paṅ-chen, in which, after the ceremony one makes a wish that Gur mgon together with his whole suite may accept the offerings brought to him (p.5b), protect the teachings of the masters, defend the holy revelations, glorify the three gems, allay and drive out the forces of evil which hinder the way to salvation.

If the interpretation I have given is right, then one has to conclude that the distinctive symbol for Gur mgon is a late addition: that symbol is the *gaṇḍī*, that is to say the piece of wood used for beating the hours in the monasteries, which in Oriental sanctuaries has preceded the use of bells. And it is a supplementary symbol indeed, because each of his hands already holds a specific object: a sword and a cranial-pan. But finally the terrific character of the divinity has succeeded in influencing the symbol too: the symbol transformed itself in a kind of terrifying club, which punishes everyone offending the sanctity of the word. Gur mgon being the same divinity as

Mahākāla was necessarily also the god of justice, who governs the oath and watches over the fulfilment of vows and promises. The oath and the invocation of the divinity which guarantees faith constituting the essential part of many Bon-po rites, whence perhaps some of these genii entered into Lamaism, even if under a changed name. In Buddhism the promise becomes the supreme vow, that means the vow of pursuing supreme enlightenment; if a person does not fulfil this vow, then he will again be pulled into the realm of Samsāra (*nivartate*); he will again fall a victim to the forces of life and hence of death, and he will be devoured by the dark world of instincts that pull us away from redeeming light. In the figure of the lamaistic Gur mgon a glimpse of the primitive religion has remained, but with a different content; it becomes the symbol of a nobler and deeper conception of life, so deep that the people did not always understand its symbolic meaning and again gave rise to turbid primitive intuition.

Because of this process of continuous assimilation the cycle grew ever larger, as we can see in the numerous figures adorning the walls of this chapel all around and representing the anxious cortege passing before the god they are afraid of (fig.34). The cycle being scarcely known as yet and the sources being difficult of access, and moreover as we find yet other representations of it in temples we have to speak about, it could be useful to present its scheme according to the sources quoted above.

The central divinity then is Gur mgon, or better Dpal rdo-rje Nag-po gur-gyi-mgon-po/Śrī VajraKāla Pañjara-nātha, black, with two arms: in his right hand he holds the sword and in his left a cranial-pan filled with blood, held at breast level; between his two hands he holds the miraculous *gandī*. As a major part

of the terrific divinities does, he bears a crown of five skulls, a necklace with fifty heads still dripping blood, and at his ceinture a quiver made of tigerskin, and he is standing on the corpse of a dwarf. He has three eyes. Next to him, in the sense of the cardinal points, on the walls of the chapel five symbols have been reproduced in a schematic way, that is to his right 100,000 birds moving their wings all around, behind him 100,000 jackals with wide open hungry muzzles, in front 100,000 black men heaving sighs towards heaven, above him 100,000 garuḍa that fly around. Then to his left comes Ekajaṭā (1), of turquoise colour, with a single face, two arms; in her hands, at breast-level, she bears a vase of turquoise filled with nectar. Her turquoise hair is dressed in the form of a plait falling down at the left; she has a terrifying aspect and sits in *vajraparyāṅka*. During the meditation process one imagines the manifestation, within the belly of this goddess, of the syllable *trag* out of which is squirting out an ocean of blood; in the middle of this ocean appears the syllable *bhyoḥ* from which derives Dpal-ldan lha-mo ḥdod-khams-kyi-dbañ-phyug-ma/Kā-madhātv-īśvarī ŚrīDevī, riding an ass, turquoise, with one face and four hands holding, in the right a sword and cranial-pan, in the left a lance and trident; on her neck is fluttering a piece of black stuff. The upper part of her body is covered by elephant-skin, the lower part by ox-skin: she wears a girdle made of snakes; she is breaking rigid human corpses. On her right ear she wears a poison-snake and a golden bell, on the left ear a lion and a bell of turquoise; from her body drips

(1) In confirmation of what I have said above, we should remind ourselves that in some of her appearances Ekajaṭā was considered to be a foreign divinity: Nāgārjuna should have found her worship in Tibet, and from there he should have introduced her into India. Compare B. Bhattacharyya, *Sādhana-mālā*, II, introd., p.cxii.

blood. She is surrounded by a halo of flames symbolizing the fire of gnosis. From the two divinities arise two mystic syllables which change themselves into Nag-po gnod-sbyin, and Nag-mo gnod-sbyin. The first is black-coloured, has one face and two arms; in his right hand he holds a golden sickle and on the palm of his left hand open and held up he holds the disc of the sun; his right stands out. Nag-mo gnod-sbyin is of black colour, with one face and two arms; she has a golden sickle in the right hand and on the palm of her left hand open and held up she holds the disc of the moon; her left leg is stretched out.

From those two divinities (1), by means of the current transformation of mystic syllables, arise three corpses which serve as a vehicle for three different divinities:

a) Ġsin-rje-ma-ruñs-pa Mon-bu pu-tra, black: in his right hand he holds up and moves a dagger (*śaṅ-laṅ*), in his left he holds a skull filled with the marrow and blood of those who have violated their promises, and he lifts the skull to his mouth; the left leg is stretched forth.

b) To his left side Bdud-ma-ruñs-pa Mon-bu bha-ta, black; with his right hand he waves a stake for hanging the criminals (*dam-śiṅ*) in his left hand he holds and brings up to his mouth

(1) Lcam-dral; this word always means a couple of divinities, the one masculine, the other feminine, deriving from one single origin and being nevertheless capable of procreating – although having a relationship of brother-and-sister – a new divine series by means of germinal mystic syllables. To insist on this double character of these divinities (as well that of being produced by one single divine emanation; as that of having the possibility of producing nevertheless further creations) one calls these divinities *lcam-dral*; whereas simple brotherhood is expressed by the term *miṅ-sriṅ*. Considering only the creative character one uses the expression *yab-yum*.

the heart of a man who violated a promise, a blood-dripping heart with its veins still attached; the left leg stretched.

c) Mon-mo gser-gyi-spu-gri-ma, black, emanates flames out of her mouth: with her right hand she waves a razor of gold, with her left hand she holds and lifts to her mouth the entrails of wicked people; the right leg is stretched forth.

These five divinities together form an organic group; they are two parents, Nag-po gnod-byin and Nag-mo gnod-sbyin, with their three children. They are adorned with the usual macabre ornaments, one thinks the terrific divinities are clothed with bones, entrails and human skin. From the mystic syllables which are within the heart of the three Miñ-sriñ, who are considered brother and sister because they derive from one single couple, emanate powers that penetrate the whole universe and are capable of any kind of magic action. This is the reason that they are said to be executors of the orders of Rdo-rje-nag-po-chen-po/Vajra-Mahākāla. Their suite is represented on the right by a hundred masculine *ru-ḥdren* (1), the heroes who bear luggage (2); to the left by hundred *ru-ḥdren* monks and arhats who bear batons, and by a hundred Ban-dhe of black colour who hold the *phur-palkīlaka*; then there is a suite of a hundred black women who lead towards the street in front of them. These deities are surrounded by an infinite number of their messengers (*pho-ñā*) who have the aspect of black birds, black dogs (3), black people, hyenas (*lcags-spyañ*)

(1) Literally *ru-ḥdren* means "the guides of the wings (of the armies)", that is the demons; but it could also be a corrupt text standing for Sanskrit *Rudra*.

(2) The text of the fifth Pañ-chen has *stag-chas brgyan*, but the treatise of Hjam-dpal-bde-legs-rgya-mtsho (see p.1214, n.1) has *stag-chas thogs* which is clearer; the symbols of the other *ru-ḥdren* have also to be taken from this text, which instead of Bhande has: *snags nag phur-bu thogs-pa* "black witches i.e. who operate black magic" bearing the *phur-bu*: as for the women the treatise of the fifth Pañ-chen has *mdun-gyi śul-byañ ḥdren-pa*, whereas the treatise of Lha-btsun-pa says *gśegs-paḥi śul yañ ḥdren*.

(3) The dogs too, and especially the black ones, are symbols of terrifying or chthonic divinities, compare Arbman, *Rudra*, p.255-395.

and jackals (*lce-spyan*) who tear to pieces anybody who does not fulfil the given promises (fig.35). On the contrary from the Gaṇḍī emanate legions of terrific beings who protect all who keep their promises. Some of them are holding weapons of different kinds, some are waving flags, some are blowing on thigh-bones, some are flinging a lasso made of human entrails, some are filling up human skin, and still others are yelling the magic syllables *hūm*, *phaṭ* etc.: all of them are surrounded by a halo of fire. They are also accompanied by the Sgo-skyoñ/Dvār-apāla who protect the doors, by the Phyogs-skyoñ/Dik-pāla who stay in the cemeteries, by the Zhiñ-skyoñ/Kṣetrapāla, Mkhaḥ-ḥgro/Dāka, Śa-za/Piśāca, the eight groups of Lha/Deva and Sriñ, the masculine and feminine Dregs and by many other groups of terrific divinities.

Now that we have spoken about the meaning of the statues and paintings one finds in this sanctuary, we should speak of their artistic value, which is not negligible. The photographs alas do not reproduce the delicacy of the colours, the harmony of the blues, of the pale greens, or of the fading rosy red, this summary gives only a poor idea of the phantastic cavalcade of demons riding mounted on the strangest animals one is able to imagine. Oggling skulls and skeletons interwoven in a kind of lugubrious dance frame the spaces; corpses quartered and torn up by beasts of prey are the macabre background for these figures: in the foreground, under a fiery rain, which falls down with ruddy flashes, the awful cavalcade passes by.

With great mastery and a certain freedom of composition the artists have reproduced the dreary pageant, thus giving a degree of animation to their work one usually does not see in Tibetan art. But it is evident that they were following Central Asian models of Chinese inspiration; even if we do not make any allowance for some absolutely Chinese types, because they

represent Chinese persons, as for instance the one we see on plate 34, perhaps a reproduction of a Ha-sañ, taken as a whole the style of drawing and colouring is Chinese as one sees, for instance, on plate 35 and especially in the figures of the horse and the lion.

Of course, in this case too we encounter a case of provincial art, which nevertheless indicates irrefutably that China is the country of its origin.

CHAPTER VI

SALU, IWANG, SHONANG AND GNAS-RÑIN

SALU

Following the road to Gyantse one encounters, a few kilometers from Samada, the village of Salu (Selu of the maps); a few houses, in the neighbourhood of which arises the monastery of Gyani, or according to the spelling of the Myañ-chuñ: Rgya-gnas.

Here still rules the Sa-skyapa sect, but very little has remained of the ancient works: nothing else but the wall of circumambulation, and within the atrium very beautiful capitals, which have to be ascribed to the XVI century. The joists supporting the roof on consoles jutting out in the shape of lions with extended forepaws, as if they were ready to jump (fig.36); the stylization indicates analogies with Chinese ornamental lions rather than with the Indian. No less interesting are the capitals, now fixed in the wall, sculptured with phantastic animals, griffins and dragons, which are remote but fair descendants of the style one is used to call "style with decoration by animal figures": as a matter of fact these motifs still persist today in the *gau* and in the feminine ornaments of Tibetan people and especially of the nomadic tribes (1) (figs. 37-38).

(1) See J.N. Roerich, *The animal style among the nomad tribes of Northern Tibet*, Seminarium Kondakovianum, 1930.

In the veranda one sees traces of mural paintings picturing the five supreme Buddhas. But inside, the paintings are all very recent and artistically as well as iconographically of little value.

IWANG

§41. *The chapel of Iwang embellished in the Indian manner.* A little after Salu, nearly half a kilometer to the left from the street, on a stone-strewn plain, surrounded by barren heights, one finds the small sanctuary of Iwang. Thus at least the spot is called on the map, and that is the way the name is pronounced by the people of the country as well as by the caravaners. However, as we may read in the *Myaṅ-chuṅ*, the ancient name of the temple must have been *G.ye-dmar*.

Here we encounter one of the most important monuments of the whole region, not only because of the works of art we will describe now, but also because the tradition associates its name with that of one of the most remarkable figures of late Buddhism, one of the noblest apostles of this religion in the Land of the Snows. I am speaking of Śākyaśrī, the author and translator generally known in Tibet as the *Kha-che Paṅ-chen* “the Kashmiri Paṅḍita”. Well, according to this legend the sanctuary of *G.ye-dmar* was founded by *Lha-rje Chos-byaṅ*, who has been considered as being one of the former incarnations of Śākyaśrī; this means that at least according to the tradition, the sanctuary of Iwang had already been built when this master arrived in Tibet in the XIII century (1), and therefore its founding dates back to the beginning of that second penetration of Buddhism in Tibet, that the historians call *phyi dar*.

Iwang is surrounded by a double red-painted wall: inside rises the small temple, divided into three chapels (fig.39-40).

(1) According to the Tibetan tradition, he arrived in the year 1204.

The central chapel is longer like the other two, stretched out at its right and left like two parallel wings. Even the construction as such is unusual and refers to a plan which does not have anything in common with the plan of the Tibetan sanctuaries we have studied before. By now the sanctuary belongs to the Yellow Sect: rather by name than in fact, for it has no priests, but a poor family of shepherds has been entrusted with it.

When I visited Iwang it was opened by an old woman in dirty rag clothes, whose task it was to light the ritual lamp of the temple which had already been despoiled of any possible religious outfittings.

No sooner I entered into the central chapel that I felt myself struck by the magnificence of the decoration and the majesty of the statues: on the walls meditating Buddhas in mural paintings with a very soft design and very vivid colours form the background for big images of gilded stucco, which by the splendour of all that gold and the wealth of the attire greatly redeem the nudity of the chapel itself. The central statue represents a Buddha sitting down in the posture called *padmāsana*, having his hands in the attitude of the symbol of preaching (dharmacakra). On the halo (*rgyab-yol*), set off in two parallel rows of five, we see the ten Buddhas of the ten heavenly worlds (fig.41).

To the right and to the left of this divinity are sitting enthroned in a European way, six figures of Buddha, all of them in the attitude of somebody explaining the Law (fig.42).

The central statue represents *Mthoñ-ba-don-yod* i.e. Amoghadarśin, whereas the whole cycle as such represents the group of the seven Buddhas (*rabs-bdun*), we have met already. Against the lateral walls and on the walls next to the door there

is a row of sixteen statues of Buddha upright, all of them in the same attitude of hands (figs.43, 44) (1).

The mural paintings represent a well known series, that is to say the cycle of the *ltuñ-bśags*, i.e. the Buddhas one invokes during the litanies recited in the ceremony for the purification of sin (fig.45).

They have been painted in vivid colours with a predominance of dark red: the figures are set up by means of flowers, arabesques and styled animals which adorn the empty spaces with unusual parsimony. But the design is poor: stale and expressionless the images have been multiplied in a monotonous repetition of the same type. Their charm consists entirely of the harmony of colours which give a marvellous background to the ancient gold of the statues.

One single figure distinguishes itself from others by its primitive simplicity and by a kind of modesty that lightens even through the rigidity of the drawing: the figure of a Buddha having the same attitude as the upright statue (fig.46).

One sees a touch of realism and of folksy naivity in the figures of the sponsors, probably the same who erected together the chapel (figs. 46bis-47). Two persons, dressed in wealthy attires, direct themselves to the central statue in an attitude of reverence and with their folded hands they offer a flower; at a lower level is kneeling another figure dressed in a white coat and wearing a tall hat on his head. Elsewhere one sees two monks (fig.49), probably those who take part in the consecration of the temple; they stride along modestly and praying. The costume of the first two sponsors is different from the contemporaneous; it rather reminds of those reproduced in some

(1) Namely the cycle of the sixteen Bodhisattvas a synthesis of the *Bskal-bzan/ Bhadrakalpa* on which see p.235.

Central Asian paintings (1). Further the men are not wearing pigtails, and the women do not have the complicated hair-dresses which has presently become the fashion in Central Asia and especially in Gtsañ. There is also an inscription repeated twice, above and at the foot: the one at the foot is more complete than the first one. Indeed, it has not only preserved the name of the sponsors, but also that of the painter, whose name was Rgyal-mtshan-grags and who, as he himself declares, has painted in the Indian way (*rgya-gar-lugs*) (2).

Thus the very painter confessed that the paintings were realized according to the models of the Indian masters: but the very fact that even this manner has been recorded specially makes us suppose that other styles too have been studied and imitated. And this hypothesis finds its full confirmation in the next chapel. However, if there is no doubt that the paintings reflect the influence of India, the statues on the contrary reflect with much precision the influence of Samada and they appear to be derived from a school which followed Chinese rather than Indian traditions. The images are not so slender as the ones realized according to the Indian model: the halo is no longer round, but it ends on top like a leaf: the garment does not adhere to the body, but it enlarges like a bell showing at the front-side a much stressed game of folds. Here too, as in Samada, we are anyhow obliged to think of an influence of the Chinese manner through its Central Asian descendants, an influence which replaced the Indian tradition or which more precisely existed together with the Indian tradition, superseding it in some places.

(1) Remarkable is especially the coat of the person reproduced in fig.48: as for the cuff of the collar and the cut compare Le Coq, *Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens*, p.39, fig.8.

(2) The only archaism in the inscription is that of the inverted *gi-gu*.

§42. *The chapel embellished in the Khotanese manner.* Because of the god who is represented as the central figure, the chapel on the right can be called the temple of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus.

All around the other statues are standing upright, clothed with long cloaks, tiaras and jewels. On their feet they are wearing long shoes: they are ten in all, two to the right and two to the left of the central figure, and six others in groups of three along the lateral walls (fig.50).

The dress and the lines of the face indicate a still more pronounced style than that of the preceding chapel. It is right that in this chapel too the statues refer in a way to a Central Asian influence: but it is a kind of art which, according to new customs, changes even the details of more or less traditional iconographic types. In this second chapel one should not speak only of an influence of the Central Asian manner, but more exactly of the complete translation of an entire iconographic cycle into that specific style which inspires even the smallest of details, from the tiara to the dresses, from the ornaments to the shoes.

The paintings too reveal the same influence: the colours are more delicate, the drawing rigid (fig.53). However, very few times at least the artist – we do not know if the work has been executed by one or by more of them – reaches a high degree of expression, as for instance in fig.52, which is a highly delicate vision of purity, serenity and modesty. The garment which goes down to the ankles and hides the whole body leaves free only the hands, which have palms painted red, as if they want to direct immediately the eyes of the faithful towards the symbol of the liberating law; the head delicately bends unto the shoulder, as showing compassion for suffering men. The Bodhisattva (fig.51) one sees to the left of the central Buddha

has the lightness of the best Central Asian paintings, the imitation of which is evident because of the hair-dressing as well as because of the pale and delicate tints. The results of our stylistic examination are fully confirmed by the few remains of the inscription one is still able to read and where it is said that these paintings have been made according to the Li manner (*li-lugs*), that is in the Khotanese manner.

In the chapel to the left one sees the representation of the assault of the demons against the meditating Buddha (fig. 54): here we find the same confused interweave of monstrous figures and the same visions represented here, if not with the same quality, then at least following the same schemes as in the chapels of Samada. In a small bay the family of the sponsors seems to be afraid (fig. 48) of seeing themselves in such a terrifying company; they are standing there with folded hands, and above them are hanging on a beam the stuffs and garments which record the gifts given by them to the monastery.

So it has become clear that the small temple of Iwang, although being so desolate, is one of the most interesting monuments one meets on the road to Gyantse: even if the style of the paintings and statues should not have been sufficient for that, the inscriptions prove that in two chapels, almost like in a competition, at the same time have worked two squadrons of artists, each of them continuing and transmitting from master to pupil two different manners, with rules and techniques of each of them: the Indian and the Central Asian manner. Tibetan art not yet formed was balancing between these two inspirations, but one could already anticipate the coming fusion of these two currents out of which Tibetan art should rise very soon with well-defined characteristics.

What I have said refers to painting: as for the statues, in the first as well as the second chapel, the influence of the Chinese

manner is evident; more in the second chapel one should not speak of a simple influence but, if not of Central Asian artists proper, at least of a squadron of artists who followed the Central Asian artistic traditions scrupulously. Against the background of paintings executed in the Khotanese manner only statues of the same style could have been found suitable.

It is not easy to fix the period to which these works of art belong. In the Kumbum or in the great temple of Gyantse, that perhaps contain the greatest pictorial monuments of the XV century, one already sees the Tibetan style, and therefore the chapels of Iwang bring us certainly back to a preceding period. Of course that does not mean that their paintings and statues have to be dated back to the time indicated by the tradition as being the time of the founding of the monastery i.e. to the time of Chos-byan. Very likely Iwang has been rebuilt or restored in the time of the Sa-skyapa, that means, not of the first of them, for then one could not explain the big stylistic difference between these works and those of the Kumbum, which we have been able to date with certainty.

But the fact that the site is very ancient is also proved by some graffiti one sees on the rocks next to the monastery: they remind of those in Ladakh, although they do not present the same variety of types. Some of them reproduce the Bon-po svastikā i.e. with the brackets to the left (fig. 55); others represent men mounted on an animal whom it is difficult to identify with certainty: it could be a horse (fig. 56) if its tail was not so long. The rider holds a lance or a standard and has tufts on his head; at other times, as in fig. 57 two men seem to fight back a horned animal.

The importance of these graffiti consists of the fact that they are unique finds on the Sikkim-Gyantse road; they must pro-

bably be ascribed to those raids of Central Asian nomads of whom the Tibetan chronicles have preserved many records.

These graffiti are in any case very different from the graffiti one finds in Ladakh; the latter are not only older, but some of them even contemporaneous of the Kushan king, but they offer a big variety of types also. Here in Central Tibet, for instance, one misses the ibex, which is the most frequent figure on the rocks next to Khalatse and Dras, and the scenes of the hunting of this animal as well.

SHONANG

The other monastery which in the local chronicles is recorded as being one of the most ancient monasteries of the region, is that of Shonang (Śo-man). Here too the Yellow Sect commands. The monastery is surrounded by the usual wall: the temple, in the very sense of the word, has two floors. The lower chapel does not contain anything interesting. It has been restored and repainted. The upper floor on the contrary, although it has been subject to many reworkings, is of a very impressive grandeur. On the central wall are sitting seven meditating Buddhas, who represent the cycle of the *Rabs bdun* (fig. 58). Thus we find nothing new, neither from the iconographic nor from the artistic points of view: the stucco statues are well polished upto the details, solemn and well refined, but they lack expression. One could say the same of the mural paintings, which reproduce on the left wall the supreme pentad (*rigs lña*). The central divinity is always, as expected, Vairocana (in the attitude of explaining the law, white in colour and with one face only, fig. 59). Well preserved is also the figure which represents Ratnasambhava (fig. 60): besides each Buddha of the pentad one has two figures of Bodhisattvas, standing upright;

above, emerging from a sea of clouds, deity in the act of adoration – a great festival of colours and lights, but the drawing is very rigid: the face of the divinity is enlarged, the figure obeys only iconometric canons.

To the left of the door three figures of Mgon-po/Nātha: best preserved is the one which is reproduced in fig. 61 and which represents the most terrifying form of Vajrapāṇi, known under the name of Mgon-po phyag-drug/Ṣaḍbhujā Nātha, together with his Śakti (1).

In the lower part one sees the mystic procession of the minor divinities, and above the masters of the esoteric schools, who transmitted the corresponding initiations.

Nearly all the mural paintings of the right wall have disappeared: however, the good images of Tārā have remained, that is the White Tārā and the Green Tārā.

NENYING

§43. *The foundation of the monastery of Gnas-rñin.* Nenyning (Gnas-rñin) is one of the most famous places of Central Tibet, and according to what the Myañ-chuñ and the eulogy tell us, also one of the most active and ancient centres of diffusion of Buddhism in the whole province of Gtsañ.

According to what one reads in the eulogy, the monastery was built in a region, originally named Skyegs (2). According to the local traditions collected in these sources, it was given by king Mñah-bdag, Khri-Ral-pa-can as a fief to one of his chaplains, i.e. to Rgya Hjam-dpal-gsañ-ba. The latter stayed at Bsam-yas, but Mgos Khri-bzañ-po (1), former minister of Khri-

(1) Grünwedel, *Iconographie des Buddhismus*, p. 161, fig. 135, and *Indo-Tibetica* I. 92

(2) Also in Buston, *History of Buddhism*, transl. By Obermiller p. 208, Gnas-rñin is called Skyegs-gnas-rñin

sron-lde-btsan, sent him to lower Gtsaṅ to spread the Buddhist doctrine. He should have accepted this mission, at least after having obtained the permission of the king and after having received from him as a fief some country-seats in Nān-stod. The old Mgos being dead in the meanwhile, the eldest son Mgos Khyuṅ-rgod-rtsal should have yielded his rights on the fief, corresponding to the lower Gtsaṅ, to his younger brother Rdo-rje-rtsal; having thus transferred himself to Skyegs with Rgya Hjam-dpal-gsaṅ-ba he had become the patron of that master, on whose counsel he had built many temples and above all the monastery proper (*gnas-dgon*) Gnas-rñiṅ with its surrounding wall, the habitations for the Lamas (*gzim-khaṅ*) and the temple, then the pilgrim's house (*dben-dgon*) at a site that must be near to Gnas-rñiṅ and that is called Lun-thaṅ-kuṅ, and last but not least the cells for the highest mystic realizations (*sgrub-khaṅ*) at another site called Skyid-sgo (kha, fol. 4a).

Founded by a priest of Bsam-yas, chaplain of the royal house, Gnas-rñiṅ has been for a long time one of the most important monasteries of the Rñiṅ-ma-pa school. Even in more recent times, as the Dge-lugs-pa had already begun their religious and political ascension, the place remained one of the most remarkable, where one continued studying the esoteric systems according to the old system (*ñags-rñiṅ*). But its abbots, whose short biographies have remained in the eulogy of the monastery, had very large ideas pursuing their formation in the school of the most famous masters of their time, so that, even keeping the Rñiṅ-ma-pa tradition alive and the cult of Padmasambhava fervid, in Gnas-rñiṅ has been prospering one of the most flourishing schools of Lamaism, open to all currents.

(1) See above p. 53

Therefore it has rightly merited the name of Rdo-rje-gdan, which means the Bodhgaya of Tibet (1), as if it were a new Bodhgaya out of which the religion was propagated in the whole of the Land of Snows.

Later the monastery came under Rdo-rje-phag-mo, the abbess of Samding, incarnation of Vajravārāhī (2) and hence definitely under the authority of the Yellow Sect. Today only the surrounding wall has remained of this once so famous place and that too is destroyed at many points or fallen into decay. The temples have been rebuilt inside a few years ago, that means after the Anglo-Tibetan war, during which the convent, where the monks had entrenched themselves, has been nearly entirely destroyed. On benches and improvised altars in the main temple have been put together a lot of bronze images. One notes that they belong to the best period of Tibetan art, and that some of them are Nepalese.

In the private flat of the abbot (*bla-bran*) too, have remained some magnificent fragments of a big halo of gilded bronze; graceful floral motifs are interwoven in a series of delicate curls. Slender images of Maitreya and Mañjuśrī rise on miraculously sprouting lotuses (figs. 62-63.).

We are evidently in the presence of a splendid fragment of Indo-Napalese (3) art of the best period; one of those many masterpieces which, as we read in the chronicles of Gnas-rñin,

(1) *Eulogy* KHA p. 2, *Nān-stod rgya-gar-gyi gliñ gnas-rñin rdo-rje-gdan mtshuñs* and the same also often in the *Myañ-chuñ*. But the monastery of Mag-dge-ldin on the Gyantse-Shigatse road was also generally known under the name of Rdo-rje-gdan.

(2) The abbess had been visited by S. Ch. Das, *Journey to Lhasa* (Rockhill). p. 131 ff.

(3) Compare for instance R.D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, pl. XCIVb.

pious and generous abbots so many times wanted to be executed by Nepalese hands in their monasteries (see for instance *Eulogy*, p. 16b), or who possibly also arrived from India through Nepal.

Not less remarkable is the symbolic lotus reproduced in the figures 64-65; out of a sculptured basement with flower-motifs rises a quadrangular shaft which gradually goes on enlarging, and on the sides of which one sees small figures of stūpas within which sit the Buddhas of the supreme pentad, each of them in its own particular attitude. Above we see the eight leaves of the mystic lotus enlarging and spreading out themselves; on each leaf have been reproduced nearly always coupled divinities (*yab yum*) who belong to the cycle of Bde-mchog/Śamvara.

The work has been executed with great precision and reminds of bronze lotuses discovered in Bengal and reproduced by N.K. Bhattasali (1) and R.D. Banerji (2); probably our specimen too has been brought to Tibet by the first Buddhist missionaries.

The few objects that remain in the monastery of Gnas-rñin give us a pale idea of the treasures of art it must have possessed once and they have been lost for ever.

(1) *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical images in Dacca Museum*, plates XV and XVI.

(1) R.D. Banerji, *op.cit.*, pl.LXXII.

CHAPTER VII

GYANTSE AND ITS MAIN TEMPLE

§44. *The three chapels on the first floor.* Gyantse (Rgyal-rtse) is a very ancient city, which has been recorded several times in the few historical documents we have at our disposal today for this region. As we have seen, it had been the fief of a family, which received it from Bla-ma Sa-skya and maintained its lordship for some generations, although perhaps with decreasing authority. During the government of the most ancient princes of that feudal dynasty the city seems to have known some prosperity, later lost. It is in this period that its most famous monuments have been erected which are its most superb ornaments till today, I mean the great monastery and the Kumbum built within its sacred precincts.

The temple rises to the north of the actual bazar, and it is surrounded by walls mounting on the spur of the hill, till it joins and mixes up with the later fortifications, constructed by the Chinese (figs. 66-67). It consists of various buildings, mostly restored in modern times after the English expedition, that damaged them much. Three schools live here in common accord each in its own monastery and under its own abbot; that of Yellow, that of Nor, which is a sub-sect of the Sa-skyapa,

and also that of the Zha-lu-pa (1), that is to say the followers of Bu-ston.

The first sect has greater number of followers and obey the Khampo. He is a monk sent from Lhasa to guide the convent and is the highest authority of the region.

The Sa-skyapa and the Zha-lu-pa obey their own incarnations (*sprul-sku*) who stay at Gyantse only for a few weeks, for the rest of the time they move on to the many other monasteries depending on them. During my stay at Gyantse I had the fortune of meeting both of them.

These monasteries of Gyantse are so to say an island known by the name of Dpal-ḥkhor-chos-sde, or according to the oldest references, Dpal-ḥkhor-bde-chen (2). Since ancient times they are known as the most sacred place in Tibet, and every good pilgrim is expected to visit them.

In the surrounding wall, a great door of majestic proportions leads to a spacious courtyard. Along its walls are lined a series of "prayer mills" which the pilgrims turn with devotion. After this the Buddhas invoked during the ceremony of confession (fig. 68) are carved in bas-relief on large slabs of stone, set in a line on the left side of the road. The work is coarse and done in a hurry: a certain iconographic interest can be attached only to the rough image of the Chos-rgyal who got the great temple of Gyantse (fig. 69) constructed.

(1) They are so called from the name of the Zha-lu monastery, where the great Tibetan doctor lived and wrote the major part of his monumental work. See above page 71.

(2) Myan-chun 81.

Among all the temples the one which really still maintains many great objects of art is the central temple. It emerges with its massive red walls in the middle of the courtyard, and is surmounted by a tall *gañjira* made of gold, gleaming in the sun under a turquoise sky. The walls, which tower towards the upper portion, give to the temple the impression of great solidity. On the facade the porch opens solemnly and leads to the door with strong shutters. They seem to close implacably the mysteries of the sanctum. The building strikes terror and inspires an anxious expectation of the secrets it encloses. On the first floor there is the hall of congregation (*hdus-khan*) where three minor chapels open, respectively on the back wall and on the sides.

The congregation hall, where solemn ceremonies were celebrated, is very large and can have several hundreds monks. The darkness is hardly broken by the gleam of the immense statue of the Buddha which stands in the entire niche of the central cella, and on which is reflected the shimmering light of the lamps burning on the altar. Evidently the vastness of the statue is done at the expense of artistic value. It represents the Jo-bo of Lhasa and as such wears the diadem on his head (1).

The statue is of the same measure, so says the tradition, as the famous one at Mahabodhi, and for building it 1000 *khal* (2)

(1) Not too bad a figure of the Jo-bo of Lhasa has been published by Walsh in The image of Buddha in the Jo-bo-Khang Temple of Lhasa, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1938 plate VI.

(2) A *khal* is about 11 kgs; each *zho* is equal to around 50 grams.

of copper were used and 108 *zho* of gold. In order to give it mystic life and to consecrate it, formulae (*dhāraṇī*) brought to Tibet by Paṇḍita Śāriputra were deposited in its interior.

At its sides the images of Hjam-dbyaṅs/Mañjughoṣa and Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara are seen, and then those of two Budhas, namely that of the past and of the future: Mar-me-mdzad/Dīpaṅkara and Byams-pa/Maitreya; then on the walls to the right and to the left is the cycle of the sixteen Bodhisattvas, eight on each side. As the Myaṅ-chuṅ (p. 84) records, this cycle of sixteen Bodhisattvas is inspired by a well-known liturgy of the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra (1).

The first project of Hphags-pa-dpal-bzaṅ-po was to build only the central hall (2): but having found it inadequate, he modified the original plan, added the cellas on the side wings (*glo-ḥbur*) and then the upper floor with the verandah (*ḥkhyams*) and the corridor for circumambulation (*ḥdah-yab-kyi-ḥkhor-yug, ḥkhor-lam*). The temple progressively assumed the majestic aspect which we admire today.

The first chapel to the left is dedicated to the cycle of Vairocana, and specifically to the maṇḍala of the Vajradhātu, as it is described in the first section of the Tattva-saṅgraha; it is meant to eliminate the passions, namely the affective state, most intense and violent, which drives away the way of salvation; in doing so they have recourse to the same passions by transforming them and turning them to moral purification.

(1) See M. Lalou, *Iconographie des étoffes peintes (paṭa)* dans le Mañjuśrī-mūlakapa, pages 31-32. They are: Mañjuśrī, Candraprabha, Sudhana, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, Gaganagaṅja, Kṣitigarbha, Anagha, Sulocana, Maitreya, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Mahāmāti, Śāntamāti, Vairocanagarbha, Apāyajāha.

(2) Myaṅ-chuṅ p. 83a.

But this maṇḍala, as we have seen, may be represented in three different ways, according to the manner in which it can be understood, respectively by individuals able to understand the truth explained only diffusely to them, or by those who can understand its meaning only if explained in an adequate form, neither too large nor too concise, and finally by those who need only a short and concise explanation.

The maṇḍala represented on this wall addresses itself only to the first category. In the centre is Vairocana, in his characteristic attitude as principal divinity of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala: namely, he has four faces and two hands in the mudrā called byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī. He is surrounded by four other Buddhas of the pentad, each of them accompanied by the Bodhisattvas of his mystic family.

All the statues are of painted stucco, those representing the supreme pentad of bigger size, and others of smaller size. They jut out from the wall into trilobate arches (1) clearly of Indian inspiration, these arches display themselves around the statues of the five Buddhas in volutes and arabesques of austere simplicity. The images have been refined with care and in them there is still that serenity and that grace which the scruples of the iconometric canons later made to disappear little by little. We are evidently faced by works made during the highest flourishing of Tibetan art, when the echo of the Indian tradition had not yet been extinguished. The inscription confirming the tradition given by Myañ-chuñ, clearly says that this chapel was built at the time of the Chos-rgyal Hphags-pa-dpal-bzañ-po (figs. 70-72).

(1) They are called *mchod-rten/stūpa* in Tibetan literature.

The walls are covered with very small figures. They form a delicate and polychrome curtain on which the images of the Bskal-bzañ/Bhadrakalpa are multiplied. They are not one thousand, but they could be 996 figures, namely, 249 figures in the aspect of white Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, 249 in that of red Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, 249 in that of red Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma, 249 in that of green Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma (1). They are done with such accuracy that they seem to be inspired by the miniatures of Indian and Nepalese manuscripts (figs. 73, 74). The chapel had been consecrated by the sku-zhañ of Zhalu, the chos-rje Nam-mkhaḥi-mtshan-can: the name of the painter has been preserved.

In the chapel there is a superb copy of the Prajñāpāramitā in 8000 verses, written in golden letters on folios varnished by indigo. The manuscript, which is carried in procession on solemn occasions, is protected by two wooden covers (*glegs-sin*, *phalaka*), on which in a maze of flowers and volutes are engraved the figures of the sacred pentad accompanied by minor deities.

The right chapel (*gtsaṅ-khañ*) is dedicated to Byams-pa/Maitreya, who dominates it with his grand statue. This statue has been added later and this is clear not only because of its less artistic value, but specially because of the testimony of the Myaṅ-chuñ (p. 86). In this very useful collection we read in fact that the central deity of the chapel is Spyan-ras-gzigs bcu-gcig-zhal/Avalokiteśvara with eleven faces, and this is now seen behind the image of Byams-pa/Maitreya. Regarding Avalokiteśvara with eleven faces, many formulae of meditation are known, and therefore also different iconographic representations. The statue of our chapel represents Avalokiteśvara

(1) See Bu-ston, *Bśad-rgyud rdo-rje-rtse-moḥi dkyil-hkhor-gyi bkod-pa*, fol. 11a.

according to a formula of meditation attributed to Nāgārjuna. According to this formula the god is represented with a thousand arms, of which 42 are considered the principal ones and are well visible and equipped with characteristic symbols. In the paintings covering the walls are reproduced the series of masters who were the interpreters and continuators of this mystic school. On the right and the left of the central image there is a row of lamas and doctors. They are beautiful statues of stucco made with admirable accuracy and with a certain realism which gives to each of them — a peculiar physiognomy. On the right there are Hjam-dbyaṅs/Mañjughoṣa, Padmasambhava, Kamalaśīla, Atīśa. On the left wall are three beautiful statues, also in stucco, on which time has spread a superb patina of a dark color and this underlines the finesse of the work. Three persons are seated on seats of Chinese model, covered with rich drapings adorned by drawings of flowers (figs. 75-76). They represent a kind rather rare in the temples, namely the series of the three great kings of Tibet, great not only by their political power, but also by the place they have in the diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet; that is, in Tibetan *mes-dpon gsum* “the three ancestors” Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po, Khri-sroṅ-lde-btsan, Mṅaḥ-bdag Ral-pa-can.

On the walls alternate frescoed figures of Amitāyus and Vajrasattva (fig. 77, detail fig. 78).

On the left of the hall there is a little door which leads to the Mgon-khaṅ, the cella where the protecting deities are guarded and propitiated. One can enter it through a corridor whose walls have frescoes in very bad condition; they represent the terrific deities who guard the door (*sgo-skyoṅ/dvārapāla*) and at the same time are the procession following Gur-mgon, who is as it has been said the protector of the Sa-skyapa sect.

Here again is a repetition of what has been noticed at Samada: all these temples have been built during the maximum flourishing of the Sa-skyapa school and only later have they been shifted to the Yellow Sect.

The divinities who follow one another in the corridor are :
to the right

H̄dod-khams-lha-mo/Kāmadhātviśvarī (fig. 81)

to the left:

White Dkar-mo ñi-zla/Sūrya-candra Gaurī (fig. 79)

Black Bdud-rgyal (fig. 82) and another divinity not determinable (fig. 80) and also the actual custodians of the doors (*sgo-skyon/dvārapāla*), with faces of lion, tiger, bear, and leopard (*sen-gdon, Stag-gdon, Dom-gdon, Gzig-gdon*).

The inner portion of the Mgon-khan leads to a world of nightmares: from the darkness emerge, won with difficulty by the shimmering light of the guide, the terrific figures of Gur-mgon surrounded by his minor acolytes. All around, the stuffed bodies of yaks, gazelles and goats are hung from the roof and from the walls together with standards and flags, dusty and blackened by the years, which swing like phantoms. In this Mgon-khan one breathes that fearful atmosphere which is peculiar to Lamaist art and which imprints its creation with specific fascination.

On the walls, free from such fearful curtains, are images of cemeteries, torn corpses eaten up by birds of prey and animals of prey; in the mist of mounting flames sneering deities brandish instruments of death. They are the five Mon-bu pu-tra miñ-sriñ about whom we have already spoken.

§45. *The chapel of Lam-bras.* The upper floor (*dbu-rtse*) consists of a vast courtyard which corresponds to the congregation hall downstairs. All around there is a verandah (*yab-rin*) sustained

by small wooden pillars in which the carpenter's skill could not hide the knottiness of the tree. On the walls of the hall is a long panel of frescoes representing a hundred main moments in the life of the Buddha, as they are narrated by the Dpag-bsam-khri-śiñ/Avadāna-kalpalatā. These are new paintings, but made with gracefulness, finesse of drawing and especially liveliness of colours.

On the back, the verandah is closed. A modern painter has depicted a colorful paradise on it and a nice portrait of the last Dalai Lama, although highly stylized.

To the left and to the right are two chapels, and on the back the higher chapel—the actual *dbu-rtse* (*steñ gzal-yas-khañ-chen-mo*) — to which one can go through two stairs, one to the right and the other to the left.

The first chapel, that to the left, is called Lam-ḥbras lha-khañ. The name stands for the sect by which the shrine has been built: lam-ḥbras is the title of the meditation manuals of the Sa-skyapa school. The name is due to the fact that they explain the way leading to liberation and the fruit derived from it. Lam-ḥbras corresponds to the *lam-rim* of the Yellow School: it is the process of meditation and of purification through which man transforms himself into the eternal overcoming of the world of appearances. This attribution of the chapel to the Sa-skyapa school is confirmed also by the stucco images running around the niches of the central wall. They represent the series of masters of the mystic revelation, received and subsequently transmitted by the Sa-skyapa. They are Rdo-rje-ḥchañ/Vajradhara in the middle, Bdag-med-ma/Nairātmā to his right, Virūpā to his left, and then the series of Sa-skyapa lamas (figs. 83, 84, 85).

The centre of the chapel is occupied by a maṇḍala of wood and stucco of the cycle of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara (fig. 86) according to the system of Lūipā. This maṇḍala of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara not painted but plastically built with the little statues of the gods each arranged in his own place are called *blo-blans*. You find another in the little temple of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara at Tsaparang that I have already described (1).

Ritualistics imposes that one should turn around the maṇḍala of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara not in the traditional way of pradakṣiṇā, namely from left to right but in the inverse sense from right to left; this way of turning around sacred things adopted by the Bon-po, as is known, is a possible indication of the resemblance between Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara and Śiva on one side, and of the overlapping between Lamaism and the primitive cults of Tibet (2). For the exigencies of this work, we will follow the normal order in the description of this chapel. Besides the stucco statues about which I have already spoken, the frescoes are also of great importance. Artistic importance, because iconographically the cycle is well known; it represents the series of the 84 Siddhas or perfect men, whose importance is due not only to having perfected the haṭhayoga techniques and to having insisted on the necessity of the psychophysic culture for realizing liberation quickly but also to having attempted a fusion between Buddhism and Śivaism.

(1) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.616.

(2) In fact in the *Dpal-mchog rigs bsdus-kyi dkyil-hkhor bkob-pa* of Bu-ston (I. fol.19a) in the description of the maṇḍala of the Lha-ma-yin/Asura, it is said that Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara is Lord of Asuras (*Lha-ma-yin-gyi dpah-bo Bde-mchog*) in the centre of this maṇḍala is Viṣṇu, in the east Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara, in the South Thags-bzañ-ris/Vemaci trin, in the west Lag-bzañ/Sabāhu, in the north Lha-ma-yin-gyi sriñ-mo. The ritual round to the left in Tibet is always connected with non-Buddhistic cults, either Bon-po or Hindu.

The cycle is very popular in the Bkaḥ-brgyud-pa school, perhaps less among the Sa-skyapa and Dge-lugs-pa. But in our case, of great interest is the extraordinary finesse of the figures which move with agility on a background that in its stylization is very well-adapted to this fantastic and magic world that it wants to represent (figs. 87, 88, 89, 90, 91).

The Siddhas are either seated on tiger-skins, or they perform mystic dances with their śaktis, while all around them flowers and plants mount with strange twistings resembling apparitions of dreams. The colours are vivid, and yet harmonised with great mastery. Light clouds move in the sky. Each figure is accompanied by a short invocation in Sanskrit containing the name of the Siddha represented; the orthographic inaccuracies are not rare.

Here, as well as downstairs in chapels consecrated to Vairocana, we begin to find epigraphic documents of great importance for the history of Tibetan painting. In fact, on a line that runs under the frescoes are given not only the names of the donors (*sbyin-bdag*) who had these paintings done at their own expense, but also the names of painters themselves. The donors who wanted these frescoes to be made were “the honorable Btsan Dpal-ḥbyor-rin-chen of Gnas-rñin, and the Dbu-mdzad Dpal-mchog,” while the painter was the most honorable (*dpon-mo-che*) Dpal-ḥbyor assisted by his disciples.

On the left wall are represented various episodes of the life of a monk, according to Myañ-čuñ of Sa-skyapaṇ-chen. According to the same source, confirmed by the inscriptions (fig. 94), this scene should represent the dispute that he had with

the heretics, namely with the Hindu ascetics at Skyid-sron (1) and their defeat (figs. 92, 93, 94, 95, 96).

On the opposite wall, instead, that is to the right, the life of the Chos-rgyal is represented in paintings, namely of Hphags-pa who went to China, got the investiture of Tibet from the Mongol emperor and of his visions (figs. 97, 98, 99).

On the walls at the two sides of the door are various figures of terrific deities, in their proper function of “guardians of the door”. They are committed to sending afar from the sacred precincts the baneful forces or influences. On the wall to the right of the door (that is called *mar-khyu* in technical terms) is seen the Mgon-po/Nātha of the Sa-skyapa sect (fig.100) that is to say Gur mgon. Around him there are scenes representing cemeteries and processions of fearful deities dancing in the midst of flames.

The cornice, painted with flowers and trees, delimiting the maṇḍala of Gur mgon (fig.101), reproduces ornamental motifs taken from Chinese models. In it special emphasis is laid on the five *las-mkhan*, namely the executors of the orders of the Mgon-po, that is to say the Mon-bu pu-tra, about whom we have already spoken.

Near Mgon-po/Nātha, Rnam-thos-sras/Vaiśravaṇa in his divine palace. On the wall to the left of the door (*yar-khyu*): Dpal-ldan Lha-mo/ŚrīDevī surrounded by the four *ru-ḥdren* described above (fig.102); black Bdud-rgyal with a rosary made of human skulls; in the right she has the spear (*mdun-rin*), in the left flutters a standard (*ba-dan*) (fig.103); Dkar-mo ṅi-zla represented according to her more common iconographic type

(1) This episode of his life is narrated also by Hjjigs-med-nam-mkhaḥ. See Huth op. cit. p. 123ff. But he is not the only one represented in these paintings. On them are often reproduced the wonderful apparitions by which he got the revelation of the mystic wisdom that he either transmitted to his disciples or committed to his writings.

(fig.104): one face and two arms, in the right she sustains mount Meru with superimposed planes, and in the left she has the four continents at the height of the heart. She wears a garland of 999 suns and moons, on the head a sun and a moon and a crown of skulls (1). The two divinities are always united: they form a couple, *lcam-dral*, and are often indicated by a single name *dkar-bdud*.

§46. *The chapel of maṇḍalas*. The central chapel, the actual *dbu-rtse* (fig.105) is of very great dimensions. It represents, from the religious point of view, the most secret and important part of the temple. It is a kind of gallery of Mahāyānic esoterism, since on its walls are reproduced in great detail the maṇḍalas of the well-known tantric schools. In this temple were celebrated the initiatic rituals and here was given baptism to the neophytes during the tantric mysteries. Nowadays the chapel is used as a hall for congregation. During my stay at Gyantse in this temple there was a reunion of monks for reciting the *Bkaḥ-ḥgyur*, all together, to accomplish a request by the local people who scared by the prolonged drought begged the rain longed for from the magic power of the Divine Word. That the temple has lost its primal character of a hall of initiations is shown by the fact that its maṇḍalas are mostly covered by big and rough book-shelves on which are piled up books of various

(1) The description is taken from *Dpal Sa-skya-paḥi yab chos yan phur thun-moṅ-gi bkaḥ-sruṅ DKAR BDUD lcam-dral-gyi sgrub-thabs rjes-gnaṅ dan-bcas* in *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod*, vol.ŃI.

kinds from the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur to voluminous treatises on logic. On top of it, along the central wall there are many statues a few of certain antiquity and most of them of recent date. They completely cover the paintings on the wall. Among the statues only one merits to be recorded; it is a precious Buddha solemn and serene (fig.106), behind whom had been put a bronze aura originally belonging to another statue. Statue and aura do not seem to be Tibetan, but are almost surely in the Nepalese manner.

It is therefore clear that the temple has been spoiled; this probably happened during the Anglo-Tibetan War of 1904.

The maṇḍalas on the left side of the door and the first seen on the left wall are with inscriptions. It is clear that they have been made again in a period very near to us, on the pattern of those already existing, as it is said in the brief lines written under the paintings. The first maṇḍala of Dpal Rdo-rje-gzhon-nu/Vajrakumāra in his angry form (*khro-bo*), according to the mystic family of the Vajra, is described by the Phur-pa rtsa-dum-kyi rgyud (1), that is the Phur-pa according to the system of realization of the Sa-skyapa (fig.107).

Immediately under this is the maṇḍala of the 29 gods of Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajra-hūmkāra (fig.108), and then the maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-bdud-rtsi/Vajrāmṛta (3) (fig.109).

Coming to the left wall there is the maṇḍala of Black Yamāri (*gśed nag*) (fig.110) and of Red Yamāri (*gśed dmar*) (fig.111); to the

(1) That is *Rdo-rje-phur-pa rtsa-baḥi-rgyud-kyi dum-bu*, translated by Sa-skyapaṅ-chen (Toh.439, not in the Narthang edition).

(2) Besides the maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra recorded in the above published schemes, compare *Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad-kyi sgrub-thabs*, Toh. 3289, 3359, 3634.

(3) *Rdo-rje-bdud-rtsi-rgyud* (Toh.435).

side of the door on the right, a maṇḍala is seen which according to the inscription is not that of Rdo-rje-dbyiṅs/Vajradhātu according to the Samputāntra, as it is written in the guide to the temple but that of Bde-mchog-rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ zhi dkar-po/White Śānta Vajrasattva Śamvara (fig. 113).

Then there is a maṇḍala of the Mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Dākinīs, according to the Rdo-rje-gdan-bzhi/Catuṣpīṭha (fig. 114) (1) and the maṇḍala of Hūm-mdzad/Hūmkāra (fig. 115) with eleven gods.

The other maṇḍalas are, as I have said, mostly covered by shelves and statues: and the visible ones too have the same difficulties of interpretation as the other maṇḍalas.

That it is very difficult to connect them to a specific text or to that cycle of esoteric experiences of which they are the symbol. And when there are no clarifying inscriptions the task is almost on the lines of despair, because of the yet imperfect knowledge that we have of the immense tantric literature in Tibet.

In our case, however, we have an exact and ordained description of the paintings covering the walls of this temple, in the Myaṅ-chuñ, already quoted often. According to this text, the central maṇḍala is the maṇḍala of the plenitude of the three mystic bodies, the physical, the verbal and the mental, symbolized by the Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra, as it is described in that tantra. At its right the maṇḍalas devolve in the following sequence.

1° Two great maṇḍalas of Mi-bskyod-pa-rdo-rje/Akṣobhyavajra, described by Gsañ-ba-ḥdus-pa/Guhyasamāja, according to the system of Ḥphags-pa (namely Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzav-po).

(1) Compare Bu-ston, complete works JA: *Rdo-rje-gdan-bzhihi dkyil-ḥkhor rgyas-paḥi sgrub-thabs mi-brjed-par dran-byed.*

2° Maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava according to the family of the physical body: it includes seventeen divinities in all and is painted according to the method of meditation described by the lotsava of Skyo.

3° On the left wall—maṇḍala of Hjam-paḥi-rdo-rje/Mañjuvajra with 19 divinities, described by the Gsañ-ba-ḥdus/Guhyasamāja and belonging to the mystic family of Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, represented according to the system of meditation of Ye-śes-zhabs/Jñānapāda (1).

4° Maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava including ten gods according to the system of meditation expounded by the lotsava of Rva (see *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.81).

5° Maṇḍala of Gsin-rje-gśed dmar/Red Yamāntaka, still visible and about which we have already spoken; it is reproduced according to the system of Dpal-ḥdzin/Śrīdhara (Bstan-ḥgyur XLIII.103.104, 106, 107 etc.).

On the left side of the central maṇḍala on the back wall:

1° Maṇḍala of Heruka (fig. 112) taken from Mkhah-ḥgro-rgya-mtsho/Dākārṇava (2): the god is represented with 17 faces and 76 arms and is surrounded by 104 deities forming his train. Around the maṇḍala is reproduced the cycle of bhadrakalpa in two rows.

2° Maṇḍala of Bde-mchog/Saṁvara according to the system of meditation expounded by Lūipā: it contains 62 divinities (3).

3° On the right wall, maṇḍala of the five Mkhah-ḥgro-ma/Dākinī according to the system of meditation of the Sa-skyapa: it

(1) Two small treatises on *Gsañ-ḥdus Hjam-rdo-rje/Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra* are found in the works of Bu-ston, vol. *THA Gsañ-ḥdus Hjam-rdor-gyi sgrub-thabs hjam-dbyaṅs yid-ḥphrog* and *Gsañ-ḥdus Hjam-rdor dkyil cho-ga Hjam-paḥi-dbyaṅs-kyi byin-rlabs-kyi rnam-ḥphrul*.

(2) About the vernacular portions in this text see *Dākārṇava* ed. N.N. Chaudhuri, Calcutta Sanskrit Series no. X.

(3) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.17ff.

is taken from Mkhah-ḡgro-rdo-rje-gur (Toh. 419) and is twofold because it symbolises the mystic families both in a comprehensive manner (*bsdus*) and divided (*rkyan*) (see Toh.1322 and 1321 = Bstan-ḡgur XXII.36).

4° Maṇḍala of Kye-rdo-rje/Hevajra which includes nine gods and is represented according to the system of meditation expounded by Virūpā, based on the second chapter of the Rdo-rje-gur brtag-gñis.

5° Maṇḍala of the fusion with all the Buddhas (Sañs-rgyas-thams-cad mñam-par-sbyor-baḡi dkyil-ḡkhor) (1).

6° Maṇḍala of Gdan-bzhi/Catuṣpīṭha described by the Dpal-gdan-bzhi-rgyud (2) according to the system of meditation expounded in the Sanskrit text of Bhavabhadra, and commented upon by Grags-pa-rin-chen.

Then there are the maṇḍalas enumerated by the Myañ-chuiñ and today mostly invisible, which cover the central portion of the walls. They are the principal maṇḍalas around which, and above and below which, are many minor maṇḍalas as enumerated later on by the same source. Above, always to the right of the central maṇḍala, and then, following the same direction till reaching the left side of the door:

1° Maṇḍala of Gśed dmar/Red Yamāntaka including five central divinities, according to the system of meditation of Virūpā (3).

2° Maṇḍala of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara expounded in the Guhyasamāja and having 19 divinities: according to the system explained by Atīśa in Byañ-chub-ḡod.

(1) Toh. 1659, 1660, 1661, 1663, 1677 = Bstan-ḡgyur XXIV.11, 12, XXV.1, 3, 17.

(2) Comment and liturgy of Toh. 366, 429-430 *Śri-catuḡpīṭhakhyāta-tantrarāja*.

(3) Toh. 2017, 2018 = Bstan-ḡgyur XLIII.97, 96.

3° Maṇḍala of the family of nine gods of the Gsañ-ba-ḥḍus-pa/Guhyasamāja as given in the Kālacakra.

4° Maṇḍala of 25 gods of the Phyag-rdor ḥkhor-chen/Mahācakra Vajrapāṇi (1).

5° Maṇḍala of 25 gods included in the sextuple family of the Gsañ-ḥḍus/Guhyasamāja.

6° Maṇḍala of 43 divinities of the maṇḍala of Sgyu-ḥphrul/Māyājāla according to the system of the three mystic families of the Sgyu-ḥphrul-dra-ba given in the Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra.

7° Maṇḍala of Bdud-rtsiḥi Heruka/Amṛta-Heruka according to the (Rdo-rje-) ḥphren-ba/Vajrālī.

Below the great maṇḍalas, always in the same direction :

8° Maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-gtum-mo/Vajracandī with the five garuḍas (2).

9° Maṇḍala with 13 gods of Dgra nag/Black Yamāntaka according to the system of Ras-chuñ.

10° Maṇḍala with nine gods of Sañs-rgyas-thod-pa/Buddhakapāla according to the Rdo-rje-ḥphren/Vajrāvalī (3).

11° Maṇḍala with 25 gods of Phag-mo/Vārāhī according to the Phag-mo-mñon-byañ-chub/Abhisambodhi-Vārāhī (4).

12° Maṇḍala with 13 gods of Bde-mchog sdom-ḥbyuñ/Saṃvarodaya with three faces and six arms (5).

13° Maṇḍala with 45 gods of Ḥjam-dpal-sgyu-ḥphrul-dra-ba/Māyājāla-Mañjuśrī given by the Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra.

14° Maṇḍala with 32 gods of the Gsañ-ḥḍus/Guhyasamāja expounded by the Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra.

(1) In the works of Bu-ston, vol. THA: *Phyag-rdor ḥkhor-chen-gyi bstod-pa bstod-pas don-thams-cad ḥgrub-pa*.

(2) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.165.

(3) On Sañs-rgyas-thod-pa/Buddhakapāla see the Tantra *Sañs-rgyas-thod-pa zhes-bya-baḥi rnal-ḥbyor-maḥi rgyud-kyi-rgyal-po* (Toh. 424).

(4) Toh. 377 *Phag-mo mñon-par-byañ-chub-pa*.

(5) On which see Bu-ston, *Bde-mchog sdom-ḥbyuñ-gi sgrub-thabs dños-grub rin-po-cheḥi-gter*, complete works, vol. JA.

15° Maṇḍala with 13 gods of the Gsañ-ḥdus/Guhyasamāja expounded by the Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra.

17° Maṇḍala of Bdud-rtsiḥi-hūm-mdzad/Amṛta-hūmkāra, one of the three maṇḍalas of Bdud-rtsiḥi given by the Rdo-rje-ḥphreñ/Vajrāvalī.

18° Maṇḍala of Bde-mchog reg-tshig-rnams/Bhayanāśana Śaṃvara.

To the left, above:

19° Maṇḍala of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara according to Nag-po-spyod-pa/Kṛṣṇācārya with 62 gods.

20° Maṇḍala of Bde-mchog/Śaṃvara according to Maitripā with 33 gods.

21° Maṇḍala of Kye-rdo-rje/Hevajra of the physical plane (*sku*) with one head and two arms according to the Brtag-gñis, namely the second chapter of the Sampuṭatantra.

22° Maṇḍala of Kye-rdo-rje/Hevajra of the verbal plane (*gsuñ*) with three heads and six arms.

23° Maṇḍala of Kye-rdo-rje/Hevajra according to the Sampuṭatantra with 17 gods.

24° The 9 gods of the maṇḍala of Sñiñ-po Kye-rdo-rje/Citta-Hevajra with 8 faces and 16 arms.

25° Sañs-rgyas-thod-pa/Buddhakapāla with 25 gods from the tantra of the same name (Toh.424).

26° Maṇḍala of Kurukullā with 15 gods according to Rdo-rje-ḥphreñ-ba/Vajrāvalī.

27° Maṇḍala of Thugs-rje-chen-po padma-dra-ba/Padmajāla Mahākāruṇika according to Bu-ston (1).

28° Maṇḍala with five deities of Bde-mchog Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Śaṃvara Vajradākinī according to Dril-bu-pa/Ghaṇṭāpāda.

29° Maṇḍala with 9 gods of Mahāmāya according to the lot-sava of Rñog.

(1) *Thugs-rje-chen-po pad-ma-dra baḥi sgrub-thabs thugs-rje ḥod-zer ḥbyuñ-ba*, complete works of Bu-ston, vol.JA.

30° Maṇḍala of Thugs-kyi-rdo-rje/Cittavajra with 4 faces and 8 arms.

31° Maṇḍala with 15 goddesses of Bdag-med-ma/Nairātma according to the Britag-pa-gñis of the Sampaṭatantra.

32° Maṇḍala with 17 goddesses of Sgrol-ma bla-med/Anuttara-Tārā.

33° Maṇḍala with 13 goddesses of Ye-śes-mkhaṭ-ḥgro-ma/Jñāna-ḍākinī according to the Sampaṭa (third chapter).

34° Maṇḍala of Sgrol-ma/Eārā according to the Rdo-rje-ḥphren-ba/Vajrāvalī.

35° Maṇḍala of Hūm-mdzad/Hūmkāra in his eleven irate forms according to the Rdo-rje-ḥphren-ba/Vajrāvalī.

36° Maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-nag-po-chen-po/Vajra-Mahākāla expounded by the Rdo-rje-gur (1).

Still above it on the free surface, there are the images of masters and doctors through whom the tantric tradition was revived and was operating in the minds of disciples. Thus this hall gives us not only the visible representation of the religious experiences vivifying the community by which it was built, but also sheds light on tantric culture as it spread in the monasteries of central Tibet around the XV century. Texts of mysticism not common today and almost forgotten were so well known at that time that the artists could decorate the walls of the temples with their figures even without giving their meaning, even without a brief inscription. It is clear that they were painting for monks mostly well versed in the mysteries of tantric mysticism, who could read this symbolic language through which the maṇḍala spoke to their spirit. The paintings of the temple are always in relation to the culture of the milieu among which they emerge. Today that the monks are no longer so cultivated, these reproductions of maṇḍalas have

(1) See above p. 124ff.

become rare. They have given way to the wheel of life. The symbols have become simpler and easier, accessible to a range of mediocre religious culture. The very pantheon covering the walls of the temples of recent constructions has become impoverished and is reduced to more popular and humane divinities: Tārā and Avalokiteśvara.

Around this temple runs the *skor-lam* or corridor for ritual circumambulation, frescoed with the figures of the Thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, accompanied by the respective Bodhisattvas.

The chapel on the right has images of stucco of the sixteen arhats almost natural and therefore it is called the chapel of sixteen arhats (Gnas-brtan lha-khañ).

Other statues are seen on the central wall, and they represent Hjam-dbyaṅs smra-baḥi-señ-ge/Vādisimha Mañjuśrī with his cycle; five divinities in all.

On the wall to the sides of the door good paintings of the Rgyal-chen sde-bzhi/Caturmahārājika (figs. 116, 117, 118) can be seen, namely of the four supreme kings, guardians of the cardinal points.

Although there are no inscriptions, it is clear that the painters of these frescoes have again strayed afar from the Indian models, and that they have rather followed Central Asian inspiration. The tonality of the colours too, among which the pale green and the faint red dominate, reminds of the manner of Central Asia. There is no doubt that in this case too, we are faced by paintings made according to the Khotanese system, which for reasons I shall soon give, has continued through the centuries to influence the iconography of the four celestial guardians.

The two lateral chapels on the upper floor of the main temple of Gyantse have each an opening with a triple door: and this is not a whim of the architect. In such constructions, where everything is symbolic, no detail is left to the arbitrariness of the artisans, but has a precise significance of its own: the doors are three, because they recall the three *vimokṣa-mukha*: the three parts that lead to salvation, namely the realisation of the insubstantiality of things, the renunciation of various differentiating concepts, and the extinguishing of every desire.

CHAPTER VII

KUMBUM (1)

§47. *General symbolism of the Kumbum.* We have already said above that the stūpa is a maṇḍala; and we also spoke though briefly, of the meaning that the schools projecting the construction have given to the edifice itself. Furthermore that this Kumbum imagined as a maṇḍala architectonically constructed, is evidently shown by the very plan of the monument, which is presented as a superposition of concentric maṇḍalas. The prescribed four doors in the four directions open over four chapels of major proportions. These maṇḍalas have as their centre the axis of the temple (*srog-sin*). This axis is the soul of the universe, invisible, but omnipresent, namely the prime principle symbolized in the highest cella of the Kumbum by Rdo-rje-ḥchañ/Vajradhara (see fig. A on the opposite page).

The symbolism that the author of the eulogy gives to the Kumbum is not his own creation. We have already seen in the first volume of this series how every stūpa is the architectonic expression of the essential truths of Buddhism. This is why it

(1) Figures 119, 120.

was imagined that progressive ascension to the successive floors, in which the *sku-hbum* is divided, corresponded to a profound purification. He who piously visited the chapels of Kumbum would eliminate little by little the traces of his sins and would almost transform himself into the spiritual planes expressed in symbols in the stūpa. It is of no import that this change does not take place in reality: it is of no import that the

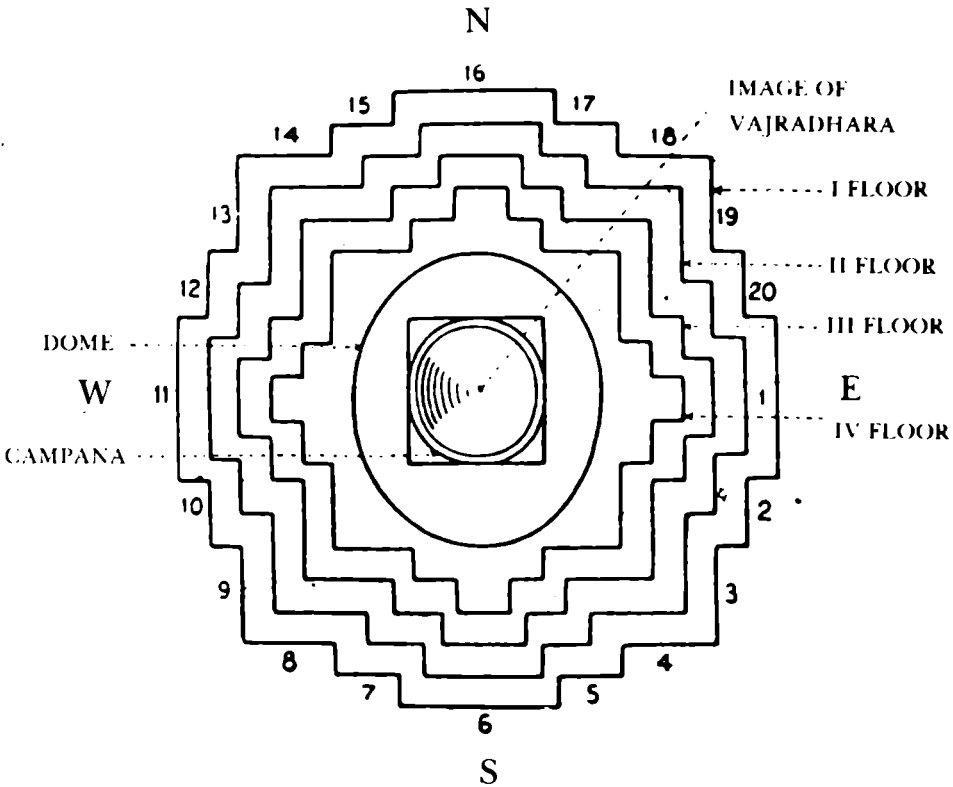


Fig. A.

people visiting the Kumbum even today with a sense of profound reverence will not come out profoundly renewed. The modest result of that devoted circumambulation of so sacred a monument cannot overshadow the symbolic value of the edifice and the mystic significance attributed to it and that was at the basis of its very construction. The building is the *chos-skuldharmakāya*, the body of the law made visible: to go through the chapels was almost an identification with the

highest spiritual planes. That is why the progressive mounting from floor to floor corresponds also to an ascension towards truths ever more subtle and secret. Ascending one passes from an order of tantric cycles to higher ones: one starts with the Kriyātantras and reaches on the top of the building to the Anuttaratantras. In this way one traverses through all the mysticism and esoteric liturgy of Mahāyāna in a short time.

The sacred buildings, as the images, are constructed according to fixed rules. There is a unity of measure which, variously multiplied, determines the proportions of single portions. In our case the tradition reported by the anonymous author of the eulogy says that this unit of measure was the cubit (*khru*) of the king and this exceeded the normal measure by four fingers (*sor-mo*). Starting from the centre and measuring 108 cubits for each side in all the directions, therefore with a diameter of 216 cubits, the base of the building was measured and built. It is technically called the “lunar lotus” because the moon becomes the lotus of Rdo-rje-ḥchan/Vajradhara, serene and beatific divinity. This basis symbolises the fusion of two elements from which the thought of illumination is derived, namely, the praxis (*upāya*) and the gnosis (*prajñā*), or the two aspects of being, beatitude and insubstantiality (*mahāsukha* and *sūnyatā*). It measures one cubit in height and is surrounded by three steps (*them-skas*). On the basement, on a stilobate (*khri-ḥdegs*), symbolizing the four imperturbabilities of the Buddha (*vaiśāradya*, *mi-ḥjigs-pa*), is the throne proper, divided into five faces (*gdon*) for each side (1)

(1) All are not on the same line, but descending, which gives exactly 5×4 walls which constitute the facades of the twenty chapels.

On them are represented the symbols of the five Buddhas of the supreme pentad: the lion (Vairocana) (1) symbol of imperturbability (*hjigs-med*); the elephant (Akṣobhya) symbol of the ten mystic forces (*stobs bcu*); the horse (Ratnasambhava) symbol of thaumaturgic powers (*rdzu-ḥphrul*); the peacock (Amitābha) symbol of the ten dominant capacities (*dbaṅ bcu*); the eagle (*mkhaḥ-ldin*) (Amoghasiddhi) symbol of the force of non-attachment to anything (*asamparigraha*). This throne is surmounted by the usual frame consisting of a double lesser border (*bad chun*), an indented border (*bad bar*), a great border and lastly in a frame jutting as a roof (*bya-ḥdab*).

The whole of Kumbum lies on that throne which elevates up for about three meters on the surface of the basement: on the south side there is a stair leading to the door opening on the first floor. On every floor, as it has been seen, to each side corresponds, in the centre, a great temple around which, on the sides, are the minor chapels in respective jittings (*glo-bur*). Thus without counting the two corridors between the dome and the campana, we have a total of 73 chapels disposed according to the following scheme:

I floor: 4 major temples, 16 minor chapels	20
II floor: there are no major temples, since they correspond to the upper portion of those below; 16 minor chapels	16
III floor: 4 major temples, 16 minor chapels	20
IV floor: 12 chapels	12
V dome (<i>bum-pa</i>): 4 major temples	4
VI campana: image of Rdo-rje-ḥchan/Vajradhara	1
	<hr/> 73 <hr/>

(1) On the "vehicles" of the five Buddhas see *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.78. ,

Kumbum I.1

Although the technical term regularly found in all the inscriptions to designate such a monument is *bkra-śis sgo-maṅ mchod-rten* “the lucky stūpa of many doors”, the popular tradition now knows it by the shorter name *sku-ḥbum* namely “the stūpa containing the 100.000 images”. This is a literal translation, but in Tibetan *ḥbum* has the same value as the *wan* in Chinese, it does mean an extraordinarily great number. I could not, as is natural, count all the images painted on the walls; but it seems that the anonymous author of the oft-quoted guide imposed upon himself the not light task of counting them, because he gives at the end of each floor the statistics of the frescoed figures. According to his calculations, the images of the first four floors and of the dome would aggregate to 27,529.

§48. *The first floor of the Kumbum.* The first floor is surrounded by an enclosure (*lan-kan, lan-khan*) on which there were two doors, the one to the south for entrance, and the other to the north for going out. But now the north door is closed.

The first floor, symbolizing perhaps the four coefficients of awareness (*smṛtyupasthāna*), is eight cubits high and has a circumference of 354 cubits. The first floor too, following the design of the “throne” which determines the plan of the entire building, is divided into five faces for each side, and these are, as it has been said, two to the right and two to the left of the central one which is wider. Moreover, the central juts out with respect to the others which progressively withdraw towards the axis of the building. In this way the whole floor is divided in twenty projections in which are temples in the centre and minor chapels at their sides.

Kumbum I.2

The guide, in its description of the Kumbum, starts from the first temple, that on the very axis of the door and therefore looks toward the south. Then it goes on to describe the two chapels in the east, namely to the right, and then the other two in the west, namely to the left. Following the same rule, it goes to the great temple in the west, and then to that in the north, and at last to that in the south, noticing on the way minor chapels which are on their right and left. I will follow the same order, from left to right, as I have always done, but going directly from chapel to chapel, which will be numbered by a progressive number from the first to the twentieth, indicating the major temples with a T.

I will not dilate on their description, provided that the iconographic and artistic importance of the cycles represented does not advise me to the contrary. The descriptions will be as brief as specific and as diffuse as are the inscriptions.

Then, shall we start our tour of the chapels of the Kumbum.

I.1T. The central image of painted stucco represents Śākyamuni in the attitude of preaching the law. At his side one finds Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, then the eight Buddhas of Medicine (*Sman-bla*) (1). On the wall the frescoes have been partly retouched or re-done. Originally they represented the cycle of the *Sman-bla*/Bhaiṣajyaguru, that of the Prajñāpāramitā, the sixteen Arhats: according to the calculations of the eulogy: 121 figures in all.

I.2. The chapel is dedicated to Ḥod-zer-can-ma/Mārīcī, whose statue with three faces and eight arms is on the eastern wall. On the wall to the west is painted the same goddess in yellow colour with eight arms and three faces; the central one is

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.168.

Kumbum I.2

human and the other two on the sides are of a boar. From the forelock emerges the figure of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana and serpents are coming out of the hair bound by a garland of flowers (fig.121).

The goddess is fairly well known in her various representations described by the literature of Sādhanas, which has been used by A. Getty and by Benoytosh Bhattacharyya. The latter is right, I believe, in clearly distinguishing this goddess from Vajravārāhī.

Her character of luminous divinity is pointed out by her connections with Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, by her chariot drawn by seven boars as seven are the horses of the Sun (1) and especially by her name Mārīcī namely “ray”.

There is no doubt that this is the original significance of the goddess. There is also a trace of it in the Buddhist dhāraṇī dedicated to her in various versions, where it is said of her: “there is a divinity staying before the sun and she has attributes of great divine power and sway; constantly she walks before the sun. The sun does not see her, but she can see the sun” (2). That Mārīcī had a significance for the rays of the sun and especially those preceding sunrise, namely the light of Dawn, is beyond doubt. But in the Buddhist tradition other symbolisms superimpose this central nucleus. There is a detail that we always find in her representation, and that may serve to let us understand what was the new significance given by the

(1) About the pork sacrificed to the Sun at Nagpur see W.Crooke, *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p.33.

(2) Taishō 1254-1255, 1256, 1257, Toh. 564, 565, 566.

Kumbum I.2

Buddhist schools to the old divinity accepted in their olympus. This detail is, to my opinion, the stūpa: the stūpa is represented in the middle of her ascetic lock and the figure of the goddess has to be represented inside a stūpa. Therefore there is a constant relation between the stūpa and Mārīcī.

What is the relation between the stūpa and the solar rays? Evidently none, if they are actual solar rays, but very close if Mārīcī, rather than the solar rays, stands for the luminous beams that the Buddhist legends relate to emanate from the stūpas every time that a miraculous deed is about to be accomplished. For the sake of brevity, I will recollect only one among the well-known examples, namely the bursting forth of the luminous rays from the stūpa wherein Prabhūtaratna, accompanied by Śākyamuni, introduced himself at the moment of his parinirvāṇa, according to the description of the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka (1): these innumerable rays fill the universe and each of them projects infinite images of Bodhisattvas. We have, therefore, a new example of that deification of various moments of episodes of the life of the Buddha or of the Buddhas, to which is mostly due the continuous enrichment of the olympus of Mahāyāna.

Since Bu-ston completes the descriptions of Mārīcī, already known and contained in the Sādhanamālā, we recapitulate the iconographic schemes of this goddess according to the data furnished by him in the table on pages 176-177.

(1) ed. Kern, chapter XX, page 387.

Kumbum I.2

	heads	colour	number of arms	their symbols right	left
I° (fig. 122) Bu-ston, p. 14	three: the left one is of a boar.	yellow	six	arrow, vajra, needle	bow, thread, aśoka flower
II°Bu-ston, p. 15a.	id.	id.	id.	id.	id.
III° Bu-ston, p. 15b.	three: right and left of a boar.	yellow	eight	1) Rdo-rje-gdens and Rigs-ldan/ Kulika 2) arrow and Padma 3) Padma-chen/ Mahāpadma needle and thread 4) Duñ-skyon/ Śankhapāla and hook	1) bow, Mthaḥh-yas/ Ananta 2) Nor-rgyas-kyi-bu/ Vāsuki 3) H̄jog-po/Taksaka, aśoka flower 4) noose and Karkoṭa (1)

(1) Namely, the eight mahānāgas: Kulika, Ananta, Padma, Vāsuki, Mahāpadma, Taksaka, Śankhapāla, Karkoṭa.

Kumbum I.2

vehicles	symbols	acolytes		
boar	mechod-rten/ stūpa in the middle of hair & aśoka flowers on the head	Arkamasi	of the colour of the bandhuka flower (<i>Pentapetes phoenicea</i>); two hands	all of them have the face of a boar
		Markamasi	yellow; needle with thread and aśoka flower	
		Antardhana	yellow; aśoka flower (<i>Saraca indica</i>)	
		Tejomasi	red; arrow and bow	
		Udayamasi		
		Gulmamasi	similar to the preceding ones	
		Banamasi		
		Civaramasi		
		Mahācivaramasi		
		Varāhamukhi		
		Padakramasi		
Varālī	aśoka and rdo-rje/vajra			
Parakramasi				
Badalī	red; bow and arrow			
Urmamasi				
Baralī	green; needle and thread			
Patālī	red; needle and thread			
Batālī	thread and aśoka			
Barālī	yellow; aśoka and noose			
Varāhamukhī				
Ālo	blue; hook			
Tālo	yellow; noose			
Kālo	red; chain			
id.	id.	only the first eleven goddesses		
id.	id. and image of Rnam-par- snañ-mdzad/ Vairocana and serpent	Bātakamasi		
		Parakramasi	blue; 4 arms, hook, needle, vajre, vajra and thread	
		Lha-mo (Hod-zer-can/ Mārīcī)	yellow; 4 faces	
		Lha-mo Lha-mo	red; 4 faces green; 4 faces	

Kumbum I.2

From this list of names it is clear that the acolytes of the goddess are not reduced to only four as we read in Benoytosh Bhattacharyya or in Getty (1). Besides Vartāli, Vadāli, Varāli and Varāhamukhī the cycle of her followers comprises twentyfour or eleven minor divinities.

It is not clear how this cycle has been formed: some of the divinities are hypostases of various moments of the course of the sun or of his virtues: Arkamasi, Markamasi (in the sense of life, vital spirit) - Antardhāna, Tejomasi – Udayamasi, Padakramasi, perhaps for Padakramamasi the steps made by the sun in his luminous way through the world (compare Āditya-hṛdaya-stotra from the Bhaviṣyottara-purāṇa in Bṛhat-stotra-ratnākara, page 242: *yojanānām sahasre dve śate dve dve ca yojanelekena nimīṣārdhena kramamāṇa namo 'stute* //).

It is difficult to explain these names: if the form °masi is a correct one, one has to think that these deities were born, as others, either from given moments of the liturgy as symbolized by them, or from invocations in sacred hymns: *tvam udayo 'si*. But in this case too it is not clear how a masculine form *udayo 'si* has then become *udayam asi*, lest the invocations were contained in those dhāraṇīs where grammar was never respected. Other divinities like Ālo, Tālo, Kālo, namely modifications of an original word Ālo (suggesting *āloka* light) similar to *tārā*, *tāre*, *tuttāre* and other similar formula, are born as hypostases of the invocations in the dhāraṇī. The presence of Varāhamukhī is explained by iconographic resemblances, since Mārīcī sometimes has piggish aspects as Varāhamukhī the face of a boar.

(1)-*Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p.133.

Kumbum I.4

There are also figures of masters who were initiated to the mystic revelations of this goddess; and among them excels the figure of the Sa-skya Paṇḍita (fig.128) (1). From the scheme reproduced it appears that the fig.121 corresponds to the third type of the goddess according to Bu-ston: the figure 122 reproduces the first type. The figure 123 represents an angry form of Ḥod-zer-can/Mārīcī described by the Sādhanamālā, p.285, and the figures 124 and 125 represent other manifestations of the same goddess according to Sādhanamālā, p.282. A portion of the cycle of acolytes according to the first and third maṇḍala of Bu-ston is represented in the figures 126, 127 and 128.

I.3. This chapel, as stated in the inscription running along the wall, below the frescoes, is dedicated to Ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed/Bhūtaḍāmara, a special manifestation of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi.

The inscription, published in the appendix, has a rather complete description of the paintings of this chapel. Therefore I do not stop to describe it but refer the reader to the appendix. I simply remind the reader that the cycles taken specially from Kriyātantra have been described, although summarily, by Bu-ston (2). In this case, however, it does not seem that the painters have followed the iconographic interpretation by Bu-ston but that they have followed another source (see details in figs. 129-132 which represent prevalently the following of Rnam-thos-sras/Vaiśravaṇa).

I.4. This chapel is dedicated to Rme-(or Sme-)brtsegs, namely to Ucchuṣma about whom I already had occasion to talk in a previous volume. The divinity is represented as a

(1) The Ḥgro-mgon ḥphags-pa blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzañ-po has written an *Ḥod-zer-can-maḥi sgrub-thabs* much followed in the Sa-skya school. It is contained in the *Sa-skya bkaḥ-ḥbum*, edition of Sde-dge, vol. BA.

(2) Vol. TSA, *Skabs gsum-pa bya-rgyud-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi rnam-gzhag*, folio 61. *Phyag-na-rdo-rje gar-mkhan*, folio 42, *Rdo-rje-sa-ḥog*.

Kumbum I.4

statue of stucco at the end of the chapel, surrounded by his acolytes: Mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma rme-brtsegs and Khro-mo rme-brtsegs. He is reproduced in the fresco immediately to the left of the main door (fig.133), according to the same iconographic schemes as followed at Tsaparang, namely three heads and six hands (1). He is of green colour, according to the system of mystic realization of the lama of Mdo and he is surrounded by four forms of the same god, forms which correspond to the mystic families deriving from him.

On the main wall, facing the door, the central figure represents Rdo-rje-rnam-par-ḥjoms-pa/Vajravidāraṇa, a secondary form of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi (2), reproduced

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.165. In the *Sādhanamālā* he is usually represented with one head and two hands.

(2) Green-blue colour, one face and two hands; in the right sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra, in the left a bell leaning on the lap. In the Bstan-ḥgyur there are many sādhanas of him but none is attributed to Virūpā. In his serene forms he is green blue; in the right hand sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra, the left a bell which leans on the lap. In other manifestations, the right holds the sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra and the left is in the mudrā of threatening at the height of the waist. According to Bstan-ḥgyur LXVIII.219 and 220 Vajravidāraṇī-maṇḍala-vidhi and Vajravidāraṇī-nāma-snāna-vidhi-vṛtti, the four principal acolytes of Rdo-rje-rnam-par-ḥjoms/Vajravidāraṇa are:

	colour	right	left
Rdo-rje-gtum-pa/Vajracāṇḍa	black	vajra	mudrā of threatening
Rdo-rje-phur-bu/Vajrakīlaka	dark green	phur-bu	
Rdo-rje-be-con/Vajradāṇḍa	red	club	
Rdo-rje-tho-ba/Vajramudgara	dark green	hammer	

But in Bstan-ḥgyur LXVIII.225 (Vajravidāraṇī-nāma-sādhana) there are, in part, the deities appearing in these paintings and with the four above-mentioned they form four tetrads: Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub/Aparājita, Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Bdud-rtsiḥi-ḥkyil/Amṛtakuṇḍalin with the following symbols on the right: skull, club, lotus, vajra; Ḥdod-paḥi-rgyal-po/Kāmarāja, Dbyug-snon-po/Nīlādāṇḍa, Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, Stobs-chen/Mahābalā.

Kumbum I.4

according to the meditation system attributed to Virūpā, the Indian siddha recognised and venerated as its master by the Sa-skyapa school.

The central figure, surrounded by a halo of flames, is accompanied both on the right and on the left by the cycle of the ten terrific divinities forming his followers, namely to his right beginning from top: Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, Hdod-paḥi-rgyal-po/Kāmarāja, Śes-rab-mthar-byed/Prajñāntaka, Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka,... (figs. 134, 135, 137) and to his left, from Padma-mthar-byed/Padmāntaka, Dbyug-sñon-can/Nīladaṇḍa, Hgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka, Stobs-po-che/Mahābala (fig. 136). On top, instead are reproduced images of the masters initiated into his mysteries: first of all Virūpā (Hbir-va-pa) and Sa-skyapa Paṇḍita.

Hereafter small figures of female deities are seen and their right hand is in the mudrā of threatening and they have a flower in their raised left hand: these figures with the left leg forward and slightly flected, represent the sixtyfour messengers (*pho-ña-mo*) of Rnam-par-hjoms-pa/Vidāraṇa (fig. 138).

On the left wall, namely that to the right of the door, there are other terrific deities, multiplying their arms and their faces: Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka (fig. 139) and to the right on the side of the door, among minor images, Bgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka, above whom can be seen Lha-mo ḥod-zer-can/Mārīcī and Gdugs-dkar-can/Sitātapatra (fig. 140). On the lower portion a beautiful figure of Khams-gsum-dbañ-phyug/Trailokyeśvara (fig. 141).

Along the walls, above the inscriptions, are painted the goddesses who symbolize the mystic offerings to the divinities (*mchod-paḥi-lha-mo*); they are evoked during the tantric liturgy for

with the following symbols on the right: hook, club, sword, trident. Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, Sa-ḥog/Pātāla, Gnod-mdzes/Yakṣa, Rdo-rje-che/Mahāvajra with the rdo-rje/vajra in the right; the left, in the mudrā of threatening in all of them.

Kumbum 1.4

bringing the offerings made by the initiate in spirit to those planes, whose vision opens before the initiate during his meditation. We have already met them at Tsaparang and therefore I will not repeat their significance. There they were naked, here they wear wide gowns on which the movement of the dance plays with soft undulations and folds. Each of them has the symbol of her mystic nature and they unroll themselves in the lower bands of the temple as a graceful train eternizing in the painting the devotion of the donor (figs. 142, 143 detail).

The artist painted the frescoes with such skill and with such sapient harmony of colours that this is one of the most interesting chapel in the whole of Kumbum.

According to the calculations of the eulogy the figures are 160 in all.

1.5. This chapel is dedicated to Gdugs-dkar-mo-can/Sitātapatrā a goddess represented in many more shapes than those given in the Sādhanamālā and described in the iconographic treatises. In this little temple she is represented in her peculiar aspect invoked for averting evil influences of the planets (*gzah*): her statue, on the north wall, is surrounded by her four acolytes, namely Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā, white, Gtum-mo-chen-mo/Mahācaṇḍā, yellow, Hbar-ba-chen-mo/Mahājvālā, red, and Stobs-chen-mo/Mahābalā, green. All have the fist of the left hand on the lap, the right hand has a vase at the height of the waist.

On the wall at the left side of the door can be seen Gdugs-dkar-can/Sitātapatrā of white colour with three faces and six hands (fig. 144) with her acolytes mentioned in the inscriptions.

In the centre of the eastern wall the main figure represents another manifestation of Gdugs-dkar-can/Sitātapatrā, white

Kumbum 1.5

(fig. 145) with three faces and eight hands, surrounded by terrific manifestations of Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā (fig. 146) and by various phyag-rgya/mudrās (figs. 147, 148, 149, 150 details). Except for the central divinity that has a thousand arms in Bu-ston, the maṇḍala would correspond with respect to the acolytes to that described by Bu-ston on p.17ff. of his treatise on the Kriyātantra. Besides the four deities represented by four statues of the acolytes in the centre of the wall, also figure:

	colour	right	left
Hbar-baḥi-hphen-ba dgos-dkar-mo	yellow	garland	utpala flower
Sgrol-ma khro-gñer-can	blue	"	"
Hbar-baḥi rdo-rje-hphen	green	"	"
Pad-maḥi mñon-mtshan rdo-rje-mtshan	red		
Mi-thub hphen-ba-can	white	vajra	on the lap
Rdo-rje mkhaḥ-rnam -hjom-s-pa	yellow	stick, vajra	"
Zhi-baḥi lha-rnmas-kyi mchod-ma	black	incensoir	"
Gzugs gzi-brjid-chen-mo	green-black	chain, vajra	"
Hphags-ma sgrol-ma stobs -chen-mo	red		
Rdo-rje lu-gu rgyud	yellow	vajra	rosary
Rdo-rje-gzhon-nuḥi rig- hḍzin-ma	white	"	"
Lag-na-rdo-rje rig ser- phen	green		
Le-brgan rtsi-dañ-rin-chen -ma	red	viśvavajra	"
Snañ-mdzad rdo-rje gtsug -tor grags	white	"	"
Rnam-par hgyin-(bsgyins-) baḥi-rdo-rje-ma	green	"	"
Gser-hod-lta-buḥi-spyan- sna-ma	yellow	"	"(1)

(1) This cycle is also reproduced in the following chapel, cf. fig.157.

Kumbum I. 5.

On the southern wall, in the centre, is seen a form of the same goddess, white, with five faces and eight hands.

This special form of Gtsug-tor-gdugs-dkar-mo/Uṣṇīṣa-sitātapatrā is the central deity of the fourth maṇḍala dedicated to Gtsug-tor according to the already mentioned treatise of Bu-ston (p.18b) on the Kriyātantra. She has five faces and eight hands, whose symbols in the right are: rdo-rje/vajra, sword, pestle, disc; in the left: hook, hatchet, spear, noose (fig.151). Her followers are:

	Colour	right	left
Rnam-pa-bsgyiñs-rdo-rje-ma	blue	vajra	lotus
Gser-ḥod-lta-buḥi spyan- mñah-ma	yellow	disc	eye on lotus flower
Rdo-rje-hgros	green	sna-tshogs- rdo-rje/ viśvavajra	utpala flower
Dkar-mo/Gaurī	red	lotus with vajra	lotus held by the stem
Pad-maḥi-spyan	red	discus	lotus
Zla-ḥod/Candraprabha	white	vajra	lunar disc
Saṅs-rgyas-dpal	red	lotus + vajra	image of Snañ-ba- mthaḥ-yas
De-bzhin-spyan/Tathāgata- locanā		without iconographic	indications
Rdo-rje-ñi-hod/Vajra-Sūrya- prabha		without iconographic	indications
Zla-ḥod rdo-rje-ḥdzin/ Vajradhara Candraprabha		without iconographic	indications

The ten Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpālas surround these deities (details fig.152).

In the chapel 78 images are counted in all.

I.6T. It is the temple on the western side known under the name of Bde-ba-can/Sukhāvaṭī, because it is dedicated to Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus whose great image in stucco dominates

Kumbum I.7

the centre of the chapel. He is surrounded by Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara and Mthu-chen-po/Mahābala, and yet on the right, H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara and Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha.

On the walls are the images of the 35 Buddhas invoked during the confession ceremonies, taken from *Phuñ-po-gsum-mdo* (Toh.284) and then divided into many squares, the paradise of Sukhāvātī full of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods and praying personages.

The images emerge from a rich background of vivid colours; white clouds run with sinuous and slow movements over a gracious lacing of flowers and trees (figs. 153-154).

It is a large composition, in which there is a reactionary air against the iconographic schemes: the artist has given free vent to his fantasy, by projecting on the paintings the vision of those paradises where the Buddhist community imagined to have a beatific peace not given to be lived as such by mortals on earth.

The figures of this temple are 268 according to the eulogy.

I.7. This chapel, dedicated to Ri-khrod-lo-ma-gyon-ma/Parṇaśabarī is not well preserved. Many frescoes are scarcely visible. The statue represents the goddess, of yellow colour, with three faces and six arms, accompanied by her two acolytes, namely her two other particular manifestations, the one red and the other black.

On the eastern wall, in the centre, Ri-khrod-lo-ma-gyon-ma/Parṇaśabarī is reproduced according to the method of meditation of the Sa-skyapa school (1), namely as a central figure of the group of statues we have spoken of just now (fig.155). All round, on the wall the images of the deities of her retinue

(1) It is the same as that described in the Sādhanamālā p.306 no.148.

Kumbum I.7

are painted. To her left, beginning from the top Phyr-bzlog-ma-chen-mo/Mahapratyaṅgirā, blue and with six hands (first row from top, beginning from right), then Khro-gñer/Bhṛkuṭī with one face and four hands, then Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā, yellow with one face and two hands (fig.156).

In the lower row, always beginning from right, Ri-khrod-lo-ma-gyon-ma/Parnaśabarī, red, with two arms, Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭī, black, with twelve faces and twentyfour hands, then another form of Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭī, black, with one head and four arms (fig.156, second row) and so on according to the names given in the inscriptions.

To the left of the door other feminine divinities of a peaceful and serene form face this series of terrific deities. In the centre the goddess almost the same as in fig.155, but yellow in colour (fig.157) (1). In fig.158 are seen Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ, Rnam-hjoms-pa-mo/Vidāraṇī, Gtum-mo-chen-mo/Mahācaṇḍī, Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā, Hphreṅ-ba-can/Mālatī, Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā, namely a heaven similar to the one we have already described in the preceding chapel.

According to the eulogy there are 55 figures in all.

I.8. This chapel is dedicated to Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva whose statue, accompanied by the two traditional acolytes, is to be found on the northern wall. The figure 159 reproduces the frescoes covering a small wall jutting out in front of the door. Above there is the figure of Rta-mgrin-mchog-ye-śes-rdo-rje/^{*}Hayagrīv-ottama-jñāna-vajra and below there is a group of three divinities, of whom the central one is Don-yod-padma-gtsug-tor/Amoghpadmoṣṇīṣa, to the right, almost completely effaced, is red Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, and to the left Phrag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi.

(1) See Sādhanamālā p.308 no.149.

The paintings to the left of the door are reproduced in fig.160; above red Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭī and then the four kings of the cardinal points (1).

The figures 161 and 162 represent two forms of red Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, one with eight, the other with six arms. To the right of the first, on various planes, there are many images of particular emanations of Sphyān-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara and Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva taken from Sgyu-ḥphrul-dra-ba/Māyājāla (fig.163) (2).

Above the door the emphasis is on the maṇḍala of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi which is usually called the maṇḍala of nine divinities (figs.164-165).

There are 80 figures in all.

I.9. This chapel is dedicated to Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, whose statue is on the eastern wall and accompanied by two acolytes, iconographically very similar to the central divinity. On the northern wall, i.e. on the left side of the door, in the middle is a large image of Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, blue, with one head and two hands, in the centre of a maṇḍala composed of seventeen divinities (fig.166).

The deity is represented according to the iconographic indications given by Bu-ston in his treatise on the Kriyātantra (fol.22b); he is black, has two arms, of them that on the right has a sword and that on the left a noose in the shape of a serpent. But the maṇḍala described by Bu-ston seems much more numerous, because it includes, besides the central divinity:

Brgya-byin/Indra and Rdo-rje-mi-g.yo-ba/Vajr-Ācala, white, with the serpent Nor-rgyas/Vāsuki on the left shoulder (fig.167).

Lha-chen/Mahādeva and Rin-chen-mi-g.yo-ba/Ratn-Ācala, green.

(1) About Rta-mgrin see the diligent work of Van Gulik already cited, to which I refer for specific details.

(2) The references to the figures are to the inscriptions.

Kumbum I.9

Khyab-hjug/Viṣṇu and Pad-ma-mi-g.yo-ba/Padm-Ācala, red, with the serpent Chu-lha/Varuṇa, Thag-bzañ-ris/Vemacitrin, and Las-kyi-mi-g.yo-ba/Karm-Ācala, green, with the serpent Rigs-ldan/Kulika, Tshañs-pa/Brahmā and Khams-gsum-rnam-par-rgyal-ba/Trailokyavijaya with four hands (trident, rdo-rje/vajra, serpent Mthaḥ-yas-kyi-bu/Ananta, skull).

Gzhon-nu smin-drug/Ṣaḍānana Kumāra and Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, green, with four hands (stick and hammer; serpent Dgaḥ-bo/Nanda and phur-bu/kīlaka).

Dgaḥ-byed and red Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva.

Kun-tu-rgyal-ba/Sañjaya and Bdud-rtsiḥi-ḥkhyil-ba/Amṛta-kunḍalin, blue (club, intestines, mudrā of menacing).

Bdug-spos-ma/Dhūpā, Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā.

Stag-gdoñ-can/Vyāghravaktrā, white, yellow, red, green.

It is clear from the above list that the principal nucleus of this cycle has just sixteen divinities, spread around the god, who is in the centre. The manifestations of Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala multiply according to the various mystic families: the eight feminine divinities belong to the external part of the maṇḍala and form the usual group of the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevīs and of the guardians of the four doors. Thus there is no doubt that the maṇḍala here represented is that described by Bu-ston according to the system of the Kriyātantra

The centre of the main wall, that in the southern direction—one has to remember that we have now passed on to the northern side of the mchod-rten—is occupied by a large figure of Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, blue, with one face and four hands, inspired by the liturgy contained in the Bkaḥ-ñan mi-g.yo-baḥi brtul phol-pa (1) (fig. 168).

(1) Toh.496 *Āry-ācala-mahākrodharājasya sarva-tathāgatasya balāparimita-vīra-vinaya-svākhyaṭa-nāma-kalpa*. The iconography is in Bu-ston. See the following note.

Kumbum I.9

Around him there rise flames symbolising the fire of gnosis that destroys error, and then both to the right and to the left, the images of gods forming the maṇḍala are displayed (1) (figs. 169, 170, 171).

(1) This maṇḍala is described by Bu-ston in *Skabs gñis-pa spyod-paḥi-rgyud-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*, p. 19ff. in the following way:

divinity	colour	number of faces	number of hands	symbols	
				right	left
Śākya-mgon-po	yellow	1			samā-dhi-mudrā
Spyan-ras-gzigs/ Avalokiteśvara	white			vajra on lotus	
Byams-pa/Maitreya	yellow			flower of naga- kesara	vase
Hjam-dpal/ Mañjuśrī	red- yellow			sword	lotus
Kun-tu-bzañ-po/ Samantabhadra	yellow			cintā- maṇi gem	
Phyag-na-rdo-rje/ Vajrapāṇi	green				bell
Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala	black		4	vajra, lasso	sword
Gnas-dbañ-phyug	red			red lotus	mudra of thr- eaten- ing
Yum-chen-mo/ Prajñāpāramitā	yellow			vajra	book of gnosis on lotus
Yul-las-rnam-par- -rgyal-ba				with the hands in the mudrā of explaining the law	
Pad-maḥi-yan-lag				book on a lotus	a tower

To the cycle of acolytes also belong the ten listeners/Śrāvakas, Phyag-na-rdo-rje, iconographically similar to the central deity, Dpuñ-bzañ/Subāhu, Gtsug-ḥchañ etc., the sixteen Bodhisattvas, Gos-dkar-mo/Pāṇḍaravāsini, Māmaki etc., Rma-bya-chen-mo/Mahāmāyūrī, etc.

Kumbum I.9

To the left, on top: Śākya-mgon-po surrounded by many bodhisattvas: in fig. 169 are seen, just under Śākya-mgon-po and Gyul-las-rnam-par-rgyal, of whom only the throne is visible, the following bodhisattvas easily identifiable because every figure has its inscription: Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra, Blo-gros-mi-zad-pa/Akṣayamati, Hjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, Saḥi-sñiñ-po/Kṣitigarbha, Byams-pa/Maitreya.

The figures 170 and 171, beginning from the top and from left to right, reproduce other divinities of the same cycle, namely: Hphags-pa gnas-kyi-dbañ-phyug, Khro-gñer-can/Bhṛkuṭī and Rma-bya-chen-mo/Mahāmāyūrī, Yum-chen-mo/Prajñāpāramitā, Māmakī, Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara, Rdo-rje-lcags-sgrog-ma/Vajraśṛṅkhalā, Lha-mo Gdug-pa-mo/Chattrā, Padma-yan-lag, Nam-mkhaḥi-spyan-ma, Ri-khrod-lo-ma-can-ma/Parṇaśabarī.

The figure 167 reproduces the central image to the west of the door and represents Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, white, in his usual iconographic form: a detail is reproduced in figure 172 which represents Dpal-chen-mo/Mahāśrī.

I.10. The chapel is dedicated to Gzaḥ-yum-chen-mo/Grahamātrkā, the great mother of the planets, called also Rig-pa-chen-mo/Mahāvidyā; her statue is on the eastern wall and is surrounded by that of her two acolytes, namely Hjam-dbyaṅs/Mañjuḥoṣa and Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara.

The maṇḍala reproduced on the main wall, namely that to the south, is described by Bu-ston in his treatise on the Kriyā-tantra (fol.23b). The central divinity Gzaḥ-yum/Grahamātrkā differs only in that in the second hand on the right she has the flower instead of the rdo-rje/vajra in the iconographic scheme of Bu-ston (fig.173). The other divinities follow each other in the following order in this maṇḍala which can be called, by its composition, an astrologic maṇḍala:

Kumbum I.10

		Colour	Vehicle	Symbols right left	
Ñi-ma/Āditya	sun as a youth of 16 years	red	seven horses	in the act of adoration (visible to the right of fig.173)	
Zla-ba/Soma	youth of 16 years	white	swan	lotus flower	
Mig-dmar/ Maṅgala	youth of 22 years	red	goat	knife	human head
Lhag-pa/ Budha	man of 34 years	green	lotus	arrow	bough
Phur-bu/ Bṛhaspati	man of 36 years	yellow	elephant	rosary	vase
Pa-saṅs/Śukra	man of 50 years	white	lotus	rosary	vase
Spen-pa/Śani	man of 50 years	black	serpent	rosary	stick
Sgra/Rāhu	lower portion of body serpentine	dark red		sun	
Mjug-riñ/Ketu	...	grey	on a rock	serpen- tine	sword noose

In the four doors of the maṅḍala: Thub-pa/Muni, Phyag-nar-do-rje/Vajrapāṇi, H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara H̄jam-dbyaṅs/Maṅjuḥoṣa and the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika etc.

Some of these divinities are visible on figures 174 and 175.

Around the large image of Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/Aparājitā (fig.178), represented according to the traditional iconographic schemes (wrathful aspect, black colour, two hands, in the right the vajra and the left in the act of threatening), is the maṅḍala of seventeen divinities, turning to the right and to the left, dedicated to that goddess. Even this maṅḍala is described by Bu-ston (fol.77b) in the work on the Kriyātantra already quoted; except for the central divinity the iconography corresponds.

Kumbum I.10

	Colour	Symbols right	left
Gtum-chen-mo/ Maḥācandī	white	wheel	threatening mudrā
Ḥbar-ba-chen-mo/Mahājvālā	yellow	gem	"
Dkar-chen ḥbar-ḥphreñ-ma	red	lotus	"
Ḥphags-pa Sgrol-ma/ Ārya-Tārā	green	sna-tshogs-rdo- rje/viśvavajra	"
Rgyal-baḥi-rdo-rje-ma	blue	stick	"
Padma-mñon-mtshan-ma	yellow	hook, vajra	"
Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-ma/ Aparājitā	red	rosary	"
Rdo-rje-mchu-chen-ma	green	sword	"
Zhi-baḥi-lha-mo	white	vase of perfume	"
Zha-ba-ma	yellow	rosary	"
Dkar-chen ḥbar-ḥphreñ	red	lamp	"
Ḥphags Sgrol-ma/ Ārya-Tārā	green	conch	"
Rdo-rje-lu-gu-rgyud	blue	book, vajra	"
Rdo-rje-gzhon-nu-ma/ Vajrakumārī	yellow	noose	"
Lag-na-rdo-rje-rigs-ma/ Vajrapāni-vidyā	red	hook	"
Rin-chen-ma/Ratnā	red and green	bell	"

These divinities are reproduced on figures 176, 177, 179.

And this chapel does not miss even the usual praying goddesses, in the border on the lower part. An example from them is reproduced in figure 180.

On the wall to the left of the door there is a different iconographic type of the same goddess, to whom the chapel is dedicated (fig.181).

There are 60 images in all.

I.11T. This temple on the northern side of the Kumbum is dedicated to Mar-me-mdzad/Dīpaṅkara from whom it takes its name.

The large image dominates with his serene smile the crowd of the surrounding acolytes. It has on its two sides Maitreya to

Kumbum I.12

the right and Mañjuśrī to the left, and then Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra and Sgrib-pa-thams-cad-rnam-par-sel-ba/Sarvanīvaraṇa-viškambhin.

On the wall long processions of Bodhisattvas pass and grouping around them are crowds of adoring deities. The cycles of the Bodhisattvas taken from the Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad mñon-byañ/Abhisambodhi-Vairocana (12 bodhisattvas) and from the Hjam-dpal-rtsa-rgyud/Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra (16 bodhisattvas) alternate with paradise scenes (paradise of Hphags-pa Hjam-dpal/Ārya-Mañjuśrī), and with pictorial evocations of the preaching of the law. This one, taken out from the bonds of time and eternally renewed, seems to attract the devoted crowds of donors, monks and lay people bringing offerings and donations with devotion (fig. 182). Gods and blessed ones come down from heaven to listen to the redemptive word, chanting their lauds (figs.183,184). In these big paintings the painter, of whom we do not have the name, because in this chapel I did not find any inscription, has expressed the eternity of the revelation in a visible way. It transcends time and space, and men and gods partake of it in a present which never vanishes.

The author of the eulogy has accurately counted the figures even this time and he assures us that they are 214.

I.12. This chapel is now called the chapel of Sgrol dkar/White Tārā: but instead it is dedicated to Nor-rgyun-ma/Vasudhārā.

The statue of the goddess is on the western wall, among her four acolytes, and they are iconographically identical with the main divinity (1). On the wall follow the representations figuring different tantric cycles connected with this goddess or

(1) ŚrīVasundharā, Vasuśrī, ŚrīVasumukhī, Vasumatiśrī; see Sādhanamālā p.421 no. 213.

Kumbum I.12

the like; the maṇḍala of Nor-rgyun-ma/Vasudhārā, having nineteen gods and taken from the Kriyāsamuccaya, and the maṇḍala of the same comprising nine gods taken from the Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho.

To the left of the door is the cycle of Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa made up of eight divinities. In fig.185, below the figures of Gnod-sbyin-chen-po/Mahāyakṣa and Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa of which the lower portion is hardly visible, are reproduced: Ki-li-ma-li-chen-po, Ki-li-ma-li, Gañ-ba-bzañ-po-chen-po and Gañ-ba-bzañ-po/Pūrṇabhadra (1). Below them is the figure of black Tshogs-bdag-po/Gaṇapati.

On the eastern wall is visible the maṇḍala of Nor-rgyun-ma/Vasudhārā, according to the Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho composed of nine gods in all. To her right are seen Rab-tu-bzañ-mo, Rab-tu-dgaḥ-ma, Spos-ma; to her left Ḡdugs-can-ma, Hphags-ma, Chu-śel-ma (fig.186).

The maṇḍala taken from the Kriyāsamuccaya is represented on the long wall, to the south, with the traditional figure of Nor-rgyun-ma/Vasudhārā (fig.187) in the centre with six arms (2). The side to the left is hardly visible; on the right side, beside the deities of the cycle is seen the group of Tshogs-bdag/Gaṇapati according to the meditation system belonging to the Sa-skyapa school, and partially reproduced in fig.188: Tshogs-bdag-dmar-chen/Mahārakta-Gaṇapati, Tshog-bdag-ser-po/Pīta Gaṇapati with his acolytes, Tshogs-bdag chags-pa/Rāga-Gaṇapati. To the right of the door there are four different types of Jambhala each corresponding to a mystic family named after him, on whose protection is put a special group of magic actions.

There are 124 images in all.

I.13. This chapel is called today the chapel of Mgon-po/Nātha, but Mgon-po/Nātha is a generic name which

(1) See Bstan-ḥgyur LXXI.314.p.283b.

(1) See B. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p.118.

is given to all the Yi-dam or tutelary deities of sects and temples. In our case the divinity to whom the chapel is consecrated is Beñ stag-zhon/Vyāghravāhana Daṇḍa-Nātha namely to Mgon-po Beñ about whom we have already spoken; this god, embracing his śakti Dpal-ldan Lha-mo/Śrīdevī, is represented as a statue of stucco.

The paintings have deteriorated greatly and are little visible: the inscriptions are also almost erased. But from the Dkar-chag we know that in the frescoes two particular forms were represented: Mgon-po/Nātha in his esoteric form (*nan*) and in his secret form (*gsan-ba*), accompanied by divinities of affiliated cycles, the three Gsod-byed mon-pa, Las-byed mon-pa, the three Legs-ldan and so on.

There are 22 figures in all.

I.14. This chapel is named after Stobs-po-che/Mahābala whose statue is visible on the southern wall, between that of his two principal acolytes.

Immediately to the left of the door, in the centre, is the figure of Stobs-po-che/Mahābala derived from the formula of meditation (fig.189) of the Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho. The image, reproducing faithfully the iconographic type described by the Sādhanamālā, is surrounded by the acolytes of the god, i.e. to the right, from Dbyug-sñon-can/Nīladaṇḍa, Rdo-rje-be-con/Vajradaṇḍa, Stobs-po-che/Mahābala and to the left from Bdud-rtsiḥi-thab-sbyor/Amṛtakuṇḍalin, Māmakī, Rta-mgrin/Haya-grīva, Gtsug-tor-ḥbar-ba/Uṣṇīṣajvāla.

On the western wall the central divinity is H̄jig-rten-gsum-las-rnam-par-rgyal-ba/Trailokyavijaya (fig.190) with four heads and eight arms (2), accompanied by a multiform procession of acolytes. Those to his right are mostly in bad condition; nevertheless Gnod-mdzad/Yakṣa, Rdo-rje-lcags-kyu/Vajrāṅkuṣa and Sgrol-ma/Tārā can be seen.

(1) Page 507 no.258.

(2) Formula of meditation in Sādhanamālā p.511 no.262.

Kumbum I.14

The figures to his right, on the other hand, are better preserved. They can be seen in figs.191, 192, where beginning from top, to the left, we find in the first row: Rdo-rje-me-dañ-ñi-ma-ḥbar-ltar/Vajrānalārkajvāla, Khro-bo-rgyal-po-sdig-pa, Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Khams-gsum-rnam-par-rgyal-ba/Trailokyavijaya, in the second row: Rdo-rje-ki-la-ki-la/Vajra-kilakila, Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, Dbyug-pa-sñon-po/Nīladaṇḍa, in the third row: Khro-bo-gzigs-ma, Gsin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, Gur-mgon/Daṇḍa-Nātha, Lha-mo/Devī. On the northern wall is Stobs-po-che/Mahābala, black (fig.193).

Below, the usual procession of the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjā-deḥis and the symbols of the seven royal treasures.

There are 74 images in all.

I.15. The deity to whom the chapel is consecrated is Rgyal-mtshan-rtse-mo/Dhvajāgrakeyūrā, whose statue is on the southern wall. She is accompanied by two acolytes, that in this case are a he-messenger and a she-messenger (*pho-ñā* and *pho-ñā-mo*).

To the left of the door, the central image represents Lha-mo Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭī (fig.194) (1) with four hands, and she is surrounded to the right by Rdo-rje-dbañ-phyug-ma/Vajreśvarī, Rdo-rje-khyab-ḥjug-ma/Vajra-Vaiṣṇavī, Rdo-rje-gzhon-nu-ma/Vajrakaumārī, and to the left by Rdo-rje-chu-dbañ-ma, Rdo-rje-dños-grub-ḥbyuñ-ma, Rdo-rje-mtshan-mo, Nam-mkhaḥ-dbañ-phyug-ma, Rdo-rje-ser-mo, Rdo-rje-gdoñ-dkar-mo, Rdo-rje-bzhad-ma/Vajra-hāsyā, Rdo-rje-gyen-du-lta-baḥi-gdoñ.

The central divinity of the western wall is Lha-mo/Devī with eight hands, i.e. Ekajaṭā (fig.195) (2) and Red Tsa-rtsi-ka/Carcikā, with six hands (fig.196) surrounded to the left by Rdo-rje-gnod-byed-mo, Sño-bsañs-chen-mo, Rdo-rje-ma-chen-mo, Rdo-rje-drag-mo/Vajraraudrī and to the right by other deities of terrific aspect reproduced in fig.197, namely: Khro-bo-rdo-rje-gtsug-tor/Krodha-vajroṣṇīṣa, Khro-bo-rta-mgrin/Krodha-hayagrīva, Ḥgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka, Rdo-rje-rmoñs-

(1) See Sādhanamālā p. 261 no.124.

(2) Compare Sādhanamālā p.266 no.127, though all the symbols do not correspond.

Kumbum I.16

byed-ma/Vajra-mohinī, Rdo-rje-gsod-byed ma, Rdo-rje-khrag-
ḥthuñ-ma, Rdo-rje-zhi-ba-mo, Rdo-rje-gtum-mo/Vajracandī,
Rdo-rje-rluñ, Ḥdzin-chen-ma, Rdo-rje ..., Rdo-rje-ro-lañs-ma/
Vajra-vetālī, Rdo-rje-snañ-byed-ma, Rdo-rje-tshol-byed-ma,
Rdo-rje-rañs-byed-ma.

On the wall to the north is painted the central divinity Rgyal-
mtshan-rtse-moḥi-dpuñ-rgyan/Dhvajāgra-keyūrā (fig.198) (1).
The figures 199 and 200 (Ḥog-dpag-ma and Rdo-rje-tshug-par-
dkaḥ) show details.

According to the usual source, the figures should be 102 in
all

I.16T. This temple, which for richness and delicacy of
paintings is perhaps equal or even better than the others, takes
its name from Byams-pa/Maitreya to whom it is dedicated. The
statue of the god, covered with paraments, solemnly dominates
the background of the western wall. It is surrounded by two
smaller statues both representing Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus,
and by the figures of two Bodhisattvas, namely Sa-sñiñ-po/
Kṣitigarbha to the right and Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi to the
left.

On the walls the maṇḍalas are replaced by long rows of per-
sons mounted on vast backgrounds covered from above by
clouds, while trees mark them with their strange and twisted
forms. Here and there we see as yet, it is true, groups of gods
overshadowing with their majestic figures the crowd lining
around them with recollection and devotion, but also these
gods have lost their hieratic frigidity. The rigid iconographic
schematism is made gentle by a living breath which renders
these figures more human, less abstract, more directly partaking
of human travails, with a conscious smile of their mercy. Thus

(1) The image corresponds to the iconographic description contained in
the Sādhanamālā p.403 no.203.

Kumbum I.17

the Vaiśravaṇa cycle, closely follows Chinese models.

Fig. 206 shows one of the Rta-bdag/Aśvapati, the horsemen belonging to the retinue of the god. We have already hinted at them. From the horse to the costume, the Chinese influence is so clear that there is even no need to point it out.

The chapel should have had 65 images in all.

I.18. This is not a chapel proper, but the entrance to the stairs leading to the second floor of the Kumbum. Therefore it is called: “the entrance temple conducive to the city of great liberation”. Here are collected divinities invoked to ward off evil influences, to protect sacred places, or to eliminate contrary forces, that is to say divinities pertaining to the class of “protectors” (*skyon*, *sruñ*). In fact, besides the statues of the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika, we see on the wall the images of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Dbyug-sñon-po/Nīladaṇḍa, Beñ stag-zhon, of the fifteen Phyogs-skyon/Dikpālas.

There are 26 figures in all.

I.19. This chapel is very damaged. The frescoes are mostly erased and destroyed. It is called the chapel of Mgon-po/Nātha because the statue on the western wall represents that particular form of Mahākāla called Gur mgon/Pañjara-Nātha about whom we have already spoken. He is surrounded by two acolytes, namely by Umā ekajaṭa to the right, Ḥdod-khams-dbañ-phyug-ma/Kāmadhātviśvarī to the left.

According to the author of the Dkār-chag, the paintings represent: Phyag-na-rdo-rje ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed/Bhūtaḍāmara Vajrapāṇi, the cycle of Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa, Putra miñ-sriñ, Durkhrod/Śmaśāna, comprising 50 figures in all.

Kumbum II.I

I.20. This little temple is dedicated to Rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Vijayā after whom it is named. The statue of the goddess, having three faces and eight hands, is accompanied by two acolytes, namely Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara, Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi and two devaputras. Unfortunately this chapel too is not well preserved. The cycle represented on the main wall is inspired by the Kriyā-samuccaya and represents Rab-tu-zhi-bar-byed-paḥi lha-mo, Rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Vijayā, surrounded by her numerous maṇḍala (fig.207).

This chapel must have had 90 images.

On the first floor there should be 2423 figures.

§49. *The second floor of the Kumbum.* The second floor has only sixteen chapels because the great temple in the centre of every side is but the continuation or the dome of the temple below. According to the symbolism translated in the architectural building of the monument, the second floor would signify the four renunciations (*prahāṇa*) to be realized in the progressive ascension towards supreme perfection (1). Its proportions are given by the author of the Dkar-chag, who affirms that the height of the second floor is seven and a half cubits; and its diameter is 293 cubits.

II.1. This chapel takes its name after Tshè-dpag-med/Amitāyus, whose statue in the main wall is surrounded by four minor

(1) To avoid the birth of evil in us not yet born, to suppress that already born, to favour the birth of the good not yet born, to aid the development of the good already born.

Kumbum I.16

the splendid Byams-pa/Maitreya (fig.201) seated on the throne seems to look with sweet sympathy at suffering human misery and in his figure is visibly expressed that feeling of tender compassion that Buddhism gives to this future redeemer of humanity. Even when the iconographic rules are followed more strictly than here, because certain manifestations of this god show themselves in non-human forms, the artist has tried to reproduce this character of essential charity belonging to Maitreya. And this is the image of the Sambhogakāya of Maitreya seen in the figure 202; the multiplicity of the hands and of the heads has not overshadowed the sweet tenderness of the god.

The scenes around represent the Tuṣita heaven, namely the paradise of Maitreya, or are variations over the past life of Maitreya, before his becoming a Bodhisattva and before his formulating the vow of becoming the redeemer of the next era. The sources are the *Byams-pas zhus-paḥi mdo* (1). A splendid scheme reproduced in fig.203 is inspired by it, and Chinese influence on this is evident. Another source is the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* and specially the first chapter where it is narrated that the Buddha, being on the Gṛdhrakūṭa, enlightened the triple world by the marvellous light emanating from his body, hinting in this way to the fact that he was going to preach a new chapter of the law and raising therefore the curiosity of Maitreya.

The painter of this chapel is very skilled in composing the scene, in distinguishing the human and divine planes, in dis-

(1) Toh. 95 and 96 *Ārya-maitreya-pariṣcchā nāma mahāyāna-sūtra*.

Kumbum I.17

posing the various figures with graceful symmetry. He has, moreover, surpassed his colleagues in knowing how to impart to each figure a peculiar physiognomy and appropriate character. As soon as he comes from the divine world to the earthly he creates types of living humanity, often with a light sense of caricature, as for example in figs.204 and 205. Evidently he takes inspiration from current life and through the lines of the faces wants to show the characters with a realism contrasting with this very art, usually so abstract and hieratic. If then we are going to see the way he follows, it seems evident that Chinese painting has influenced him vastly, so vastly that some of the scenes are drawn absolutely in Chinese style: as in the fig.203. Here Indian tradition has disappeared and it is clear that the painter was formed in a school which thought and translated the motifs narrated by the sacred scriptures in the Chinese way. Now the great and free compositions of the *piensian* take the place of the maṇḍala. These compositions, formed perhaps in Central Asia, were to become very popular and win great success in China from the sixth century onwards. If the iconographic interest of this temple is noteworthy because of the groups of Byams-pa/Maitreya and his acolytes, of Phyang-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi with his retinue, of Sphyan-ras-gzigs Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Nartheśvara Avalokiteśvara and so on, on the other hand it is certain that the artistic importance of the temple is by and large superior to the iconographic.

The author of the dkar-chag in this case too has enumerated the images with care, and he has counted 463 of them.

I.17. This chapel is dedicated to Rnam-thos-sras Zhi-ba-bde-byed. The frescoes have been very much damaged, but on the whole they have to be included among the best in the Kumbum. The style, as generally happens for paintings reproducing

Kumbum I.17

the Vaiśravaṇa cycle, closely follows Chinese models.

Fig. 206 shows one of the Rta-bdag/Aśvapati, the horsemen belonging to the retinue of the god. We have already hinted at them. From the horse to the costume, the Chinese influence is so clear that there is even no need to point it out.

The chapel should have had 65 images in all.

I.18. This is not a chapel proper, but the entrance to the stairs leading to the second floor of the Kumbum. Therefore it is called: “the entrance temple conducive to the city of great liberation”. Here are collected divinities invoked to ward off evil influences, to protect sacred places, or to eliminate contrary forces, that is to say divinities pertaining to the class of “protectors” (*skyon*, *sruñ*). In fact, besides the statues of the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika, we see on the wall the images of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Dbyug-sñon-po/Nīladaṇḍa, Beñ stag-zhon, of the fifteen Phyogs-skyon/Dikpālas.

There are 26 figures in all.

I.19. This chapel is very damaged. The frescoes are mostly erased and destroyed. It is called the chapel of Mgon-po/Nātha because the statue on the western wall represents that particular form of Mahākāla called Gur mgon/Pañjara-Nātha about whom we have already spoken. He is surrounded by two acolytes, namely by Umā ekajaṭa to the right, Ḥdod-khams-dbañ-phyug-ma/Kāmadhātviśvarī to the left.

According to the author of the Dkār-chag, the paintings represent: Phyag-na-rdo-rje ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed/Bhūtaḍāmara Vajrapāṇi, the cycle of Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa, Putra miñ-sriñ, Durkhrod/Śmaśāna, comprising 50 figures in all.

Kumbum II.I

I.20. This little temple is dedicated to Rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Vijayā after whom it is named. The statue of the goddess, having three faces and eight hands, is accompanied by two acolytes, namely Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara, Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi and two devaputras. Unfortunately this chapel too is not well preserved. The cycle represented on the main wall is inspired by the Kriyā-samuccaya and represents Rab-tu-zhi-bar-byed-paḥi lha-mo, Rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Vijayā, surrounded by her numerous maṇḍala (fig.207).

This chapel must have had 90 images.

On the first floor there should be 2423 figures.

§49. *The second floor of the Kumbum.* The second floor has only sixteen chapels because the great temple in the centre of every side is but the continuation or the dome of the temple below. According to the symbolism translated in the architectural building of the monument, the second floor would signify the four renunciations (*prahāṇa*) to be realized in the progressive ascension towards supreme perfection (1). Its proportions are given by the author of the Dkar-chag, who affirms that the height of the second floor is seven and a half cubits; and its diameter is 293 cubits.

II.1. This chapel takes its name after Tshè-dpag-med/Amitāyus, whose statue in the main wall is surrounded by four minor

(1) To avoid the birth of evil in us not yet born, to suppress that already born, to favour the birth of the good not yet born, to aid the development of the good already born.

Kumbum II.1

statues representing the other four Buddhas of the supreme Pentad.

On the two laterals walls, to the right and to the left of the door, large figures of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus are represented. They represent his manifestations taken, as we read in the inscriptions, from the *Hchi-med-rna-sgra* (1) that is, on the western wall: Mi-g.yo-tshe-dpag-med/Acala Amitāyus reproduced in fig.208; on the eastern wall: Kun-gzigs tshe-dpag-med/Samantadarśī Amitāyus; to the right of the door: Yon-tan tshe-dpag-med/Guṇa-Amitāyus, and to the left of the door: Ye-śes tshe-dpag-med/Jñāna-Amitāyus surrounded by the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevīs. On a small wall to the left of the statue, the cycle of Hoḍ-dpag-med/Amitābha. According to the author of the dkar-chag, the images of this chapel would be forty. The central statue, according to what we read in the inscription, is made according to the meditation rules of Jitāri, a Buddhist master of the tenth century (2).

II.2. This chapel is now known as the chapel of Sgrol-ma/Tārā, but actually it is dedicated to a particular form of her called: Señ-ldeñ-nags-kyi Sgrol-ma/Khadiravaṇī Tārā (3) whose statue, surrounded by two acolytes, occupies the eastern wall.

The figure painted on the main wall to the north represents Nan-son-las-sbyon-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Durgottāriṇī Tārā (4), surrounded by two acolytes who are, to her right Hoḍ-zer-can/Mārīcī and to her left Khro-gñer-can/Bhṛkuṭī (fig.209).

(1) See note to the inscription.

(2) See Bstan-ḥgyur LXVIII.7, 8.

(3) See B. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p.106; Getty, op. cit., p.125

(4) Ibid.137, Sādhanamālā p.237.

Kumbum II.2

The goddess is surrounded by twentyone forms of Sgrol-ma/Tārā, pertaining to the cycle of Rnam-dag-gtsug-tor/Vimaloṣṇīṣa. To the right one may see: Rab-tu-dpaḥ-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Pravīra-Taḥā, Dge-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Maṅgala-Tārā, Gser-mdog-can Sgrol-ma/Kanakavarṇa-Tārā, Rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Vijayā Tārā, Hūm-sgra-sgrog Sgrol-ma/Hūmsvara-nādinī Tārā, Dbañ-mchog-ster-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Varada-Tārā, Rgod-pa-ḥjoms-paḥi Sgrol-ma/Vādi-pramardinī Tārā, Hgro-ba-ḥgugs-pa Sgrol-ma, Mya-ñan-sel-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Śoka-vinodana-Tārā, Khro-gñer-gyo-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Bhṛkuṭi Tārā, Dge-las-zhi-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Śānti-Tārā, Chags-ḥjoms-paḥi Sgrol-ma/Rāga-niṣūdana-Tārā, Bde-ba-sgrub-paḥi Sgrol-ma/Sukha-sādhana-Tārā, Rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Vijaya-Tārā, Bdug-sñal-bsreg-byed Sgrol-ma/Duḥkhadahana-Tārā, Dños-grub-ḥbyuñ-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Siddhi-sambhava-Tārā, Yoñs-su-rdzogs-byed Sgrol-ma/Paripūraṇa-Tārā (1). Below: Mgon-po phyag-drug/Ṣaḍbhujā Mahākāla (fig.210).

On the western wall the central figure represents (fig.211) Mchog-sbyin Sgrol-ma/Varada-Tārā surrounded by four acolytes.

On the right of the door, instead, is the image of Don-thams-cad-grub-paḥi Sgrol-ma/Sarvārthasādhani Tārā, yellow in colour, with eight heads and sixteen hands (fig.212), surrounded by her peculiar manifestations, protecting from the eight dangers (2).

There are no more the eight forms of Tārā who save the devotees from the eight terrifying things, from the vices, and from the evil inclinations, causes of bad dharma and already met with in the Tsaparang temples (3). In this maṅḍala there are actual dangers, deriving from external forces menacing the

(1) This list, although incomplete, of the twentyone Tārās shows that the cycle reproduced here differs partly from the more usual about which we have already spoken while studying the temple of Tsaparang, *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.158, which was based on the hymn of Atīṣa. Add to the sources there quoted, *Jo-bo-rje-lugs-kyi sgrol-ma-ñer-gcig-gi sgrub-thabs dños-grub-par rnam-gñis-kyi bañ-mdzod* and *Jo-bo-lugs-kyi sgrol-ma-ñer-gcig-gi sgrub-thabs rjes-gnañ dañ-bcas* included in *Sgrub-thabs kun-btus*, vol.GA.

(2) Bstan-ḥgyur LXXI.202 Sarvārtha-sādhany-ārya-prasanna-tārā. The image reproduced here corresponds perfectly to *Sādhnamālā* p.241 no.114.

(3) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.161.

Kumbum II.2

life of man. Only the following images remain: Me-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Agni-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā, Mi-rgod-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Cora-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā, Chu-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Jala-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā, Sbrul-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Nāga-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā, Chom-rkum-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Cora-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā, Śa-zaḥi-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma/Piśāca-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā (1).

In this chapel evidently are not missing even Rnam-thos-sras/Vaiśravaṇa, Mgon-po/Mahākāla with six hands (fig.210), Ḥdzam-bha-la/Jambhala and the series of Lamas who were specially initiated in the mysteries of Sgrol-ma/Tārā. First of all are Atīśa and Ņi-ma-sbas/Sūryagupta.

The images of this chapel should be 54 in all.

II.3. The chapel takes its name from Sen-ge-sgra/Simhanāda, whose statue is seen on the northern wall, along with those of his acolytes Ḥjam-dbyaṅs/Maṅjuḥṣa and Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi.

(1) The Bstan-ḥgyur preserves an Aṣṭabhaya-trāṇa-sādhana by Sarvajñamitra (LXXI.379). in which the maṇḍala is made up of:

Tārā protecting from the					eight	forms	of dangers:
"	"	"	"	"	danger	of lions	(head of a lion, mudrā of protection)
"	"	"	"	"	"	elephants	(elephant's head, mudrā of threatening)
"	"	"	"	"	"	fire	(seven faces, seven tongues, two hands with lotus flowers)
"	"	"	"	"	"	serpents	(serpent's head, mudrā of protection)
"	"	"	"	"	"	thieves	(on the right hand a sword, on the left mudrā of threatening)
"	"	"	"	"	"	chains	(hook and noose)
"	"	"	"	"	"	waters	(chain and mudrā of threatening)
"	"	"	"	"	"	wild animals	(mudrā of gift and mudrā of protection)

A similar list, but not totally identical, of fearful things is in Bstan-ḥgyur LXIX.93 Aṣṭabhaya-mocana-siddhi-gupta-sampuṭa-nāma, although there is no mention of Tārā but rather the "Defender of Faith" Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi is invoked. Because of the popular character of these litanies, it is natural that they should have been very numerous and therefore apt to vary according to places and times.

Kumbum II.3

On the wall to the left of the door, the central figure represents the image of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara, with eleven faces, according to the Pad-ma-dra-ba/Padmajāla (fig.213), and therefore also called Pad-dra bcu-gcig-zhal/Padmajāla Ekādaśamukha. He is surrounded to the right by: Yid-bzhin-nor-bu/Cintāmaṇi, Mi-dbañ-phyug, Padma-ḥbyuñ-gnas, Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, Rdo-rje-dbañ-phyug/Vajreśvara, Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-dbañ-phyug-(ma)/Vajradhātviśvarī, Gsañs-[ḥdzin-mo]; to the left Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, Dam-tshig-dbañ-phyug/Samayeśvara, Sgrub-sruñ-mo, Spyan-ma/Locanā, Kluḥi-rgyal-ba/Nāgarāja and other divinities whose names are not visible.

This maṇḍala including many divinities is divided into several lotuses or secondary maṇḍalas oriented according to the various cardinal points. It is described by Bu-ston in his treatise on the Kriyātantra, although he does not give the iconographic characteristics of the minor divinities (op. cit. p.25ff.). It is clear that the maṇḍala represented in this chapel is synthetic, that is to say that it represents only the central divinity of the secondary maṇḍalas. The principal divinity, i.e. Spyan-ras-gzigs-dbañ-phyug/Avalokiteśvara, corresponds perfectly to the iconographic canons of Bu-ston, because it is permitted to represent him with 1000, 108, 46, 22, 16, 12, 6, 4, or 2 arms indifferently. The artists painting in this chapel had chosen the form with 12 arms. Near him are four feminine divinities: Gsañ-ḥdzin-mo, Ḥdzin-pa-mo, Sñags-sriñ-mo, Sruḥ-sruñ-ma.

The divinities surrounding him represent, therefore, the secondary maṇḍala distributed around the main one: Rdo-rje-dbañ-phyug/Vajreśvara, the central god of the eastern partition (*le-tshe*) of the central maṇḍala (surrounded by Thogs-med-yid, Grub-dbañ-phyug, Rdo-rje-phyag-rgya-can, Gter-sgrom-can). Rin-chen-dbañ-phyug/Ratneśvara of the southern partition (surrounded by Grub-chen-dbañ-phyug/Mahāsiddheśvara, Phag-zhal-can/Varāhamukha, Grub-paḥi-rnal-ḥbyor-dbañ-phyug/Siddhayogeśvara, Grub-pa-ḥdzin-dbañ-

Kumbum II.3

phyug). Padmaḥi-dbañ-phyug/Padmeśvara of the western partition (surrounded by Skyes-bu-señ-geḥi-zhal (lotus, serpent and diadem, Padmaḥi-phyag, Sbrul-nag-phyag, Ḥtshe-phran-rgya-ḥdzin). Dam-tshig-dbañ-phyug/Samayeśvara of the northern partition (surrounded by Ḥkhor-lo-ḥchañ, Stag-lpags-ḥchañ, Kun-sgrub-dbañ-phyug, Sgra-duñ-ḥphel). Rnam-snañ/Vairocana is the central divinity of the maṇḍala lying to the east of the one already described. It too is subdivided in nine partitions. The central divinities of the other four partitions according to the cardinal points are: Señ-ge-sgra-rgyal-po (six hands: trident, serpentine noose, mudrā of protection; lotus, sword, hook), Yid-bzhin-nor-bu (six hands: wheel, vajra, lotus; gem, mudrā of protection, and mudrā of gift), Padma-ḥbyuñ-gnas (four hands: lotus and mudrā of protection; hook and kamaṇ-ḍalu), Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya (six hands: sword, lotus, arrows; mudrā of protection, vase, bow).

In the big maṇḍala to the south the central divinity is Śākya-thub-pa/Śākyamuni, surrounded in the four usual partitions by Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, Rin-ḥbyuñ/Ratnasambhava, Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, Don-yod-grub/Amoghasiddhi. In the big maṇḍala to the west the central divinity is Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-kyi-dbañ-phyug-ma/Vajradhātviśvarī, surrounded by the symbols of the same gods as those of the preceding maṇḍala, each in his particular partition. They in turn are surrounded by Spyan-ma/Locanā, Māmakī, Na-bzah-dkar-mo (-Gos-dkar-mo/Pāṇḍara-vāsinī), Sgrol-ma/Tārā, each surrounded by four bodhisattvas, Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja, etc. as in the cycle of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, but all with four arms (in the first on the right their characteristic symbol and in the other the mudrā of protection; on the left lotus and rosary).

To the right of the door is painted, according to the traditional schemes, the cycle of the Khro-bo: Khro-bo-Gzhan-mi-thub/Krodh-Āparājita, Khro-bo-Rta-mgrin/Krodha-Hayagrīva, Ḥgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka, Khro-bo-Gśin-rje-gśed/Krodha-Yamāntaka, Khro-bo-Rdo-rje-gtsug-gtor/Krodha-Vajroṣṇīṣa, Khro-bo-Gnod-mdzad/Krodha-Yakṣa.

Kumbum II.4

On the main wall, that on the east, the central figure represents Śākyamuni in the preaching attitude (fig.214) surrounded by Don-yod-zhags-paḥi-sñiñ-po/Amoghapāśa-hṛdaya and Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi. On the small wall to the south dominates the figure of Spyan-ras-gzigs-dbañ-phyug pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Padmanarteśvara Avalokiteśvara.

There are 144 figures in all in the chapel.

II.4. This chapel is dedicated to Ḥphags-pa Spyan-ras-gzigs Don-yod-zhags-pa/Amoghapāśa, whose statue accompanied by the usual four acolytes is on the northern wall. On the main wall, the eastern one, the centre is dominated by Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, with one face and two hands in samādhi-mudrā. Around him, in the space free on this and the other walls, is developed the maṇḍala of great compassion, Mahākaruṇā-garbha-maṇḍala, as it is described by the *Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-mñon-byañ-chub-rgyud/Vairocan-ābhisambodhi-tantra*. It is the first of the three maṇḍalas described in this tantra, i.e. the maṇḍala of the physical plane. This maṇḍala has already been described very well by Japanese scholars and specially by Professor Togano of Koyasan in a volume already quoted. Therefore it is not a case to enter into further details. It is clear that the position of the gods cannot be the same as in the diagram of the maṇḍala. The painter has used the free space of the walls without following the canons of the maṇḍala very rigidly. The images follow one another so that it is not easy to see those mystic connections, which the scheme of the maṇḍala succeeds to express so well. For example, near the figure of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara (fig. 215) is seen that of Sgrol-ma/Tārā (Grags-pa-chen-mo) (fig. 216) and of Khro-gñer-can/Bhṛkuṭī, who is at the top instead of to the left, where she should be. After it come Mthu-chen-thob and Lha-mo Sgrags-

Kumbum II.4

ldan-ma, close to each other in the maṇḍala too.

Near Sgrol-ma/Tārā should be Gos-dkar-mo/Pāṇḍaravāsini who is on the wall of the chapel on top and instead is Khro-gñer-can/Bhṛkuṭī: regularly near this goddess is seen the figure of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva. In sumi, the artist has followed as much as he could the law of vicinity established in the liturgical treatises by displaying the various figures of treatises which describe the Mahākaruṇāmaṇḍala. Instead he has adopted in some cases his own criteria of vicinity whose reasons we do not understand.

Anyway, none of the gods of this maṇḍala has been omitted. On fig. 216 there are some details of the figures around Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara. From the left of the central image which represents Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (fig. 217) they are: Nam-inkhaḥ-spyan-ma (in part), Lhaḥi-dbañ-po/Devendra, Mñon-phyogs/Abhyudgata, Sgo-sruñ Gdul-dkaḥ/Durdharṣa. Other details are visible on fig. 218 and 219, 220, 221, 222.

In the fig. 223, beginning from the second row: Gtsug-tor-cher-ḥbyuñ, Gtsug-tor-gyeñ-ḥbyuñ, Gtsug-tor-sgra-dbyaṅs; in the third: Hod-kyi-ḥphren-ba, Yid-ma-gyogs, Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, Gos-dkar-mo/Pāṇḍaravāsini; in the fourth: Sgra-rnam-par-sgrogs-pa, Lha-mo sgrags-ldan-ma, Khro-gñer-can-ma/Bhṛkuṭī. On the southern wall the main figure represents Rdo-rje-dam-pa-sbyin-pa (fig. 224).

This chapel had in all 144 images and it is one of the most interesting.

II.5. This chapel is dedicated to Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, whose statue, surrounded by two acolytes red Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva and Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, is seen on the southern wall. To the left of the door are the paintings of the four Phyogs-skyon/Dikpāla and the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika (fig. 225).

Kumbum II.6

On the walls various images of Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva follow one another according to the different formulae of meditation contained in the various liturgical treatises. On the main wall he is surrounded by minor figures representing, to his right: Spyān-ras-gzigs ha-la-ha-la/Halāhala Avalokita, Rta-mchog-ye-śes-rdo-rje/Paramāśva-jñāna-vajra, Lha-mo lce-spyān-rdo-rje, H̄jig-rten-gsum-dbañ-du-byed-po/Trailokya-vaśam̄kara, H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Lha-mo Rab-brtan-rdo-rje, Ye-śes-mgon-po phyag-bzhi/Caturbhujā Jñāna-Nātha, Re-ma-ti, Ye-śes-mgon/Jñāna-Nātha, Dbañ-Phyug-ma, Rnam-thos/Vaiśravaṇa.

To his left are seen: Lha-mo Phyag-na-rdo-rje, Lha-mo Glañ-poḥi-rdo-rje, Rnam-thos-sras/Vaiśravaṇa, Rta-mchog-rgyal-po and two Lamas, Zhañ-kyi Tsha-ḥod-can, Zhañ Dbu-dkar-po.

There are seventy-seven figures in all.

II. 6. The chapel is named after Kurukullā, whose statue with one face and four arms is surrounded by her traditional acolytes, namely Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭī and Señ-ldeñ-nags Sgrol-ma/Khadiravaṇī Tārā.

On the other walls the images of the same goddess are multiplied. They are taken from different liturgical treatises.

On the main wall, to the east, there is the figure of Kurukullā according to the formula of meditation attributed to king Indrabhūti (fig. 226, already shown by B. Bhattacharyya) (1). It is of red colour, has eight arms and is surrounded by a group of goddesses forming her retinue, namely to her right: (fig. 227) Gau-ri Sgrol-ma/Gaurī-Tārā, Mar-meḥi Sgrol-ma/Pradīpa-Tārā, Rdzogs-paḥi Sgrol-ma/Niṣpanna-Tārā (fig. 228), Sgrol-ma Tsun-da/Cundā, Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub/Aparājitā, Rab-tu-dañ-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Prasanna-Tārā (fig. 229), Rdo-rje-ro-laṅs-ma/Vajravetālī, Ral-gcig-ma/Ekajaṭā, to his left

(1) Op. cit. p.57 no.iv.

Kumbum II.6

(fig. 230) Rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Jaya-Tārā, Rna-baḥi Sgrol-ma/Karṇa-Tārā, Rdo-rje-Gāndharī/Vajra-Gāndhārī.

To the right of the door, instead, is the image of the same goddess, white and as the inscription says, inspired by the liturgy of the Sgyu-ḥphrul-dra-ba/Māyājāla (fig. 231) (1).

On the northern wall the main figure represents Red Kurukullā, taken from the tantric cycles connected with the Hevaja-tantra and namely (fig. 232) Kyaḥi-rdo-rje-rgyud-las-ḥbyun-baḥi ḥjig-rten-gsum-dbañ-du-byed-paḥi Lha-mo Rigs-byed-ma, under which are seen Kye-rdo-rje-las rim-paḥi Kurukullā and Kye-rdo-rje-las byuñ-baḥi rañ-byin-kyis rlabs-ḥbyuñ-ba Rigs-byed-ma (2)

Near this is a Kurukullā with six arms (fig. 233) taken from the Sgrub-thabs-rgya-mtsho, accompanied by Lha-mo Rigs-byed-ma and Rje-btsun-ma Kurukullā (fig. 234).

There would be 80 images in all.

II.7. The chapel is dedicated to Ḥjam-dbyaṅs/Mañjuḥṣa, in his peculiar form known by the name of Ḥjam-dbyaṅs rgyal-po-rol-pa/Rājalīlā-Mañjuḥṣa. His statue that represents him sitting on a lion, is surrounded by Śākyamuni, Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, Nor-bzañ/Sudhana and Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, together composing the special cycle in which he is the main divinity.

On the southern wall, which is the main one, in the centre is the image of Ḥjam-dpal ye-śes-sems-dpaḥ/Jñānasattva Mañjuśrī as described by the Mtshan-yañ-dag-par-brjod-pa/Nāma-saṅgīti

(1) See B. Bhattacharyya, p.126 Māyājālakrama-Kurukullā.

(2) On these forms of Kurukullā see Śrīhevajra-tantra-kramaṇa svādhiṣ-ṭhāna-kurukullā-sādhana, Bstan-ḥgyur XXII.ZA.26, fol.113. According to this scheme Kurukullā is red and has four arms: the two main ones put an arrow in the bow, the other two have in the right a hook and in the left a lotus flower; cf. also ibid. XXII.28 *Hevajrodbhava-kurukullā-sādhana*.

Kumbum II.7

(1), with four arms holding a sword, flower, arrow and bow. To his right are, above, Saḥi-sñiñ-po/Kṣitigarbha and Mya-nan-dañ-mun-pa-thams-cad-ñes-par-ḥjoms-paḥi-blo-gros/Sarvaśoka-tamo-nirghāta-mati, and below Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja and Mi-g.yo-ba dkar-po/White Acala (fig. 235). To his left, beginning from above: Ḥjam-dbyaṅs yan-lag-med-paḥi-rdo-rje/Anaṅgavajra Mañjuḥoṣa, Ḥjam-dbyaṅs ñag-gi-dbañ-phyug/Vāgīśvara Mañjuḥoṣa, Ḥjam-dbyaṅs dañ-paḥi-saṅs-rgyas/Ādibuddha Mañjuḥoṣa, Spyan-ras-gzigs mgrin-sñon-can/Nilakaṅṭha Avalokita (fig. 236) and below a second Ḥjam-dbyaṅs yan-lag-med-paḥi-rdo-rje/Anaṅgavajra-Mañjuḥoṣa, Ḥjam-dbyaṅs-ñag-gi-rgyal-po/Vāgrāja Mañjuḥoṣa, Chos-kyi-rin-chen-ḥdzin-pa, Spyan-ras-gzigs ḥjig-rten-mgon-po/Lokanātha Avalokita (fig. 237).

On the wall to the west the central figure (fig. 238) represents Sems-can-thams-cad-dbañ-du-byed-paḥi Ḥjam-dbyaṅs/śarva-sattva-vaśīkaraṇa Mañjuḥoṣa, of pink colour, with four faces and eight hands.

To the left of the door is a big figure of Ḥjam-dpal chos-dbyiṅs-gsañ-dbañ, of white colour with four faces and eight hands (fig. 239).

There are 66 images in all.

II.8. This chapel is consecrated to Rnam-par-ḥjoms-pa/Vidāraṇa whose statue is in the small niche at the east, surrounded by those of his two acolytes, namely, to the right Dbyaṅs-can-ma/Sarasvatī and to the left Rdo-rje-sgrol-ma/Vajra-Tārā. The image dominating the southern wall with his awesome figure represents the same deity — always according to the system of the mystic realization of the Lotsava of Śol-po — dancing his terrific dance in the midst of a halo of flames

(1) One of the secondary maṅḍalas of this cycle described by Bu-ston in his *Mtshan-brjod-kyi dkyil-hkhor-gyi bkod-pa* has in the centre Ḥjam-dpal Ye-śes-sems-dpaḥ/Jñāna-sattva Mañjuśrī, but neither the iconographic type of the central divinity nor the acolytes correspond to it.

Iconographic indications corresponding to these paintings are also considered in the Bstan-ḥgyur LXI.12 Ārya-jñānasattva-mañjuśrī-tattva-nāmasādhana; but in Bstan-ḥgyur LXIV.6 bis, Ārya-jñānasattva-mañjuśrī-upāyikā this divinity is represented with three faces and six arms (sun, arrow, lotus; lamp, bow, lotus).

Kumbum II.8.

(fig. 240). The god is surrounded by his cycle comprising of ten divinities, and by the usual train of adoration goddesses, i.e., to his right by (fig. 241): Rdo-rje-sgrol-ma dkar-mo/White Vajra-Tārā, Khro-bo Mi-g.yo-ba/Krodha-Acala, Rdo-rje-sgrol-ma/Vajra-Tārā, Khro-bo Gśin-rje-gśed/Krodha-Ya-māntaka, Khro-bo Señ-ge-gdoñ-can/Krodha-Simhavaktrā, Khro-mo Dbyug-sñon-can/Krodha-Nīladaṇḍa, Khro-mo Stag-gi-gdoñ-can-ma/Krodha-Vyāghravaktrā; to his left by Khro-bo Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub-pa/Krodha-Aparājita, Khro-bo Bdud-rtsi-ḥi-ḥkh-yil-ba/Krodha-Amṛtakuṇḍalin, Rdo-rje-sgrol-ma/Vajra-Tārā, Gsuñ-Rdo-rje-ḥdzin-pa/Vāg-Vajradhara, Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, Khro-bo Bdud-rtsiḥi-ḥkhyil-ba/Krodha-Amṛtakuṇḍalin (fig. 242), Lha-mo Bzhad-pa-ma/Hāsya Devī, Thugs-Rdo-rje-ḥdzin-pa/Citta-Vajradhara, Rta-mgrin-Hayagrīva, Khro-bo H-khor-los'bsgyur-ba/Krodha-Cakravartin, Khro-mo Rtaḥi-gdoñ-can-ma/Krodha-Hayamukhī, Bdud-rtsiḥi-ḥkhyil-ba/Amṛtakuṇḍalin (two images) (fig. 243), Khro-bo Stobs-po-che/Krodha-Mahābala, Khro-mo Spyañ-gi-gdoñ-can-ma/Krodha-Vṛkamukhī.

On the western wall the main figure represents the same divinity according to the formulae of meditation of another great master of tantric mystics, namely Lotsava of Ba-ri (fig. 244).

In all there are 83 images.

II.9. The principal statue of this temple, today named Ḥod-zer gtsug-tor, represents Thub-chen with four faces, eight arms and four feet, surrounded by the images of four gods symbolizing four mystic syllables, namely: *am vaṃ paṃ dzam*. Thub-chen corresponds as is well known to Mahāmuni, the “great ascetic”, i.e. Śākyamuni the Buddha. Some of the tantric schools such as those that have elaborated the cycles from where the painters have drawn their inspiration for the frescoes of these chapels, have considered the Uṣṇīṣa, the ascetic hair, as one of the most venerated symbol.

The importance and the meaning uṣṇīṣa had in the mystic schools, not only Buddhist, has already been partly sketched by others, therefore this is no more the place to insist upon it.

Kumbum II.9

We need only to remember that the esoteric value assigned rendered it easier to form particular mystic doctrines, of which we see here the iconographic and liturgic echo.

The image of the same divinity is seen on the southern wall (fig. 245) surrounded by a large number of figures which, as it is evidenced by the inscription, represent the arhats, the sixteen Bodhisattvas, the ten Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpālas etc. and twelve goddesses among whom: So-sor-brañ-ma/Pratisarā, Bsod-nams-nam-gzigs-ma, Bsod-nams-gzigs-ma, Tshe-ḥdzin-ma, Gsañ-grub-ma, Rgyas-ldan-ma, Śin-tu-go-cha-ma, Yañ-dag-ḥchañ-byed-ma, Phyag-rgya-brten-ma.

This cycle has been treated by Bu-ston in his treatise on the Kriyātantra (op. cit. p. 19a).

The central divinity described by him corresponds perfectly to that represented in this chapel: it is a form of Bcom-ldan-ḥdas Thub-pa/Bhagavan-Muni, yellow, with four faces and eight hands all in the preaching mudrā. The acolytes are:

	Colour	face	hands	right	left
Gsañ-sgrub-ma	white	1	2	fan	
Tshe-ḥdzin-ma	yellow	1	2	vase	
Phyag-rgya-brten -ma	red	1	2	rosary	
Bsod-nams-ldan- ma	white	1	2	lotus held in in hand	mudrā of donation
Bsod-nams-gzigs-ma	white	1	2	mudrā of disapproval	lamp (legs so sbyin)

Kumbum II.9

Table continued

	Colour	face	hand	right	left
Bsod-nams-rnam-gzigs-ma	yellow	1	2	book	
Śin-tu-go-cha-ma	red	1	2	lotus	
Yañ-dag-ḥchañ-byed-ma	green	1	2	lotus	
So-sor-ḥbrañ-ma /Pratisarā	red-green	1	2	mudrā of protection	hook
Mdañs-ldan-ma	pale-yellow	1	2	kumuda	
Gzi-ldan-ma	red-yellow	1	2	mirror	
Rgyas-ldan	green	1	2	spike	
In the four doors					
Ḥchi-ḥjoms-ma	white	1	2	hook	
Gśin-rje-ḥjoms-ma	blue	1	2	club	
Gśin-rje-ḥdom-byed-ma	red	1	2	chains	
Legs-skyoñ-ma	green	1	2	noose	

Then follow the Bodhisattvas, the Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpālas, Rnam-thos/Vaiśravaṇa etc.

On the small eastern wall is a solitary image of the same deity in his esoteric aspect (fig.246), as the centre of the maṇḍala of Gtsug-tor-dri-med/Vimaloṣṇīṣa. To the left of the door the cycle of the twelve goddesses and their acolytes is reproduced (fig. 247).

There are 108 figures in all.

II.10. This chapel is named after Sgrol dkar/White Tārā, because it is dedicated to her. The statue is accompanied by the four divinities of her cycle namely Khro-gñer-can/Bhṛkuṭī, Ḥod-zer-can/Mārīcī, yellow · Dug-sel-ma/Jāṅgulī, and green Dug-sel-ma/Jāṅgulī.

Kumbum II.11

On the southern wall the central figure represents green Sgrol-ma/Tārā with three faces and eight arms (fig. 248) according to the system of meditation by Atīśa. Around it are the 108 images of Sgrol-ma/Tārā.

The summary description given by the inscription permits me not to go into more details.

There are 123 figures in all.

II.11. The central statue of this chapel dedicated to Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra represents the Bodhisattva Kun-tu-bzañ-po on an elephant; on his two sides are the statues of Byams-pa/Maitreya and Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara. To the left of the door: Spyan-ras-gzigs Sems-ñid-ñal-bso/Citta-viśrāmaṇa Avalokiteśvara (1), of white colour, with the right hand on the right knee in that peculiar way of sitting called *lalitākṣepa*.

He is surrounded by sixteen Bodhisattvas according to the iconographic scheme of the *Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad mñon-byañ-chub rgyud/* Vairocan-ābhisambodhi-tantra and sixteen adoring goddesses. On figs. 249 and 250 some such divinities can be seen: Rgyas-ldan-ma, Spyan-legs, Śin-tu-go-cha-mo, Dpal-spas, Yañ-dag-ḥchañ-byed-ma Ye-śes-grags-pa, Phyag-rgya-brten-ma, Spyan-gdug-paḥi-zhal, Bśod-nams-ldan-ma, Gśin-rje-sdom-byed, partly already found in chapel 11.9

On the main wall, to the west, is the giant figure of Hjam-paḥi-dbyaṅs/Mañjuḥṣa surrounded by a long series of Bodhisattvas: Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra, Blo-gros-mi-bzad-pa/Akṣayamati, Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, Rdo-rje-sñiñ-po/Vajrahṛdaya, Zla-ba-ḥod/Candraprabha, Sgrib-sel/Nīvaraṇa-viṣkambhin, etc.

There are 71 images in all.

(1) On him see Bu-ston, *Sems-ñid-ñal-bsoḥi rtse-ba-rgyud-kyi luñ dan sbyor-ba*, complete works vol.JA.

Kumbum II.12.

II.12. This chapel is dedicated to Ḥgro-bzañ, a particular form of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi.

To the left of the door, the large image represents (fig. 251) Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, known as Phyag-rdor lcags-sbugs; around him are thirteen gods of his cycle. There are seen: Ratna-vajrapāṇi, Ratna-garuḍa, Buddha-garuḍa, B(uddha)-vajrapāṇi, Padma-vajrapāṇi, Padma-garuḍa, Karma-vajrapāṇi, Karma-garuḍa.

The central image on the eastern wall represents (fig. 252) Phyag-na-rdo-rje Ḥgro-bzañ around whom revolves the cycle of the seventeen deities of his maṇḍala. According to the Tibetan tradition the main expositor of this maṇḍala was Maitripā. To the right are seen: Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Rdo-je-rab-tu-ḥdul, Rdo-kun-tu-ḥdzin, Rdo-rje-me-tog-ma/Vajrapuṣpā, Rdo-rje-bde-byed, Rdo-rje-mthu-chen, Rdo-rje-bdug-spos-ma/Vajradhūpā, Rdo-rje-zhags-pa-ma/Vajrapāśā, Rdo-rje-lcags-kyu-ma/Vajrāṅkuṣī, Rgyal-khyuñ-mchog; to the left: Rdo-rje-mi-bzad-ḥjoms, Rdo-rje-dug-pa-ḥdul, Phyag-rdor/Vajrapāṇi, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa; Rdo-rje-sriñ-mo, Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-las-rgyal, Rdo-rje... las-skyob, Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, Ro-lañs/Vetāla, Rdo-rje-dril-bu-ma/Vajraghaṅṭā etc.

On the northern wall is represented the maṇḍala of nine gods of Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi; the central divinity comes out menacingly from a halo of flames moving and rousing around:

As it has been seen from names mentioned above the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevīs are not missing. So also the cycle of the Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpāla and of Rnam-thos-sras/Vaiśravaṇa is painted (fig.253).

There are 87 images in all.

II.13. The chapel is consecrated to Mi-ḥkhrugs/Akṣobhya reproduced as the central statue, according to the meditation system of Atīśa (1) and surrounded by four acolytes, namely,

(1) Bstan-ḥgyur LXIII.26 *Akṣobhya-sādhana nāma*.

Kumbum II.16.

Lha-mo Pad-ma-can/Padmāvati, Gdoñ-can-ma, Rnam-rgyal-ma/Vijayā and Mdañs-ldan-ma. The paintings are rather ruined. They represent the thirteen forms of Mi-ḥkhrugs/Akṣobhya, according to the Yoga-Tantra and the paradise of this god, which is known by the name of Mñon-par-dgaḥ-ba/Abhirati.

There are 160 images in all.

II.14. Through this cella without statues, one can climb to the upper floor. The walls were covered with frescoes today mostly blackened by time and slightly visible. The cycles of terrific deities in charge of the protection of the sacred places predominate, Gur-mgon/Pañjara-Nātha, Gzuñs-grva lña/Pañcarakṣā, Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka.

The author of the dkar-chag could still number them and counted 104 figures.

11.15. This chapel is named after Smra-baḥi-señ-ge/Vādisiṃha. The statue of the god is surrounded by that of his four acolytes. Many paintings are badly maintained, but those which are still preserved have a high artistic value (fig.254). They resemble closely the paintings of the temples in the floor below.

The author of the dkar-chag has counted 160 images in all.

11.16. This chapel is dedicated to Spyan-ras-gzigs-dbañ-ph-yug Hgro-ḥdul-byed, a peculiar form of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avlokiteśvara; his statue is surrounded by the “mother” Yi-ge-drug-ma/Ṣaḍakṣarī, and by the son Nor-bu-ḥdzin/Mañidhārin, namely the triad of the Ṣaḍakṣara about which we have already spoken in these very volumes.

On the northern wall, the main figure represents Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokiteśvara reproduced according to the meditation formulas of Nāgārjuna, with eleven faces and fortytwo hands (fig.255). Around him is the retinue of gods surrounding him

Kumbum II.16.

(fig.256). On the two sides are seen Nor-bzañ/Sudhana, Padmaḥi-mchi-baḥi-blo-gros, Las-kyi-gsañ-ba, Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Padma-chos-ḥdzin, Las-kyi-rdo-rje/Karmavajra, Rdo-rje-sgyu-ma, Rdo-rje-gar-ma/Vajranṛtyā, Rdo-rje-mar-me-ma/Vajrālokā.

On the wall to the left of the door is painted the image of Yid-bzhin-nor-bu/Cintāmaṇi (1) and on the same wall to the east the figure of Sphyan-ras-gzigs-dbañ-phyug mkhaḥ-spyod (fig.257) is to be admired, surrounded by the maṇḍala of fourteen gods.

Including statues and paintings, the author of the dkar-chag has calculated that in this second floor of the Kumbum there are 1542 images in all.

§50. *The third floor of the Kumbum.* The third floor, which in the symbolism visualised by the builders of the Kumbum, should represent the four rdzu-ḥphrul-rkañ-pa/ṛddhipāda, namely the four elements of the mystic force operating miracles, is seven cubits in height and has a perimeter of 262 cubits. Thus according to the author of the eulogy, the plan of this floor faithfully follows that of the preceding ones.

III.1.T. This temple is dedicated to Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus. The statue, a gigantic one, on the wall at the end of the temple, represents Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha; he is surrounded by four Bodhisattvas of the mystic family of the lotus, namely Rdo-rje-chos-rab etc.

Along the wall there is a long procession of frescoes reproducing with great vivacity of colour and richness of figures several tantric cycles. On these, the connection with the divinity by

(1) Already met with and described according to the canon of Bu-ston, in the third chapel of the second floor, p.206; his four acolytes are Yid-myurma, Rin-chen-bzañ-mo, Padma-rgyal-mo, Rta-rna-mo. Bu-ston op. cit. on the Kriyātantra, p. 26a.

Kumbum III.1

whom the temple is named is not evident. In fact, the tantra which has inspired the frescoes of this chapel is the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā whose various maṇḍalas are depicted on the walls in succession. To the left of the door is the maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja which, according to Bu-ston's analysis of the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā, is a maṇḍala of the first section. Its goal is to make easy the two accumulations, that of moral merit and that of gnosis, both preparatory elements of illumination (no.203 of my schema).

The central divinity represents Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja with the sna-tshog-rdo-rje/viśvavajra in the right hand and the bell, marked by the same vajra in the left lying on the leg. It is an attitude that copies that of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva clearly showing that this Bodhisattva is a splitting of him. Around runs his cycle including twelve other divinities and four symbols, namely, 2) Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, 3) Hjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, 4) Nam-mkhaḥ-sñin-po/Ākāśagarbha (fig.259), 5) Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja, 6) Hjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, 7) Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tu-chos-kyi-ḥkhor-lo-bskor-ba, 8) Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi who in our maṇḍala, contrary to the liturgical indications, is double, in his peaceful manifestation as well as in his wrathful manifestation (fig.260), 9) Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa' 10) Rdo-rje-sbrañ-rtsi/Vajrāmṛta, 11) Rdo-rje-sprin/Vajramegha, 12) Rdo-rje-ston-ka/ Vajraśarat, 13) Rdo-rje-dgun-ma/Vajrahemanta and then the symbols to be depicted in the four doors of the maṇḍala: to the east Chinese coins (*don-rtse*), to the south gold (fig.261), to the west pearls, to the north padmarāga i.e. rubies. Between this maṇḍala and the door is painted on top the maṇḍala of Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla derived from the same Tantra and also described by Bu-ston p.14b (no.237 of my schema).

Kumbum III.1

The god has ten arms (fig.262) and is surrounded by his acolytes namely: 1) Drag-mo/Raudrī, 2) Tshañs-ma/Brahmāñī, 3) Khyab-ḥjug-mo/Vaiṣṇavī, 4) Sriñ-ma, 5) Gzhon-nu-ma/Kaumārī 6) Nag-mo/Kālī, 7) Nag-mo-chen-mo/Mahākālī, 8) Za-ba-mo, 9) Zhi-ba-mo/Śivā, 10) Bheruṇḍā, 11) Gtum-mo/Caṇḍī, 12) Ḥjigs-byed-ma/Bhairavī (fig.262). It is also called the maṇḍala of the Ma-mo. Below this the maṇḍala of the three Miñ-po (Bu-ston p.15a) is depicted. Its centre is represented by the triad Rgyal-bar-byed-pa, white, Sbrañ-rtsir-byed-pa, yellow, to his right and Don-thams-cad-grub-par-byed/Sarvārthasiddhi, green, to his left.

The iconographic symbol is the same for the three gods: namely, the cup made of the skull in the right and the arrow and bow in the left. Around it are the acolytes, namely, 1) Grub-pa, white, with trident, 2) Ḥphel-ba, yellow, with vase containing a treasure, 3) Chen-po, red, with a basket of flowers, 4) Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa, black, having a tooth, 5) Gtum-po, black, with a stick, 6) Khro-bo, black, with a serpent, 7) Mchog, black, with the wheel, 8) Gsod-pa, black, with the sword.

The maṇḍala is almost entirely visible in figs. 262 and 263.

On the left wall the central figure represents Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra (fig.264). The painters wanted to represent the maṇḍala of Khams-gsum-rnam-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya which is the third in the list of Bu-ston (op. cit. p. 6b, no.197 of my schema). The god is blue in colour with the hands holding the bell and the vajra in the mudrā called khams-gsum-rnam-par-rgyal-ba/trailokya-vijaya and having under his foot Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara and Umā. He has to his left 1) Khro-bo Rdo-rje-ḥdzin-pa/Krodha-Vajradhara, 2) Lcags-kyu-ḥdzin-pa, 3) Ral-gri-ḥdzin-pa, 4) Zhags-ḥdzin-pa, 5) Dbyug-ḥdzin-pa, 6) Khaṭvāṅga-ḥdzin-pa, 7) Gri-riñ-ḥdzin-pa, 8) Chu-ḡri-ḥdzin-pa. These gods have in their right hands the symbol from which

Kumbum III.1

they derive their names; the left ones are in the mudrā of threatening. How they are born is thus seen clearly: they are but the iconographic hypostases of the weapons and of the instruments characteristic of the terrific deities. Below the lotus on which the divinity stands are painted the four symbols of the four doors of the maṇḍala, namely, the bow and the arrow on the eastern door, the sword to the south, the vajra to the west, and the spear to the north.

On the wall facing, to the left, the cella having the statues, is painted the maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, who is the fifth according to the order followed by Bu-ston (op. cit. p.9a, no.199 of my schema). The central figure represents Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, blue in colour, in the act of wearing a necklace of gems (fig.265). Around him are his acolytes i.e.: 1) Dbañ-skur-rin-po-che having a gemmed diadem, 2) Rin-po-che-chen-po-nor-stsol-ba with a treasure, 3) Chos-chen-poḥi-rin-po-che with a book, 4) Rin-po-che-chen-po-ro-myañ-ba in the act of bringing a tray. All four have in their right hand the symbol of their name and the left leans on the seat. Then there follow: 5) Lha-mo Rin-chen-gdugs-ma having a gemmed umbrella, 6) Lha-mo Rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan having a gemmed flag, 7) Lha-mo Rña-can-ma with the little drum, 8) Lha-mo Rin-chen-srog-śiṅ-mo. Next follow the symbols of the four doors of the maṇḍala, namely, a gemmed diadem, a vase full of gems, the book of supreme gnosis, a vase full of food (fig.266). On the left wing of the cella is painted the first maṇḍala of Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā, namely that of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva around whom in the midst of clouds and flowers, are symmetrically disposed his acolytes. The figures 267-270

Kumbum III.1

reproduce some details. From Bu-ston we know that this maṇḍala, more numerous than the others, also comprises: 1) Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, in his usual attitude, white in colour, 2) Rdo-rje-yid-las-byuñ-ba of pink colour. His name, rendering the Sanskrit term *manasija* “he who is born from the mind” and his symbols—that is to say the arrow adorned with flowers, and the bow with a small arrow in it—reveals his origin. The Tantric schools took this god from Hindu mythology adapting to their mystic schemes the God of Love (Kāma), whom Indian tradition terms as “born from the mind”. His iconography gives him as symbols the flowered arrows and the bow, 3) Rdo-rje-ki-la-ki-la-ya, red; he has a red vajra, 4) Rdo-rje-dran-pa/Vajrasṃṛti, pale-blue; in the right hand he has a flag with the sign of a sea monster (makara) and with the left he leans on the seat, 5) Rdo-rje-sñems-pa, of pure golden colour, in the two hands has two vajras kept on the sides, 6) Rdo-rje-sbrañ-rtsi/Vajrāmṛta, pink, 7) Rdo-rje-sprin, pink, 8) Rdo-rje-ston, pale blue, 9) Rdo-rje-gdun, golden. The last four gods have their hands joined above their heads holding respectively a basket of flowers, an incensoir, a lamp and a conch full of perfumes, 10) Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, white, in his traditional attitude, 11) Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, white, as before, 12) Ḥjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, of the colour of the sky, with four arms wielding swords, 13) Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratna-sambhava, blue, in his usual attitude, 14) Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, in the act of wearing a necklace, 15) Nam-mkhaḥi-mdzod/Gaganagañja, variegated in colour, holding the double vajra and the bell, 16) Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, yellow in the attitude of explaining the law (*vyākhyānamudrā*), 17) Ḥjig-rten-

Kumbum III.1

dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, pink, in the left hand he has a lotus with a long stem leaning on the side, and with the right hand he opens the flower, 18) Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tu-chos-kyi-ḥkhor lo-bskor-ba, yellow; the left hand is held on the side and on the right there is a disc with eight rays, 19) Don-yod-grub-pa/Amoghasiddhi, variegated in colour, in his usual traditional attitude, 20) Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, blue, holds a tooth. Then follow the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevīs, 21-24) Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā, Rdo-rje-bzhad-pa/Vajra-hāsa, Rdo-rje-gar-ma/Vajranṛtyā, Glu-chen-po/Gītā: after whom there are the following goddesses: 25) Rdo-rje-gzugs/Vajrarūpā, Rdo-rje-sgra/Vajraśabdā, 26) Rdo-rje-dri/Vajragandhā, 27) Rdo-rje-ro/Vajrarasā who are surrounded in the external circuit of the maṇḍala by Phyogs-skyon/Dikpālas, planets and lunar asterisms.

On the wall to the left of the cella is still found the maṇḍala of Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara who is the fourth in the list of Bu-ston, op.cit. p.8a (no.198 of my schema). In the centre is seen the figure of Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, of pink colour, having in the left a red lotus that he opens with the right hand. Then follow: 1) Dpal-pad-ma-chen-po, red, with lotus flower and bow, 2) Pad-ma-chen-po gtum-poḥi-dbañ-phyug/Mahāpadma Caṇḍeśvara, black, with four arms and trident, lotus, khaṭvāṅga and skull as attributes, 3) Pad-ma-chen-po under the form of Khyab-ḥjug/Viṣṇu, with four hands and lotus, disc, club, and conch as attributes, 4) Pad-ma-chen-po under the form of Tshañs-pa/Brahmā: four faces, four hands: club, rosary, lotus, kamaṇḍalu as symbols, 5) Pad-ma-chen-po Sa-ḥdzin/Dharaṇīdhara, yellow, with six hands out of which two are joined, and the others bear the symbols of Viṣṇu, namely, conch, lotus, club and disc; 6) Pad-ma-chen-poḥi-ñi-ma, red, in the right hand has a lotus and with the left holds the solar disc resting on the lotus, 7) Pad-ma-chen-po under the form of the God of Wind/Vāyu,

Kumbum III.1

black: in the right holds a small flag and in the left a lotus, 8) Pad-ma-chen-po-rgya-mtsho, in the form of the God of Water/Varuṇa, white; in the right has a lotus and in the left a serpent, 9) Pad-ma-chen-po Sa-ḥdzin Lha-mo-miñ-śrī; in the left a lotus and in the right a vase full of treasures, 10) Pad-ma-chen-po-rgya-mtsho-miñ-hrī; in the right a noose made of serpents and in the left a serpent, 11) Pad-ma-chen-po-ñi-ma-miñ-gī; the right hand has a lotus on which there is the solar discus, 12) Pad-ma-chen-po-rluñ-gi-lha-miñ-dhī; in the right has a little flag and in the left a lotus flower. Then follow the protecting divinities of the four doors: 13) a woman as symbol of a Padma-chen-po-chags-paḥi-mtshon-chaḥi-mtshan-ma, 14) a serpent as symbol of Gtum-poḥi-dbañ-phyug/Caṇḍeśvara, 15) a boar as symbol of Pad-ma-chen-po-nag-po, 16) a lotus as symbol of Tṣhañs-pa/Brahmā.

On the wall to the right of the guard, is represented the maṇḍala of Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tu-chos-kyi-ḥkhor-lo-bskor-ba/Saha-cittotpāda-dharmacakravartin (1), described by Bu-ston in his already quoted work (p.11b, no.202 of my list). In the centre is the figure of the god who gives his name to the maṇḍala: he has in the right hand a disc, in whose centre there is a vajra, and he has his left hand on the seat. His acolytes are: Phyang-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Ḥjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Akāśagarbha, Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja, Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tu-chos-kyi-ḥkhor-lo-rab-tu-bskor-ba/Saha-cittotpāda-dharmacakravartin, Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, and on the doors, Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-hūñ-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, Ḥjig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha.

Then on the wall to the right follows the maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa (in Bu-ston it is no.10 on p.13b, no.204 of my list), who is in the centre, surrounded (fig.273) by Phyang-

(1) The Sanskrit name is from the Japanese Mahākaruṇā-garbhodbhava-maṇḍala/Taizōkai mandara (Lokesh Chandra, *Esot.* no.181).

Kumbum III.1

na-rdo-rje Hjam-dbyans/Vajrapāṇi Mañjuḥṣa, Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ/Ākāśagarbha, Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja, Hjiḡ-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, Sems-bskyed-ma-thag-tuchos-kyi-ḡkhor-lo-bskor-ba/Saha-cittotpāda-dharmacakravartin, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa. Below there are supplementary divinities evidently of terrific character pertaining to the team of the Phyogs-skyoṅ/Dikpāla and who function as a protective ring to all the maṅḡalas (details figs.271, 272).

Lastly, immediately to the right of the door is the maṅḡala of Rdo-rje-khu-tsur/Vajrasandhi which, in the list of Buxton is at the sixth place no. 200 of my list); in the middle Rdo-rje-tshur/Vajrasandhi, yellow, can be seen; he has two hands having, at the height of the waist, the rdo-rje/vajra. He is surrounded by: Rdo-rje-sku-mchog iconographically identical with Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḡ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-ljags, pink, who has a tongue of diamonds in the right and leans on the seat with the left hand, Byaṅ-sems tiṅ-ṅe-ḡdzin-rdo-rje has the rdo-rje/vajra, Byaṅ-sems-rdo-rje, with the rdo-rje/vajra, Lha-mo phyag-rgyaḡi-khu-tshur-ma, similar to Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi, Lha-mo ye-śes-khu-tshur-ma, similar to Hjiḡ-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, Lha-mo las-kyi-khu-tshur-ma, Rinchen-khu-tshur-ma similar to Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha; on the doors of the maṅḡala Rdo-rje-sṅems-ma, similar to Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḡ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-ljags-ma, similar to Rdo-rje-smra-ba/Vajrabhāṣa, Rdo-rje-tiṅ-ṅe-ḡdzin, Rdo-rje-ma, Rdo-rje-rdo-rje-ma similar to Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma.

It is clear, therefore, as it is testified by the inscriptions, that in this temple they wanted to represent the five principal maṅḡalas and the four intermediate ones, composing the synthetic maṅḡala of the five families. Each maṅḡala in this case reproduces that explained in the preceding section at every stage, according to the families taken separately.

Kumbum III.1

The scheme of this synthetic maṇḍala is reproduced in the following figure (1):

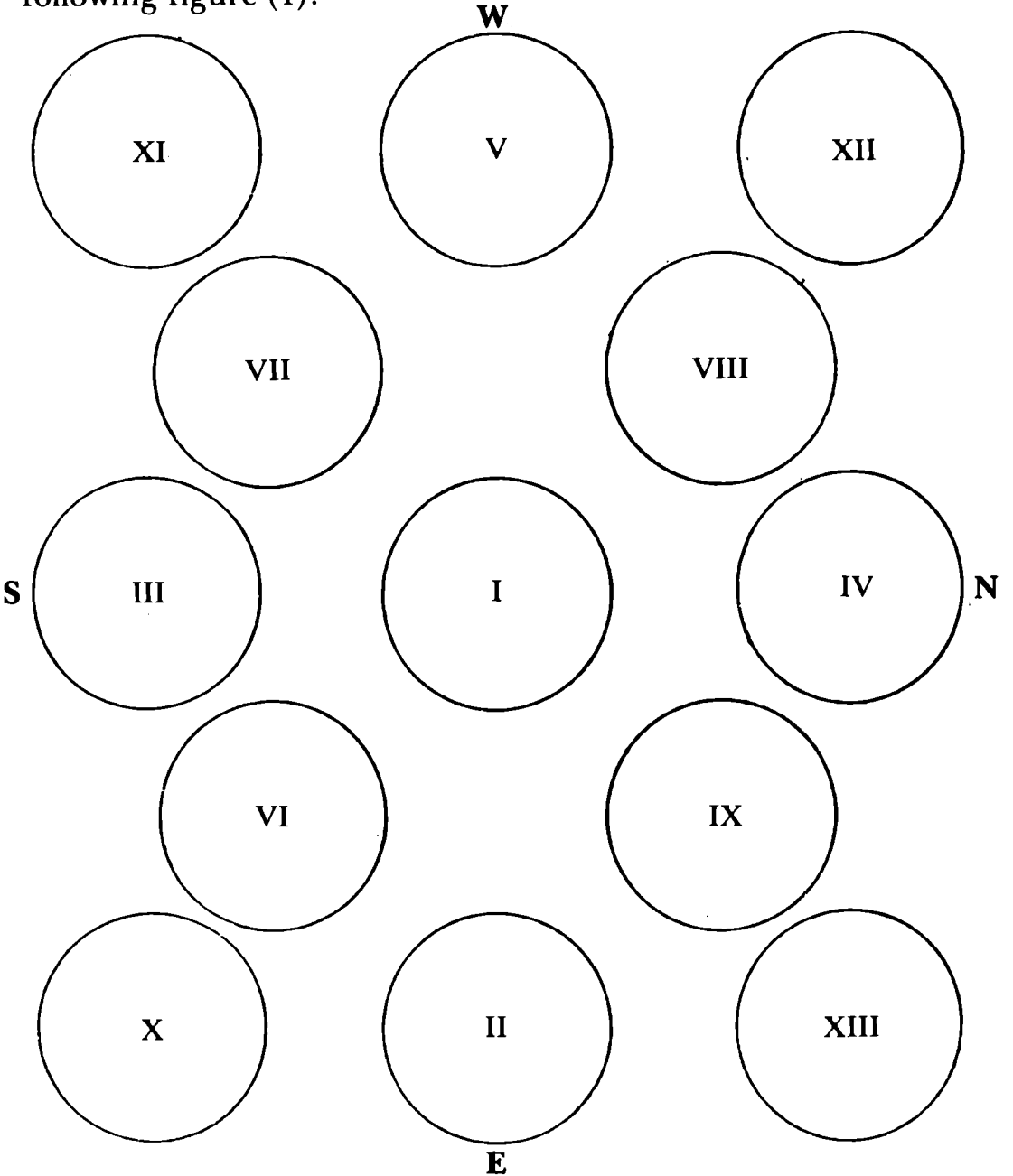


Fig. B.

I. Vajrasattva II. Vajrahūmkāra III. Ākāśagarbha IV. Vajramuṣṭi V. Lokeśvara VI. Mañjuśrī VII. Gaganagañja VIII. Saha-cittotpāda-cakravartin IX. Vajrayakṣa XI. Mātrkā XII. The three Miñ-po XIII. The four sisters

(1) See Bu-ston op. cit. fol.13b.

Kumbum III.2

I have described the main and better visible maṇḍalas; on the walls of this chapel, some higher and some lower, the cycle is reproduced entirely: that of Hjam-dpal/Maṅjuśrī, that of Ma-mo, that of the three Miñ-po and the one of the four Sriṅ-mo (1).

On the whole the maṇḍalas are interesting besides the iconographic point of view, also because they give us an idea about how they were conceived. That is to say that we do not find in them only divinities absolutely Buddhist, but also hypostases of peculiar moments of the tantric liturgy or of symbols of other divinities or of objects of cult. We have already seen, as for instance, divine shape has been given to the arms which are normally held by the terrific deities and sometimes also by the mystics during the liturgic drama (p.220). Other symbols, such as the drum, the umbrella, the flag, are equally deified (p.221). Thus, in the cycle enter also the seasons and the element (p.222 and 223) besides of course the main divinities of the Hindu pantheon, who in this case are enriched by others less frequent in Buddhist liturgy: as for instance Bheruṅḍā (p.220) i.e. Bheruṅḍā one of the forms of Kālī.

In all, according to the calculations of the oft-quoted dkar-chag, there would be 285 figures in this temple.

III.2. The monks call this chapel by the name of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva. But since the maṇḍalas dedicated to this god are infinite, it is clear that this indication is rather generic. There is need, therefore to determine

(1) See the note to the inscriptions.

Kumbum III.2

specifically as to which Tantra which has been taken as a model in this case. It is clear that on the walls there continue to be represented other maṇḍalas of Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā, already reproduced partially in the preceding temple. The scheme of the paintings in this case too follows exactly the indications of Bu-ston. On the eastern wall there are three statues representing: the middle one Bde-ba-chen-po Rdo-rje sems-dpaḥ/Mahāsukha-Vajrasattva, symbol of the essential nature of Sañs-rgyas-dkon-mchog/Buddha-ratna, that to his right H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, symbol of the essential nature of Chos-kyi-dkon-mchog/Dharma-ratna, and that to the left Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, symbol of the essential nature of Dge-ḥdun-dkon-mchog/Saṅgha-ratna. In other words, new hypostases of the three gems: the Buddha, the Law, the Community. We face the second of the six maṇḍalas included in the category of those intended to realize mystic perfections not reached through the ritual act. They represent, as can be seen from the scheme reproduced above, the second group of maṇḍalas included in the category of those intended to realize mystic perfections not reached through the ritual act. They represent, as can be seen from the scheme reproduced above, the second group of maṇḍalas described by the Rtog-pa-thams-cad-bsdus-paḥi-rtsa-baḥi-rgyud/Sarva-kalpa-samuc-caya-mūla-tantra (no. 323 of my list).

The technical name of this particular maṇḍala is De-bzhin-gs̄egs-paḥi gsañ-ba ras-ris-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor. Regarding iconography: Sañs-rgyas-dkon-mchog/Buddha-ratna is represented in the act of holding with the left hand the bow and with the right to shoot an arrow, Chos-dkon-mchog/Dharma-ratna in the act of opening a lotus flower, Dge-ḥdun-dkon-mchog/Saṅgha-ratna has instead a gem.

On the main wall, in the middle, is the figure of H̄jig-rten-dbañ-phyug/Lokeśvara, pink, who in the left hand has a lotus flower with a long stem, and he opens it with the right. Therefore, here is represented the maṇḍala of Gti-mug-gi gñen-por-ḥgro-ḥdul, meant to dispel from the mind the dar-

Kumbum III.3

kening that does not allow us to see the truth (no.198 of my list, Bu-ston op. cit. fol.8a already described above, and represented also in the preceding temple, figs. 274, 275, 276).

On the left wall of the door, the central figure represents Rdo-rje-ḥkhor-lo/Vajracakra with his retinue, i.e. the maṇḍala named Rigs-thams-cad-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-du ḥjug-paḥi-rgyur rdo-rje-ḥkhor-lo, of the first section of the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā already represented in the temple II.1 (no.202 of my list, fig.277).

To the right of the door instead we find the maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi, the same that we have seen in the preceding temple. Below is the usual line of symbols and divinities representing the mystic offerings or the defence of the sacred place.

There are 150 figures in all.

III.3. The chapel is known by the name of the Khromo. But more exactly it should be named after Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba-phra-mo, who is the divinity to whom it is dedicated, and after whom a specific maṇḍala is named: namely the fourth of the second group of maṇḍalas described by the Rtag-paḥi thams-cad bsdus-paḥi rtsa-baḥi-rgyud/Sarva-kalpa-samuccayamūlatantra, included in the second section of the Dpal-mchog-/Paramādyā (see Bu-ston op.cit. p.31, no.234 of my list).

The central statue reproduces him in a shape similar to the terrific manifestation of Vajrapāṇi: it is surrounded to the right by Ki-li-ki-laḥi-gzugs-can-ḥdzin-ma and to the left by Ḥdod-paḥi-me-ḥbar-ma — also called Thal-bar-rab-tu-ḥjig-paḥi-lha-mo-rdo-rje.

On the main wall is the maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-sñin-po/Ākāśagarbha, called Ser-snaḥi-gñen-por-rdo-rje-rin-chen already described; we have found him in the first temple. To the right of the wall is the maṇḍala of Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/-

Kumbum III.3

Gaganagañja also already described (no.199 of my list, for some details see fig. 278).

On a portion coming out of the wall facing the door there is the figure of Hjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī, in the centre of the maṇḍala called Śer-phyin gtso-bor-gyur hjam-dpal described in the first section of the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā (see Bu-ston fol.10b, no.200 of my list).

On the wall to the left of the door, is repeated the maṇḍala of Rgyal-bar-byed-pa, already found in the temple of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus.

There are 146 figures in all.

III.4. The chapel is dedicated to the Yum-chen-mo, whose statue, in the traditional attitude, is accompanied to the right, by that of Phrog-ma, red, and to the left by that of Grag-schen-ma, green.

On the main wall is the principal maṇḍala described by the Rdo-rje-sñiñ-po/Vajragarbha (no.295 of my list). The figure in the centre (fig.279) represents Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, in samādhi-mudrā. He is surrounded by the four śaktis, namely by Sems-ma-rdo-rje-ma/Sattvavajrī (to the east), Rin-chen-rdo-rje-ma/Ratnavajrī (south), Chos-kyi-rdo-rje-ma/Dharmavajrī (west), Rdo-rje-las-ma/Karmavajrī (north). According to Bu-ston (Rdo-rje-sñiñ-po-rgyan-gyi rgyud-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi rnam-gzhag, folio 3), in this maṇḍala Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana is surrounded, besides by the four goddesses now mentioned, by Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-los-bsgyur-ba/Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, red, having on the forefinger of the right hand a wheel and the left lies on the seat, Gdugs-dkar-gtsug-tor/Sitātapatroṣṇīṣa, Rgyal-baḥi-gtsug-tor/Jayoṣṇīṣa, Gsi-brjid-phuñ-po-skal-ba-che, Rnam-par-ḥphro-byed-rnam-rgyal, namely by the five Gtsug-tor/Uṣṇīṣa (1).

(1) Iconographically all are identical with the first.

There follow the other four Buddhas of the pentad, proportionally bigger than the other figures. They are accompanied by the secondary divinities of the cycle, mostly the same as those in the Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-dkyil-ḥkhor/Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, namely: in front of Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya: Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva; to the right: Rdo-rje-rgyal-pa/Vajrarāja, to the left: Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga; behind: Rdo-rje-legs-pa/Vaj-rasādhu. And thus, in the same order, around Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava: Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid/Vajratejas, Rdo-rje-rgyal-mtshan/Vajraketu, Rdo-rje-bzhad-pa/Vajrahāsa. Around Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha: Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma, Rdo-rje-rnon-po/Vaj-ratīkṣṇa, Rdo-rje-rgyu/Vajrahetu, Rdo-rje-smra-ba/Vajrabhāsa. Around Don-yod/Amogha: Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, Rdo-rje-bsruñ/Vajrarakṣa, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, Rdo-rje-khutshur/Vajrasandhi. Then, Rdo-rje-sgeg-mo/Vajralāsyā, Rdo-rje-ḥphreñ-ba/Vajramālā, Glu-ma/Gitā, Gar-ma/Nṛtyā, Bdug-pa-ma/Dhūpā, Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, Dri-ma/Gandhā.

Some details of this maṇḍala can be seen in fig. 280.

To the left of the door there is the maṇḍala of Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan dbugs-dbyuñ, surrounded by his acolytes: Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid/Vajratejas, Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja etc. (fig.281).

The other figures are much ruined. On the wall to the left of the door Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya was represented.

The small temple had 131 figures in all.

III.5. This chapel is dedicated to Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana and therefore takes its name from him. His statue represents him with four faces flanked to the right by Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva and to the left by Rdo-rje-ḥchañ/Vajradhara.

On the main wall is represented one of the maṇḍalas included in the seven maṇḍalas comprehensively called Nam-mkhaḥ-dri-med-chuñ dkyil-ḥkhor explained by Ḥjam-dpal-bśes-gñen, namely the third group of maṇḍalas described by Bu-ston as pertaining to the Mtshan-yañ-dag-brjod-pa/Nāma-

Kumbum III.5

saṅgīti (Bu-ston, *Mtshan-brjod-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*, p.18).

The central figure represents Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, with four faces and his two hands in samādhi-mudrā, on which there is a vajra.

In the centre of his waist there is another image with four faces, namely Dañ-poḥi-saṅs-rgyas/Ādibuddha who, in the four arms to the right has a sword, symbolising the mystic wisdom, and in the four arms to the left the book of supreme gnosis. In the centre of this figure there is another small image representing Hjam-dpal ye-śes-sems-dpaḥ/Jñānasattva Mañjuśrī with six faces and with the same symbols as Dañ-poḥi-saṅs-rgyas/Ādibuddha. Around them are the paintings of: Sems-ma-rdo-rje/Vajrasattvī, Rin-chen-sems-ma/Ratnasattvī, Chos-kyi-sems-ma/Dharmasattvī, Las-kyi-sems-ma/Karmasattvī, and the other four Tathāgatas of the supreme pentad, surrounded by their acolytes, in the following order: MI-BSKYOD-PA/AK-ṢOBHYA, Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja, yellow, with the hook, Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga, red, with bow and arrow, Rdo-rje-legs-pa/Vajrasādhu, green, having the vajra in the mudrā of threatening. RIN-CHEN-HBYUN-LDAN/RATNASAMBHAVA: Rdo-rje-rin-po-che/Vajraratna, yellow, with gem and bell, Rdo-rje-ñi-ma/Vajrasūrya, red, with solar disc, Rdo-rje-dpal/Vajraśrī, blue, with the flag, Rdo-rje-bśad-pa/Vajrabhāṣa, white, with a rosary of ivory, SNAÑ-MTHAḤ-YAS/AMITĀBHA: Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma, red, in the act of opening a lotus flower, Rdo-rje-rnon-po/Vajratīkṣṇa, blue, with the sword, Rdo-rje-rgyu/Vajrahetu, yellow, with a disc, Rdo-rje-smra-ba/Vajrabhāṣa, red, in the act of touching his tongue. DON-GRUB/AMOGHASIDDHI: Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, green, with bell and sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra, Rdo-rje-bsruñ-ba/Vajrarakṣa, yellow, with shield, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, black, holding his teeth, Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasaṅdhi, yellow, shakes the rdo-rje/vajra.

Kumbum III.6

On the wall to the left of the door, there is the maṇḍala of Byañ-chub-sems-dpaḥ dbugs-dbyuñ, identical with the preceding, with the difference of a change in the central divinity. The acolytes are the same. This is the seventh maṇḍala according to the liturgy of the same interpreter.

On the opposite wall there should have been the maṇḍala of Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya equally inspired by the same source.

There are 135 figures in all.

III.6. This temple is dedicated to Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava, and it can be considered to be one of the most beautiful in the whole of Kumbum, for the magnificence of its paintings and the richness of its decoration.

The central statue represents the divinity from whom the temple derives its name, and it is surrounded by four other statues of lesser proportions. They are two on each side, namely, those of Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vājraratna, Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid/Vajratejas, Rdo-rje-rgyal-mtshan/Vajraketu, and Rdo-rje-bzhad-pa/Vajrahāsa.

The group is inspired by the maṇḍala called Rin-ḥbyuñ phyag-rgya bzhi/Caturmudrā-maṇḍala of Ratnasambhava described by the Tattvasaṅgraha (it corresponds to no.7 of my list).

The major part of the frescoes instead is dedicated to the great maṇḍala called Nam-mkhaḥ-dri-med dkyil-ḥkhor-chen-po according to the liturgic system of Hjam-dpal-grags-pa: namely it expresses symbolically the mystic ritual and the experiences exposed in the Mtshan-brjod/Nāma-saṅgīti (no.273 of my list).

On the left side of the door is painted the cycle of the divinities normally depicted in the external band of the maṇḍala (Bu-ston op. cit. p.9f). Besides the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjā-devī, and the group of Rdo-rje-gzugs-ma/Rūpavajrā etc. we also see Dbañ-ldan/Īśāna, Umā, Indra and such other Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpāla, Gzhon-nu-Kar-ti-ka/Kumāra Kārttikeya on a peacock, with six faces and six hands of which two above

Kumbum III.6

the head in the act of homage, Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla of dark colour, with trident, Dgaḥ-byed-dbañ-phyug/Nandikeśvara of dark colour, in the act of playing a drum and seated over a drum (fig.287). While in the treatise of Bu-ston these divinities are in the posture of yab-yum namely accompanied by the śakti, on the paintings of this temple the goddesses are represented separately.

Then follows the cycle of the planets: Āi-ma/Āditya, red, with two hands that have a lotus on which there is the solar disc; he is on a chariot drawn by horses.

Zla-ba/Soma, white, he has in his hand a lotus on which there is solar disc; he is seated on a swan.

Mig-dmar/Aṅgāraka, red, in the right (hand) a knife, and in the left a human head; he is seated on a bull.

Gzaḥ-lhaḡ/Budha, yellow, with bow and arrows.

Phur-bu/Bṛhaspati, white, with a rosary and a kamaṇḍalu; on a vase.

Spen-pa/Śanaīścara, black, with a stick; seated on a turtle.

Sgra-gcan/Rāhu, dark red, he holds the discus of the sun and the moon.

Mjug-riñ/Ketu, black, with a sword and a noose made of serpents (fig.287).

Then there are:

1) Stobs-bzañ/Balabhadra, black, with sword.

2) Rgyal-byed/Jayanta, green, with four arms; rosary of flowers, arrows, bow and cup. He is seated on a chariot drawn by Indian cuckoos (*kokila*).

3) Sbrañ-rtsir-byed-pa/Madhukara, white, in the right hands carries a knife surmounted by a standard and the bow; in the left arrow and cup. He is on a throne adorned with figures of parrots.

4) Dpyid-kyi-lha/Vasanta, white, with bow and spade, arrow and cup. He is on a cloud.

Then there is the cycle of the eight Klu/Nāgas: Klu Mthaḥ-yas/Ananta, red, Nor-rgyas/Vāsuki, yellow, Hjoj-po/Takṣaka, black Stobs-rgyu/Karkoṭa, white, Padma, white, Padma-chen-po/Mahāpadma, black, Duñ-skyon/Śaṅkhapāla, yellow, Rigs-ldan/Kulika, red; all in the act of adoration (figs.282, 283).

Then is reproduced the cycle of the Lha-ma-yin-dbañ-po/Asurendra, namely: Thags-bzañ-ris/Vemacitrin, Stobs-ldan, Rab-dgaḥ, Rnam-par-snañ-byed/Vairocana; all with sword and shield (figs.283, 284).

Nam-mkhaḥ-ldiñ-gi-dbañ-po/Garuḍendra, with open wings and the hands joined in an act of prayer. Mi-ḥam-ci-rgyal-po/Kinnararāja, with the lute (phi-vañ), Dri-zaḥi-rgyal-po/Piśācārāja, of golden colour, with five crests.

Rig-ḥdzin-gyi-rgyal-po/Vidyāddhararāja, yellow (figs.285, 286).

Below is the cycle of the Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣas. All have in their hand the lemon (bījapūra) and the hawk. They are:

Gañ-ba-bzañ-po/Pūrṇabha-dra, blue;

Nor-bu-bzañ-po/Mañibhadra, yellow;

Gnod-sbyin/Yakṣa, red;

Rnam-sras/Vaiśravaṇa, yellow;

Pi-ci-kuṇ-ḍa, red;

Ki-li-ma-li, green;

Sgoḥi-dbañ-po, yellow;

Spyod-paḥi-dbañ-po, yellow;

Ḥphrog-ma/Hārīti, yellow, with her son.

On the wall to the left of the door, namely on the north of the temple, the central image represents (fig.288) Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra; his right hand is in the mudrā of gift, and the left has a lotus flower with a long stem.

Around him are fifteen figures which along with him form the cycle of the sixteen Bodhisattvas (Bu-ston, op. cit., p.7).

Kumbum III.6

- 1) Blo-gros-mi-zad-pa/Akṣayamati, yellow: sword in the right, a lotus in the left in the mudrā of dharmavyākhyāna (1).
- 2) Saḥi-sñiṅ-po/Kṣitigarbha, yellow; the right hand touches the earth (bhūmi-sparśa); the left has a heavenly tree on a lotus.
- 3) Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiṅ-po/Ākāśagarbha, green: in the right tree from which gems rain; in the left the flag granting desires.
- 4) Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja, yellow: in the right the gem granting desires and in the left heavenly tree coming out from the auspicious vase.
- 5) Phyag-na-rin-chen/Ratnapāṇi, green: the right hand in the act of donating gems; and in the left, on a lotus, the moon, symbol of illumination.
- 6) Blo-gros-rgya-mtsho/Matisāgara, white: in the right a conch, in the left the sword.
- 7) Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po/Vajragarbha, blue: in the right the vajra and in the left the book entitled Daśabhūmika-sūtra.
- 8) Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokita, white: the left hand in the act of donation, in the right a lotus.
- 9) Mthu-chen-thob/Mahāsthāmaprāpta, yellow: in the right the sword, in the left the lotus.
- 10) Zla-baḥi-ḥod/Candraprabha, white: in the right disc signed by the vajra, in the left the lunar disc on a lotus.
- 11) Dra-ba-can-gyi-ḥod/Jālinīprabha, pink: in the right the sword, in the left the solar disc on a lotus flower.
- 12) Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, white: in the right sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra, in the left a vase on a lotus flower.
- 13) Spobs-pa-brtsegs-pa/Pratibhānakūṭa, yellow: the right hand in the act of menacing, in the left a lotus flower on which there is the sword.

(1) According to other sources abhayamudrā and kamaṇḍalu. On this cycle see pages 149, 243 and 250.

14) Mya-ñan-gyi-mun-pa-thams-cad-rnam-par-ñjoms-pañi-blo-gros/Sarva-śoka-tamo-nirghāta-mati, of saffron colour: in the right hand vajra emanating several rays, and in the left the spear.

15) Sgrib-thams-cad-rnam-par-sel-ba/Sarva-nīvaraṇa-viṣkambhin, blue: in the right hand the sword, in the left a small flag with the sign of the vajra.

These bodhisattvas are divided into four groups, one for every cardinal point. The following divinities are seen in the lower line:

To the north-east: Khams-gsum-rnam-rgyal/Trailokyavijaya: has four faces of different colours and eight hands. The two principal hands have vajra and bell in hūmkāra-mudrā; in the others, to the right, sword, hook, bow; in those to the left: bow, noose, vajra. He has under his feet Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara and Umā.

To south-east: Rdo-rje-me-ltar-ñbar-ba/Vajrajvālānala: black, he has four faces and eight hands; in the right vajra, sword, bow and disc; in the left bell, noose, bow and khaṭvāṅga (1).

To the south-west: Rdo-rje-khrag-thuñ/Vajra-Heruka: dark blue, four faces and eight hands; in the two main hands he has a vajra and khaṭvāṅga; with the next two he spreads the skin of Rdo-rje-ñjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava, and then in the other two he has bow and arrow, while in the last two he holds two skulls.

To the north-west: Rta-mchog/Paramāśva: green, in his traditional representation. Then follow on the four doors of the maṇḍala, to the east Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamantaka, to south Śes-rab-mthar-byed/Prajñāntaka, to the west Padma-mthar-byed/Padmāntaka, to the north Bgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka.

On the small wall bordering the opening of the cella is reproduced the cycle of the twelve earths (2), as feminine figures

(1) From the iconography it can be seen that this divinity is a duplication of the previous one.

(2) Namely, the normal ten nos 2-11 of my schema, plus two supplementary nos 1 and 12. The list of 13 earths in Dharmasaṅgraha 65.

Kumbum III.6

in padmāsana and all with the vajra in the right hand. The symbol of the left hand changes for each earth/bhūmi (figs.289, 290).

The big figure in the middle represents:

1) Mos-spyod-kyi-sa/Adhimukti-caryā bhūmi, of red colour: in the left hand a red lotus (fig.290).

Then follow to the right:

2) Rab-dgaḥ-baḥi-sa/Pramuditā bhūmi, red; gem granting desires.

3) Dri-med-paḥi-sa/Vimalā bhūmi, white; white lotus.

4) Ḥod-byed-paḥi-sa/Prabhākārī bhūmi, red; solar disc on lotus.

5) Ḥod-ḥphro-baḥi-sa/Arciṣmatī bhūmi, green; utpala lotus.

6) Spyod-dkaḥ-baḥi-sa/Sudurjayā bhūmi, yellow; emerald.

7) Mñon-du-gyur-paḥi-sa/Abhimukhī bhūmi, golden; the book of gnosis on a lotus.

8) Riñ-du-soñ-baḥi-sa/Dūraṅgamā bhūmi, light blue; vajra on lotus.

9) Mi-g.yo-baḥi-sa/Acalā bhūmi, white; on a lotus a lunar disc with a vajra above it.

10) Legs-paḥi-blo-gros-kyi-sa/Sādhumatī bhūmi; pink; sword on an utpala flower.

11) Chos-kyi-sprin-gyi-sa/Dharmameghā bhūmi, golden; book of gnosis.

12) Kun-tu-ḥod-kyi-sa/Samantaprabhā bhūmi, colour of the sun at midday; image of the Buddha on a lotus flower.

To the left of the central figure is represented the cycle of the twelve perfections Phar-phyin/Pāramitā (fig.291), and not ten as is the rule. They too are represented according to the iconographic scheme of the bodhisattvas, but feminine in aspect, seated in padmāsana. In the right hand all of them have the cintāmaṇi gem to symbolise that these perfections grant the desires of creatures.

The symbol in the left is different for each figure (1). The twelve perfections are:

(1) Also in this case 2-11 correspond to the usual cycle plus 1 and 12.

- 1) Rin-chen-pad-maḥi phar-phyin/Ratnapadma-pāramitā, red; lunar disc on lotus flower.
- 2) Sbyin-paḥi phar-phyin/Dāna-pāramitā, pink; grain and gems.
- 3) Tshul-khrims-kyi phar-phyin/Śīla-pāramitā, white; flower of aśoka.
- 4) Bzod-paḥi phar-phyin/Kṣānti-pāramitā, golden; white lotus.
- 5) Brtson-ḥgrus-kyi phar-phin/Vīrya-pāramitā, green; utpala.
- 6) Bsam-gtan-gyi phar-phyin/Dhyāna-pāramitā, light blue; white lotus.
- 7) Śer-phyin phar-phyin/Prajñā-pāramitā, golden; with four arms.
- 8) Thabs-kyi phar-phyin/Upāya-pāramitā, green; vajra on a lotus flower.
- 9) Smon-lam-gyi phar-phyin/Praṇidhāna-pāramitā, yellow; sword on a lotus flower.
- 10) Stobs-kyi phar-phyin/Bala-pāramitā, red; book of gnosis.
- 11) Ye-śes-kyi phar-phyin/Jñāna-pāramitā, white; branch of the tree of illumination.
- 12) Rdo-rje-las-kyi phar-phyin/Vajrakarma-pāramitā, variegated in colour; double lotus (sna-tshog-padma/viśvapadma).

On the wall of the cella to the left of the viewer is represented Ḥjam-dbyaṅs dkar-po/White Mañjuḥṣa, with his maṇḍala.

This is the image which I have already met with at Lhalung and at Tsparang and which I could not identify with certainty. I had rightly imagined that it would be attached to a cycle connected with that of Vairocana, but I could not be more precise. Their relationship with the tantra of Vairocana is made clear by the Tibetan tradition which considers, as I have stated above, the Nāmasaṅgīti as derived from the Tattvasaṅgraha.

There is therefore the need to complete the indications given in *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.117 according to the new data collected in this volume.

This divinity has four faces and eight hands; the two main hands are in the act of explaining the law, the other three to

Kumbum III.6

the right have the sword, the bow and the vajra; those to the left the book of gnosis, the arrow and the bell (fig.292).

Ḥjam-dbyaṅs dkar-po/White Mañjuḥṣa, according to the treatise of Bu-ston (p.3b) is surrounded by the cycle of the eight ḥkhor-los-sgyur-ba/çakravartins, namely, Gtsug-tor-chen-mo/Mahoṣṇīṣa, Rnam-par-ḥthar-ba, Gzhi-byed-phuñ-po, Gyen-ḥbyuñ, Gtsug-tor-gdugs-dkar/Uṣṇīṣa-sitātapatrā, Gyen-ḥbyuñ-chen, Gtsug-tor-rnam-rgyal/Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Rgyal-ba.

All of them are yellow; in the right hand they have a disc and with the left they are leaning on the seat. In the other four maṅḍalas are reproduced the other four Tathāgatas of the pentad, and around them is developed the cycle of other thirtysix divinities: Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja, Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga, etc. as in the Tattva-saṅgraha (details in figs. 293-294). This cycle continues on the opposite wall too, together with that of the sixteen Bodhisattvas whom we have already met as acolytes of Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra in this very chapel (details in figs.295-296).

On the wall flanking the cella to the right is painted the cycle of the ten investitures *dbañ/vaśita* and of the twelve formulae *gzuñs/dhāraṇī*. The first are seen to the right and the latter to the left of the central divinity, who is the first of the first cycle, namely, Tshe-la-dbañ/Āyurvaśitā.

The ten Dbañ/Vaśitā are represented according to the iconographic scheme characteristic of the Bodhisattvas, but are of feminine aspect, seated in padmāsana. Their right hand always has a lotus flower, while the symbol of the left hand changes for every image, as it can be seen from the following list (see Bu-ston op. cit. p.6a, figs.297, 299).

Tshe-la-dbañ/Āyur-vaśitā, pink; image of Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha on the lotus which she holds in the right hand (fig.298).

Sems-la-dbañ/Citta-vaśitā, white; red vajra.

Yo-byad-la-dbañ/Parīṣkāra-vaśitā, yellow; flag with the cintāmaṇi gem.

Las-la-dbañ/Karma-vaśitā, green; sna-tshog-rdo-rje/viśvavajra.

Skye-ba-la-dbañ/Upapatti-vaśitā, multicolored; branch of multicoloured jāti (1).

Rdzu-ḥphrul-la-dbañ/Rddhi-vaśitā, green; discuses of sun and moon on lotus flower.

Mos-pa-la-dbañ/adhimukti-vaśitā, white; flower of priyaṅgu (2).

Smon-lam-la-dbañ/Prañidhāna-vaśitā, yellow; blue utpala.

Ye-śes-la-dbañ/Jñāna-vaśitā, blue; sword on uptala.

Chos-la-dbañ/Dharma-vaśitā, pink; vase on a lotus flower.

The twelve Gzuñs/dhāraṇī have in the right hand the sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra; the symbol of the left is indicated below. They are of feminine appearance (3).

Nor-ldan-gyi Gzuñs/Vasumatī, yellow; basket of grain.

Gtsug-tor-rnam-rgyal/Uṣṇīṣavijayā, white; vase of rock crystal.

Hod-zer-can/Mārīcī, pink; needle and thread.

Ri-khrod-lo-ma-can/Parṇaśabarī, green; heap of leaves.

Dug-sel-ma/Jāngulī, white; poisonous flower.

Sgo-mthaḥ-yas-ma/Anantamukhī, green; the wonderful vase containing inexhaustible treasures, kept on a red lotus.

Skul-byed-ma/Cundā, white; vase with a suspended rosary.

Śes-rab-phel-ma/Sumatī, white; sword on a blue utpala flower.

Las-skyi-sgrib-pa-thams-cad-rnam-par-sbyoñ-ma/Sarva-karmāvaraṇa-viśodhanī, yellow; pink lotus with the sign of the sna-tshogs-rdo-rje/viśvavajra.

Yes-śes-mi-zad-paḥi-za-ma-tog/Akṣaya-jñāna-karaṇḍā, red; gemmed basket.

Saṅs-rgyas-thams-cad-kyi-chos-kyi-mdzod-dañ-ldan gzuñs/Sarva-buddha-dharma-kośavatī, golden; multicoloured box.

(1) *Jasminum glandiflorum*.

(2) *Aglaiia Roxburghiana*.

(3) This is different from the list of the twelve dhāraṇī in the Mahāvīyutpatti.

Kumbum III.6

On the wall to the right of the door, namely the southern wall, the same cycle is repeated, which we have seen on the opposite wall, with the only difference that in place of Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra there is Spyan-ras-gzigs/Av-alokita (fig.300) in the centre.

Immediately to the right of the door, in the centre of the wall is Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva surrounded by the cycle of the 28 lunar mansions (nakṣatra) and by various deities of an irate aspect (figs.301, 302, 303).

The 28 nakṣatras are of peaceful aspect; both the hands joined in the act of adoration (fig.303). Below are seen: Tshans-ma/Brahmāṇī, Drag-mo/Rudrāṇī, Khyab-ḥjug-ma/Vaiṣṇavī, Gzhon-nu-ma/Kaumārī in the same attitude of the divinities of whom they are the śaktis, Dbañ-mo/Indrāṇī as Indra (fig.301, last row), Phag-mo/Vārāhī, black, on the figure of a ghost (yi-dag/preta) (ibid.), her symbols are a fish, and a skull, Rgan-byad-ma, red, on a yi-dag/preta, with knife and skull (ibid.), Bhriṅgiriti, black, with rosary and kamaṇḍalu (ibid.), Tshogs-bdag/Gaṇapati with the face of an elephant, in two hands sweets (*la-du*) and radish (*la-phug*) and in the other two hands trident and axe, Saḥi-lha-mo/Pṛthvī, Rmugs-ḥdzin/Jambhala etc. (fig.302).

There are 330 figures in all.

III.7. This chapel is rather ruined. Today the monks call it the chapel of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana. We know, both from the eulogy and from the inscriptions, that it was dedicated to Hjam-dpal ye-śes-sems-dpaḥ/Jñāna-sattva Mañjuśrī, whose statue, surrounded by those of Rdo-rje-ñi-ma/Vajrasūrya and Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, is seen on the small wall to the south. The god has six faces. Therefore we are facing the maṇḍala described by the second commentator Sgeg-pa-rdo-rje (on whom see Bu-ston, p.13a), one of the maṇḍalas included in the second series of maṇḍalas corresponding to no.273 of my list.

Kumbum III.7

On the wall to the east the central figure represents the maṇḍala of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, according to the commentary of Avadhūtipā Padmasambhava, similar to the one described in the Sgyu-ḥphrul-dra-ba/Māyājāla, the god is represented in the aspect called dbugs-dbyuñ, namely with the image of the Ādibuddha (five faces, eight arms) in the centre of his breast. He is also surrounded by the four śaktis: Sems-ma-rdo-rje-ma/Sattvavajrī, Rin-chen-rdo-rje-ma/Ratnavajrī, Rdo-rje-padma/Padmavajrī, Rdo-rje-las-ma/Karmavajrī, and by the other four supreme Buddhas, each surrounded by his acolytes.

Around the maṇḍala there is a series of sixteen bodhisattvas partly different from those listed above (Bu-ston op. cit. p.21) (1) :

	Name	colour	symbol
East	Byams-pa/Maitreya	yellow	kumuda
	Ḥjam-dpal/Mañjuśrī	green	utpala
	Spos-glañ/Gandhastin	blue	incensoir
	Ye-śes-tog/Jñānaketu	white	standard
South	Blo-gros-rgya-mtsho/ Sāgaramati	red or yellow	gem
	Blo-gros-mi-zad-pa/ Akṣayamati	yellow	gem
	Bzañ-skyoñ/Bhadrapāla	blue	incensoir
	Spos-brtsegs/ Pratibhānakūṭa	black	book
West	Mthu-chen/Mahāsthāma	red	lotus
	Nan-soñ-kun-ḥdren/ Apāyañjaha	yellow	hook
	Mya-nan-ḥjoms/Śokanirghāta	white	sword
North	Dra-ba-can/Jālinīprabha	white	net
	Zla-ba-ḥod/Candraprabha	white and yellow	moon
	Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitaprabha	white	hook
	Nam-sñiñ/Ākāśagarbha	green	sword
	Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/ Gaganagañja	green	basket of gems
	There are 81 figures in all.		

(1) See above p.149 and 236.

Kumbum III.8

III.8. This chapel is dedicated to *Byañ-chub-sems-dpaḥ-rdo-rje/Bodhisattva-vajra*, whose statue is on the southern wall, surrounded by those of *Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma* and *Rdo-rje-sgra/Vajraśabda*. This is thus the seventh maṇḍala of the liturgy of the *Mtshan-brjod/Nāma-saṅgīti* according to the exposition of *Sgeg-rdo-rje* (Bu-ston p.15b, in the group bearing no.274 of my list).

On the main wall, that on the north, is the first maṇḍala according to the same liturgy of *Sgeg-paḥi-rdo-rje* (fig.304). This maṇḍala is called “the maṇḍala expressing the five mystic families in synthesis”, because it includes the five Buddhas of the pentad, each with his appropriate acolytes. The central figure represents white *Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana* with four faces and his two hands in the *byañ-chub-mchog/bodhyagrī mudrā*; he is reproduced in that special form called *dbugs-dbyuñ*, i.e. as a moment of the absolute in which is contained the *Ādibuddha* as infinite potency which is represented in the centre of his heart. In this way, during the meditative process the divinities on whom the mystic fixes his mind are imagined to reveal themselves in all their luminosity in the centre of the heart to spread, afterwards, as luminous rays in the immensity of space. Therefore this *Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana* should rather be called *Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad-chen-po/Mahāvairocana*. The image of *Dañ-paḥi-saṅs-rgyas/Ādibuddha*, white, is visible in the middle of his breast. He has five faces and eight hands; in the four to the right he has the book of gnosis and in those to the left he has the sword. In the middle of the breast of the *Ādibuddha* is visible the figure of *Hjam-dpal-ye-śes/Jñāna-Mañjuśrī* with six faces and two hands in *samādhi-mudrā*; in them a lotus flower on which there is the book of gnosis. Four figures, placed around him represent the

Kumbum III.9

other four Buddhas of the pentad. Then follow the four mothers: Sems-ma/Sattvī, Rdo-rje-ma/Vajrī, etc. and then in parallel lines, the same gods as in the maṇḍala of Vairocana in the cycle of the Tattva-saṅgraha.

On the western wall, namely to the right of the door, is painted a maṇḍala reminding of another Tantra but analogous to this, according to the classifications of the esoteric schools already met with, namely the Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po/Vajrahṛdaya (1).

In the centre of this maṇḍala is represented Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, with a face and two hands in samādhi-mudrā, surrounded by the four mothers: Sems-ma/Sattvī, Rdo-rje-ma/Vajrī, etc., by the five Gtsug-tor/Uṣṇīṣa about whom we have already spoken, and by the other four Tathāgatas of the supreme pentad, besides a great deal of minor deities.

There are 168 figures in all.

III.9. The chapel is dedicated to Phayag-na-rdo-rje-ḥchibdag. The great wall to the south is dedicated to the sixth of the eleven maṇḍalas contained in the liturgy described in the supplement to the Nan-soñ-thams-cad-yoñs-su-sbyoñ-ba-gzi-brjid-rgyal-po/Sarva-durgati-pariśodhana-tejorāja. About them Bu-ston speaks at length in his work dedicated to this very cycle and called *Kun-rig-gi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa* (p.20 no.341 of my list). This maṇḍala is known as the maṇḍala of Phayag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, surrounded by the eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas and serves to favour the conversion of beings who may be converted by the cult of the eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas:

The central divinity of this maṇḍala (fig.305) represents that form of Phayag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi which is known by the

(1) This too is fully described by Bu-ston in the *Rdo-rje-sñiṅ-po-rgyan-gyi rgyud dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi rnam-gzhag*.

Kumbum III.9

name of Khro-bo-Ḥjig-rten-gsum-rgyal/Krodha-Trailokya-vijaya. He has four arms of which the two main ones have the vajra and the bell, the other two the bow and the vajra. The god is figured in the act of putting under his feet Ḥjigs-byed-po/Bhairava and Umā. Around him is the cycle of the eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas:

- 1) Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara, black, with trident;
- 2) Brgya-byin/Indra, white and yellow, with the vajra;
- 3) Tshañs-pa/Brahmā, yellow, with the gem;
- 4) Khyab-ḥjug/Viṣṇu, black, with disc;
- 5) Ḥdod-paḥi-dbañ-phyug/Kāmeśvara, red, with bow;
- 6) Tshogs-bdag/Gaṇapati, white, has the head of an elephant and carries the axe;
- 7) Bhringiriti, namely Bhr̥ṅgiriṭi, whitish, with a box;
- 8) Gzhon-nu/Kumāra, who has six faces and carries the knife.

Then follow: Stobs-bzañ/Balabhadra, green, with the plough, Dgaḥ-baḥi-dbañ-phyug/Nandikeśvara, red, in the act of drinking, Nag-mo-chen-mo/Mahākālī with a spear with three points. The eight Lha-chen/Mahādevas have to be accompanied by their śaktis whom they embrace with their left hands (figs 306-309). On the small wall to the west is reproduced the maṇḍala serving to favour the conversion of persons who may be converted by the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika. In the centre is seen Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, white, represented in the aspect of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva; he is surrounded by the four Rgyal-chen/Caturmahārājika in their traditional types. This is the third maṇḍala of the list already quoted by Bu-ston (no.336 of my list). On the northern wall is represented instead the fourth maṇḍala, the one destined to favour the conversion of creatures who can be converted through the cult of the ten Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpālas (no.337 of my list) in their traditional type.

Kumbum III.10

Every cycle is completed by the four Sgo-ba(Sgo-ba-bzhi)/Dvārapālī: Lcags-kyu/Ankuśā, Zhags-pa/Pāśā, Lcags-sgrog/Sphoṭā, Dril-bu/Āveśā.

There are 80 images in all.

III.10. This chapel is wrongly called the chapel of Hūm-mdzad/Hūmkāra, because the central divinity of the group of statues seen in the east represents Śā-kya-señ-ge/Śākyasiṃha. On the main wall to the south is a great maṇḍala; its central figure, representing Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala, indicates that we are faced by the last of the eleven maṇḍalas of the supplementary liturgies of the Nan-son-sbyon-ba/Durgati-pariśodhana, the one which serves to purify wrath by wrath (no.343 of my list). Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala (fig.310) is a particular from of Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva; the god of irate aspect has in his two main hands the vajra and the bell, and in the other four bow and arrow, sword and hook; and tramples over Umā and Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara.

Around him is the retinue of his acolytes:

- 1) H̄jig-rten-gsum-snañ, with vajra;
- 2) H̄jig-rten-gsum-ḥdul, with a skull and the club;
- 3) H̄jig-rten-gsum-h̄jig, with trident;
- 4) H̄jig-rten-gsum-ḥchiñ, with the axe;
- 5) Bdud-rtsi-ḥkhyil-ba/Amṛtakuṇḍalin, with vajra as a cross;
- 6) Dbyug-sñon-can/Nīladaṇḍa, with the disc;
- 7) Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, with the axe;
- 8) Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, with lotus;
- 9) Dus-kyi-sriñ-mo, with a skull;
- 10) Dus-kyi-dbyug-ma, with club;
- 11) Dus-kyi-dgaḥ-ba-mo, with the lunar disc;
- 12) Dus-kyi-gnod-sbyin-mo, with vajra (figs.311-314; details of the central figure in fig.315).

Kumbum III.10

The symbols of these acolytes, which we have so briefly hinted at, are all kept in the first hand on the right, which is the highest of all; the other hands have the symbols visible in the figures.

On the western wall we have another tantric cycle, anyway near to those represented till now: namely to the Sku-gsun-thugs gsañ brgyan bkod-pa, whose liturgy has also been described by Bu-ston in his *Gsañ-ba-rgyan-bkod-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi nam-gzhag*. The maṇḍala reproduced is the fourth of the six maṇḍalas of Yum-chen-mo, listed and separately described in this work. The central divinity represents an irate form of Yum-chen-mo, with four faces and four hands: those in the right have the vajra and the hook and those in the left the skull and the noose (fig.316). To her maṇḍala belong:

Mthaḥ-maḥi-zhal, multicoloured; has four faces and four hands: the first two hands have chain and noose, the third has a skull full of blood and the last one has the fingers in the act of producing a noise.

Mthaḥ-gdoñ, blue; has four arms: sword and gems, skull and baton.

Pad-maḥi-zhal-ma, red; she has two arms: discus of the sun and of the moon.

Khro-mo-ma-bcas-ma; she has two arms: double vajra and conch.

Then follow the male divinities who correspond to these four *Khro-mo*: they are in the same position and have the same symbols.

The maṇḍala is concluded by the twelve Phyogs-skyoñ/Dik-pālas and the four Sgo-ba/Guardians of the Gates and minor acolytes. From the number of divinities included in it, this

Kumbum III.11

maṇḍala corresponds to the plane of action (*las*) and is used in magic rites, and as said in the inscription, it is called the maṇḍala of 33 gods (1).

On the northern wall is the first maṇḍala of the Gsañ-rgyan known as the maṇḍala of the mystic knowledge (*ye-śes-kyi dkyil-ḥkhor/jñāna-maṇḍala*, Bu-ston p.2ff).

Its central divinity is the Yum-chen-mo with four faces and four hands, yellow; her two main hands are in the act of the explanation of the law, the other two have a lotus and a vajra. Around her:

1) Mthaḥ-yas-zhal-ma, with many faces and many hands, white; her two main hands have the vajra and the lotus.

2) Nam-mkhaḥ-dge-ma, blue; her right hand is in the act of giving, and the left one has the cintāmaṇi gem.

3) Yid-ḥphrog, red; in her right hand leaning on the side she has a lotus which she opens with her left hand.

4) Grags-chen-ma, green; with the vajra and the bell.

In the intermediate points, Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, Bdug-pa-ma/Dhūpā, Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā, who are followed by the other Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevīs and the four Sgo-ba/Door-keepers.

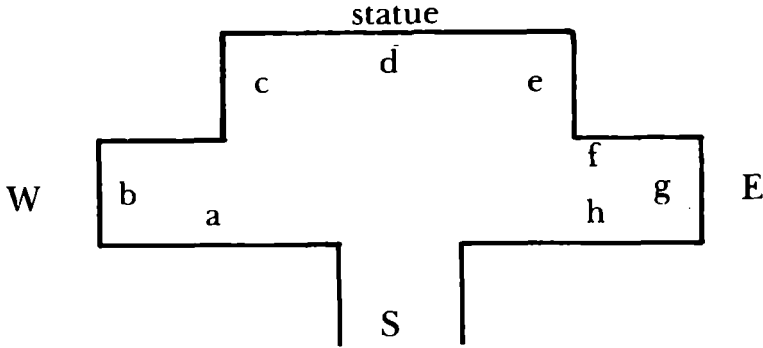
There are 83 figures in all.

III.11.T. This temple, resembling a veritable lamaistic pantheon, so many are the images covering its walls, is dedicated to Don-yod/Amogha whose statue dominates the central wall, surrounded by his minor acolytes: Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, Rdo-rje-bsruñ-na/Vajrarakṣa, Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi.

(1) With central divinity accompanied by 32 acolytes.

Kumbum III.11

In order to be clear, it is advisable to reproduce here the schematic plan of the temple:



On the walls c, d, e, f is the cycle proper of Kun-rig/Sarvavid namely the group of the 37 images constituting its central nucleus and about which we have already spoken in the course of this book.

Around them are painted the images of the sixteen Bodhisattvas who complete the cycle, and so also the images of the Śrāvakas.

The sixteen Bodhisattvas, four for each direction, are:

East: Byams-pa/Maitreya

Mthoñ-ba-don-yod/Amoghadarśin

Nan-son-kun-ḥdren/Sarvāpāyajaha

Mya-ñan-dañ-mun-pa-thams-cad-ñes-par-ḥjoms-paḥi-
blo-gros/Sarva-śoka-tamo-nirghāta-mati

South: Spos-kyi-glañ-po/Gandhahastin

Dpaḥ-bar-ḥgro-ba/Śūraṅgama

Nam-mkhaḥ-mdzod/Gaganagañja

Ye-śes-tog/Jñānaketu

West: Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitaprabha

Zla-ḥod/Candraprabha

Bzañ-skyoñ/Bhadrapāla

Dra-ba-can/Jālinīprabha

North: Rdo-rje-sñiñ-po/Vajragarbha

Blo-gros-mi-zad-pa/Akṣayamati

Spos-pa-brtsegs-pa/Pratibhānakūṭa

Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra

These figures vary only in the colour, that is to say, that each group is represented according to the colour of its corresponding direction; but all of them are reproduced in the attitude of

Kumbum III.11

Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva. This means that in this case too the authors of the paintings have followed the canons of Bu-ston. In fact we know that other authors like Gnur-pa changed, according to the region where the bodhisattvas were placed, their poses as well.

The Śrāvakas are all dressed in monk's robes carrying the vase for alms. They are:

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------------|
| East: | Dgaḥ-bo/Nanda (1) |
| | Sgra-can-ḥdzin/Rāhula |
| | Śa-riḥi-bu/Śāriputra |
| | Moḥu-ḥgal-gyi-bu/Maudgalyāyana |
| South: | Rab-ḥbyor/Subhūti |
| | Ḥchar-kha/Udayin |
| | Ma-ḥgag-pa/Aniruddha |
| | Koḥu-di-nya/Kauṇḍinya |
| West: | Ñe-bar-ḥkhor/Upāli |
| | Rta-thul/Aśvajit |
| | Ba-lañ-bdag/Gavāṃpati |
| | Kun-dgaḥ-bo/Ānanda |
| North: | Min-chen/Mahānāma |
| | Nor-sbyin-ḥdzin |
| | Gaṅ-po/Pūrṇa |
| | Ḥod-sruṅ/Kāśyapa |

Then follow the twelve Pratyekabuddhas, who in the symbol-ogy of maṇḍalas signify the twelvefold causal nexus (*pratītya-samutpāda*), two for each main direction and one for each intermediate point:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Gduñ-ba-bsel-ba | Smra-baḥi-sgra-can |
| Snañ-ba-brtsegs-pa | Bse-ru-lta-bu |
| Ḥjigs-pa-med-pa | Dug-chen-ḥjoms |
| Dpaḥ-bo-ḥdul-ba | Rdzu-ḥphrul-cher-ston |
| Śes-rab-mgyogs-can | Señ-ge-sgra |
| Ri-bo-rgyal-ba | Yid-myur |

(1) Except the 14th, all are in the Mahāvīyutpatti § 48.

Kumbum III.11

Details of these cycles and of the acolytes are reproduced in figs.317-323.

On the walls marked with the letters a, b, h, g are represented the supplementary divinities, belonging to the same maṇḍala, who are unfolded around the central group.

There are first of all, one for each wall, four tetrads, which in the maṇḍala proper occupy the area of the doors. According to the custom usually followed by the schools of painting which have frescoed the Kumbum, the central place is occupied by the first figure of the tetrad. Thus on the wall a is Khro-bo H̄jig-rten-gsum-snañ-ba, who should have been placed on the external door to the east; and he has on the right Bdud-rtsi-ḥkhyil-ba/Amṛtakuṇḍalin, to the left Dus-kyi-lcags-kyu-ma, and behind Dus-kyi-lcags-kyu-ma (fig.332).

On the wall b (which corresponds, in the maṇḍala, to the external door to the south) is H̄jig-rten-gsum-ḥdul, to this right Dbyug-sñon-can/Niladaṇḍa, to the left Bdus-dbyug-pa-ma, and behind Dus-kyi-zhags-pa-ma/Kālapāśī. (figs.324, 325). On the wall g (which corresponds to the external door west of the maṇḍala described by Bu-ston): H̄jig-rten-gsum-ḥchañ, who has to the right Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, to the left Dus-kyi-mtshan-mo/Kālarātrī, and behind Dus-kyi-lcags-sgrog-ma (figs.326-327).

On the wall h (which corresponds to the external door in the north): H̄jig-rten-gsum-ḥjig, to his right Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, to his left Dus-kyi-gnod-sbyin-mo/Kālayakṣī, and behind Dus-kyi-dril-bu-ma (1) (fig.328).

Around these four tetrads are the various cycles of secondary divinities disposed along the external margins (*phyi-ma*) of the maṇḍala. As can be seen from the plates, and as can

(1) The cycle of the Khro-bo is described in the Sundarālaṅkāra, Bstan-ḥgyur, rgyud LXII, p.207.

Kumbum III.11

be deduced from quotations of the same text, mentioned both by Bu-ston and by the inscriptions, these cycles are many and varied: their iconographic representation differed from school to school (1).

Since these are cycles not yet studied it is proper to give briefly their names and characters.

Name	Colour	Symbols	Vehicle	Śakti
Tshañs-pa/Brahmā	yellow	kamaṇḍalu	swan	
Tshañs-ma/Brahmāñī		lute		
Pho-ñā/dūta		lotus		
Mñag-gzhug-yid-du- hoñ-ba		sword		
Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/ Maheśvara	white	trident		
Umā		in the act of open- ing the lotus		
Pho-ñā Rnam-par-snañ- ba		bow		
Mñag-gzhug- ded-dpon (2)		spear		
Brgya-byin/Indra	red & yellow	vajra		

(1) The iconographic description and the position of the divinities in the maṇḍala followed by Bu-ston is that established by the Sa-skyapa differentiating themselves from other liturgic schools (p.9a, b). The treatise of Bu-ston must have served as a guide for the authors of the paintings of the Kumbum, and they wanted to quote him in the inscriptions.

Bu-ston himself, after giving his own ideas, quotes also the theories of Rtsva-skyā and Gñur-pa (op. cit. p.9-14) but prefers the liturgic interpretation that Atīśa has given of the cycle in his instructions (*man-ñag*) (p.14f). Another exposition of the same maṇḍala with some variations in the position of the images and in their iconographic representation is attributed to Kun-dgañ-sñiñ-po (Bu-ston op. cit. p.14ff.).

(2) The Ālokālamkāra makes a single category of the Pho-ñā and of the Mñag-pa, Bstan-ñgyur LXII.248.6. This text is obviously the basis of the Tibetan tradition followed by Atīśa and Bu-ston.

Kumbum III.11

Table continued

Name	Colour	Symbols	Vehicle	with śakti
Bde-sogs-ma		lute		
Pho-ña Kun-tu-snañ-ba		sword		
Khyab-ḥjug/Viṣṇu	black	disc	eagle (nam- mkhaḥ- ldiñ)	
Dpal-mo/Śrī		tree for impaling (gsal-śiñ)		
Mñag-gzhug Rdo-rje- bde-ba		tooth		
Pho-ña Rdo-rje- ded-dpon		disc		
Lha-ma-yin Thags- bzañ-ris/Vemacitrin	white	armour and sword		
Dri-za Zur-phud-lña- ba/Pañcaśikha	green	lute		
Mkhaḥ-ldiñ-ser-mig- can	multiple			
Gnod-sbyin Ku-be-ra	yellow	gem	horse	
Sriñ-po Lañ-ka-mgrin- bcu/Laṅkā Daśa- kaṅṭha	black	sword	corpse	
Lto-ḥphyehi-rgyal-po- sa-bdag	blue	noose	boar	
Hbyuñ-poḥi-rgyal-po Dbañ-ldan/Īśāna	grey	trident	bull	
Gśin-rje/Yama	blue	sword	buffalo	
LHA-MA-YIN (1)/ ASURA				
Rnam-par-snañ-byed	arrow	and bow		with śakti
Sgra-gcan/Rāhu		moon		"
Sum-brtsegs		mountain		"
Rab-sim		ambrosia		"
Keu-śi		vajra		"
Kun-tu-snañ-ba		mirror		"

(1) While the preceding names indicate the group: here are given individually the various gods and their retinues, according to other commentaries referred to by Bu-ston. The list of asuras is different from that already known. Keu-śi is an abbreviation of Heranakeśu (Ālokālamkāra p.249 = Hiraṇyakeśin).

Table continued

Name	Colour	Symbols	Vehicle	with śakti
NAM-MKHAḤ- LDIÑ/Garuḍa				
Mkhaḥ-ldiñ-gser- mig-can		hook		”
Gyog-du-ma-can		vajra		”
Ga-ru-ṇa/Garuḍa		noose		”
DRI-ZA/Piśāca				
Zur-phud-lña-ba/ Pañcaśikha		garland of flowers		
Yul-ḥkhor-sruñ/ Dhṛtarāṣṭra		lute		”
GNOD-SBYIN/Yakṣa				
Yañ-dag-śes/Samjñeya		moon		
Gañ-ba-bzañ-po/ Pūrṇabhadra		vase		”
Ḥbrog-gnas/Āṭavaka		box		”
Ku-be-ra		club		”
Nor-bu-bzañ-po/ Mañibhadra		gem		”
Pañ-ji-ka/Pañcika		treasure		”
Ḥdzam-bha-la/ Jambhala		mongoose		”
Nor-lhaḥi-rgyal-po		fruit		”
SRINPO/RĀKṢASA				
Sriñ-po Lan-ka-mgrin- bcu/Lan-ka-daśa- kañṭha		bow & arrows		”
Upakarṇa		sword		”
Buṃ-snañ		club		”
LTO-HPHYE/URAGA				
Lto-ḥphye Rab-brtan		vajra		”
Khyus-ḥgro		gems		”

Kumbum III.11

Table continued

Name	Colour	Symbols	Vehicle	with śakti
ḤBYUN-PO/BHŪTA				
Ḥbyuñ-po Dbañ-ldan/ Īśāna		trident		with śakti
YI-DAGS/PRETA				
Phyi-sgrib-can				
Nañ-sgrib-can				
Rañ-bzhin-gyi-sgrib -pa-can				
Me-lceḥi-ḥkhor-lo-can				
Sgo-kur-can				
ḤDRE/PIŚĀCA				
Log-ḥdren	black	serpent		
Gñe-hu-thuñ-gnas- gnon-me				
Spyiḥu-tshugs-thur-bltas				
Seḥu-mon-ta-ka-ḥjug- paḥi-ḥdre		sword		
Dar-dbyañs-ta-ka-lce- la-ḥjug-pa		sword		
Mu-rgan-ta-ka-myur- bas-ḥjug-pa (1)		sword		

(1) It refers to divinities who can cause such poisons/*dug*, cause disturbance to various parts of the body or provoke sicknesses; *ḥjug-paḥi-dug* poison producing an illness; *lce-dug* poison acting on the tongue, *myur-bas-ḥjug-paḥi-dug* poison immediately causing sickness, so for the flesh, the teeth, the lips. See Sundarālaṅkāra, fol.137.6.

Table continued

Name	Form	Symbols
acolytes of:		
ḤBYUN-POḤI-BDAG-PO/ BHŪTAPATI		
Ri-dvags-rgyal-po	in the form of antelope	
Skem-byed	aspect of youth	
Brjed-byed	in the shape of fox	
Khu-tshur-can	" " of bird	
Nam-gru	" " of dog	
Srul-po	" " of boar	
Dzamita.	" " of worm	(1)
Ḥdod-pa-can	" of vajra	
Ma-rgad-byed-pa	" " of cat	
Bzhin-byad	" " of owl	
Gñah-lag-can	" " of duck (<i>bya-gag</i>)	
Bya-ni	" " of wing	
Mig-ḥphyañ	" " of bat (<i>pha-vañ</i>)	
Ḥjam-pa-po	" " of bell	
Ma-mo	" " of woman	
KLU/NĀGA		
Mthaḥ-yas/Ananta		lotus
Ḥjog-po/Takṣaka		axe
Chu-lha/Varuṇa		lotus
Duñ-skyoñ/Śaṅkhapāla		conch
Nor-rgyas/Vāsuki		vase
Stobs-rgyu/Karkoṭaka		plough
Pad-chen/Mahāpadma		lotus
Rigs-ldan/Kulika		gem

(1) *kita* = *kīṭa*.

Name	Symbols	with śakti
Dgaḥ-bo-sprin-phuñ	sword	
Dgaḥ-bo-sprin	rain of gems	
10 RIGS = 10 Phyogs-skyoñ/ Dikpāla as in the traditional list		
		with śakti
4 RGYAL-PO/Caturmah- ārājika as in the traditional list		
		"
9 PLANETS the iconographical type is different from the one quoted above		
Pa-saṅs/Śukra	flower	"
Phur-bu/Bṛhaspati	book	
Gzaḥ-lhag/Budha	mudrā of donation	"
Zla-ba/Soma	lotus kumuda	"
Mig-dmar/Aṅgāraka	vase of ambrosia	"
Sgra-gcan/Rāhu	blue lotus	"
Ñi-ma/Āditya	lotus	"
Spen-ba/Śanaīścara	fruit	"
28 RGYU-SKAR/NAKṢ- ATRA; all are of feminine shape: instead of being in the act of rendering homage to the Buddha with the hands joined together above the head, in this cycle each holds his appropriate symbol.		

Table continued

Name	Colour	Symbols	Vehicle
East			
Smin-drug/Kṛttikā	red	earring and bracelet	vase
Snar-ma/Rohiṇī	green		bull (<i>khyu-mchog</i>)
Mgo/Mrgaśiras	yellow		antelope
Lag/Ārdrā	red		serpent
Nabs-so/Punarvasu	yellow		lotus
Rgyal/Puṣya	green		vase
Skag/Āśleṣā	green		crow
South			
Mchu/Maghā	yellow	gem and necklace	buffalo
Gre/Pūrva-phalgunī	green		dog
Dpo/Uttara-phalgunī	yellow		golden throne
Me-bzhi/Hastā	yellow		bull
Nag-pa/Citrā	green		peacock
Sa-ri/Svāti	red		rat
Sa-ga/Viśākhā	white		horse
West			
Lha-mtshams/Anurādhā	yellow	flower	bird
Snron/Jyeṣṭha	red		measuring vase
Snubs/Mūla	green		tortoise
Chu-stod/Purvāṣāḍhā	yellow		shield
Chu-smad/Uttarāṣāḍhā	green		man
Byi-bzhin/Abhijit	blue		weasel (<i>sre-mo</i>)
Gro-bzhin/Sravaṇā	red		tortoise (1)
North			
Mon-gre/Śatabhiṣā	green	flower of utpala	white eagle
Mon-gru/Dhaniṣṭhā	red		eagle
Khrums-stod/Pūrva- bhadrapadā	green		golden throne
Khrums-smad/Uttara- bhadrapadā	yellow		throne with gems
Nam-gru/Revatī	red		horse
Tha-skar/Āśvinī	green		man
Bra-ñe/Bharaṇī	blue		disc

(1) Ku-ma, Sanskrit *kūrma* = Tib. *rus-spal*.

Kumbum III.11

Table continued

Name	Symbols	with sakti
KHRO-BO-MA-RUNŠ-		
ḤTSHE		
dmyal sruṅ (1)		
BGEGS		
Tshaṅs-ma/Brahmāṅī		with śakti
Srin-po		”
Brjed-byed		”
Rnon-po		”
Skem-byed		”
Grib-gnon		
Ma-mo/Māṭṛkā		
Log-ḥdreṅ		
DRAN-SRON (2)		
Me-bzhi	flaming gem	
Nag-po	disc	
Yaṅ-dag-śes	disc with vajra	
Mdun-brdar	trident	
Gya-gyu	box	
Rgyud-mi-dad	axe	
A-gur	fire	
Gyon-dor	disc	
LĀMĀ (3)		
Keuri/Gaurī	club	
Tseu-ma/Caurī	bow and arrow	

(1) Namely from the *tsha-dmyal* and *gran-dmyal*, having eight hot hells and eight cold hells.

(2) In the *Sundarālaṅkāra* the list is different: Rgyas-pa, Baradvasdza, Ser-skya, Skye-dguḥi-bdag-po, Rgyun-śes. Gnas-mchog, Nag-po, Gzag-zan (f.3.)

(3) Namely, inspite of the corruption of names, the eight *Kūro-mo-chen-mo* of the cycle of the *Na-rag don-sprugs*, see *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.124: Gaurī, Caurī, Pramohā, Vaitālī, Pukkasī, Ghasmarī, Śmaśānī, Cāṅḍālī. [Lāmā = Rāmā “lady”—L.C.]

Table continued

Name	Symbols
Pramohā	standard
Betali/Vaitālī	vajra
Sukasi/Pukkasī	noose made of human intestines
Ghusmari/Ghasmarī	skull
Tsaṅḍali/Cāṅḍālī	trident
Smaśani/Śmaśānī	flaming gem
BUD-MED	
Kha-rag-khyuñ-btsun	flaming gem
Śa-med-gaṅs-dkar	disc
Nam-gru	lotus
Nag-mo	vajra
Dpal-ldan-rdo-rje-ḥgros	skull and club
Ḥod-zer-can	bow and arrow
Ḥjigs-byed-kun-ḥgro	axe
SRIN-MO	
Rgyal-ba/Jayā	lotus
Rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Vijayā	vajra
Mi-pham-ma/Ajitā	disc
Rig-sṅags-ḥchañ/	trident
Vidyādhari	
RNAL-ḤBYOR-MA/YOGINĪ	
Pad-ma-can	śrīvatsa (1)
Ḥjigs-byed-ma	disc
Rnam-rgyal-ma	standard
Mdaṅs-can-ma	umbrella
Ḥod-ldan-ma	lotus
Yid-gzhuñ-ma	vase
Dri-med-ma	conch
Yid-bzañ-ma	golden fish

(1) A sign on the chest of Viṣṇu.

Name	Symbols
ḤBYUN-BZHIḤI LHA	
Me-lha G.sal-byed	disc
Chu-lha Sdud-byed	noose made of serpents
Rluḅ-lha G.yo-byed	flag
Sa-bdag Lag-chen	disc
KHYIM-LHA	
Kun-snaḅ	box with gems
RIḤI LHA	
Blo-ḥgros	gems
ṢIN-LHA	
Kun-nas-ḥod-zer	tree
KUN-DGAḤ-RA-BAḤI LHA	
Kun-tu-snaḅ-baḥi-blo-gros	heavenly tree
GNAS-KYI LHA	
Sna-tshogs-sgo	disc
DUR-KHROD-KYI LHA	
Ḥbyuḅ-po-dge-ba	khaṭvāṅga
GRON-KHYER-KYI LHA	
Bsod-nams-dge-baḥi-blo-gros	gems

Details on figures 329-331, 333-338.

This tantric cycle which, as I have already stated in the second volume of this series, has a great popularity in Tibet, has been resumed in its essential scheme according to the indications given by Bu-ston. The accompanying liturgy is essentially based on the tantric text Toh.483 *De-bzhin-gśeḡs-pa dgra-bcom-pa yaḅ-dag-par-rdzogs-paḥi-saḅs-rgyas Nan-son-thams-cad-yoḅs-su-sbyoḅ-*

Kumbum III.11

ba gzi-brjid-kyi-rgyal-pohi brtag-pa (compare Toh. 485), which does not have a Chinese version. The text must have had a notable diffusion in India, because the *Bstan-ḥgyur* has a large number of works commenting upon it or dealing with its liturgy. Of all these commentaries, without taking into account individual explanations of special liturgies, the most important are: the *Sundarālaṅkāra* of Vajravarmaṇ (Bstan-ḥgyur LXII.1), the *Arthavyaṅjanavṛtti* of Buddhaguhya (ibid. LXI.34), the *ṭikā* of Kāmadhenu (ibid. LXI.35), the *Ālokālaṅkāra* of an unknown author (1) (ibid. LXII.2), and the *Kalpaṭikā* of Ānandagarbha (ibid. LXIII.1). According to the Tibetan traditions, among the numerous systems interpreting this text, the one which had more diffusion goes down to the instructions given by Atīśa to his immediate disciples. As it is mentioned in the very name of this Tantra, this cycle and its liturgy were meant to assure both to the officiant and to the person commissioning the ceremonies prescribed in this tantra, a rebirth in good forms of existence. The idea was to assure good karma, or to nullify the effects of a possibly bad karma, i.e. to cancel the sins committed, in order to accelerate birth in the body of Buddha, that is to say to obtain the condition of Buddha. Till this supreme end was not reached, one would pray at least to be reborn among the gods, or if among men in a fortunate and prosperous condition, living whereby one could put into practice the teachings of the

(1) Bu-ston does not know his name because he does not mention him in his catalogue of the *Bstan-ḥgyur*.

Kumbum III.11

Great Vehicle, and spread its salvific truth. This is invoked at the end of the ceremonies.

Then, one had also to think to get rid of the bad luck that comes to us in this life as a consequence of sins perpetuated in past existences. The ceremonies prescribed by the Durgatipariśodhana therefore served to vanquish illnesses and the bad and noxious influences, with which bad deities or noxious demons, as deva, nāga, the god of wind, Nam-mkhaḥ-ldin/Garu-ḍa, Kinnara, may render life gloomy and hard.

Therefore the value of this text and of the rituals prescribed by it is twofold: on the one hand, as in this last case, which is especially an exorcizing one, by calling together the forces of the supreme compassion symbolized by Vairocana. And with the energies emanating from Him one could vanquish and free persons from all the influences which can cause concern both to the body and to the spirit. On the other hand, this special tantric liturgy serves another purpose as well: it is efficacious not only in this very existence, but aims to determine a good rebirth after death has closed the present existence. In a certain sense this cycle of the Kun-rig/Sarvavid represents, in the Sa-skyapa school or in that of the Dge-lugs-pa, something similar to the cycle of the Bar-do which is so popular in the Rñin-ma-pa groups. In this case too the issue is to pacify certain forces, symbolically expressed in the shapes of gods or groups of gods, borrowed from folklore, and from the most ancient religious traditions. This is to avoid that such forces, allowing themselves to become judges and severe wardens of the law of Karma, force us into the most hard conditions of life, and make us reincarnate to suffering. Thus it does not seem strange to find in the long list of gods composing this maṇḍala

Kumbum III.12

also the eight Khro-mo-chen-mo of the Bar-do cycle; although their names appear so changed that sometimes it is difficult even to recognize them (see p. 259). In general it seems that the Tibetan tradition followed specially the Ālokāṅkāra; but since this comment only hints at single divinities included in the various groups, Lha-ma-yin, Ḥdre and so on, it seems that Tibetan interpreters had somehow enlarged these lists and inserted in the various maṇḍalas some demons derived not from the Indian tradition, but that they took them from the beliefs of their own people: such seem to me some of the Ḥdre gods mentioned by Bu-ston. It is not improbable that the iconography also maintained the remembrance of popular representations of Bon-po divinities, who entered to partake of Buddhist maṇḍalas through this cycle. The case is not new, and already in the course of this series we have seen some examples.

The author of the dkar-chag has counted 310 images in all.

III.12. This chapel is called Nan-son-thams-cad-sbyon-ba/Sarva-durgati-pariśodhana. The main statue represents Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana; to the right is that of Rdo-rje-sems-dpañ/Vajrasattva and to the left that of Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma.

As we learn from the inscriptions, on the walls are mainly maṇḍalas described by the supplementary section of the Kun-rig/Sarvavid.

On the main wall is represented one of the eleven esoteric maṇḍalas (see chapel 9 where some of them are reproduced) which are included in the supplementary section of the Kun-rigs/Sarvavid (Bu-ston, op. cit., p. 17b).

Kumbum III.12

In the centre there is Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva; to his right Kun-tu-bzañ-po/Samantabhadra and to his left Bde-ba-chen/Mahāsukha (fig. 339), surrounded by Phyag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, white, Rin-chen-rdo-rje/Ratnavajra, Rnam-par-gsal-ba, Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma. This central maṇḍala is surrounded by nine bands in which there are the seven Buddhas, the pentad, the sixteen Bodhisattvas, the sixteen gods of the Bskal-bzañ/Bhadrakalpa namely Byams-pa/Maitreya etc., as in the list of the inscriptions and as in the maṇḍala of Kun-rig/Sarvavid. The technical term by which this maṇḍala is called is: *Sñags-dañ rig-pa-dañ sñiñ-po thams-cad brtan-par-byed-paḥi ḥkhor-los-sgyur-ba bzhiḥi dkyil-ḥkhor.*

On the eastern wall is painted the maṇḍala of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus who gives long life in this existence and good rebirth; namely the ninth maṇḍala of the supplementary section of the Kun-rig/Sarvavid (Bu-ston op. cit. p. 22 and no. 342 of my list). In the centre is Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus in samādhi-mudrā surrounded by Phag-na-rdo-rje/Vajrapāṇi, Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, Spyan-ras-gzigs khro-baḥi-rgyal-po/Krodharāja Avalokita (1).

To the left of the door is represented the second maṇḍala of the same series (no. 335 of my list). The central divinity is Phyag-na-rdo-rje ḥchi-bdag-ḥjoms-pa, surrounded by the Tathāgatas Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava, Chu-skyes-dam-pa, Gdon-mi-za-ba, all in the mudrā of giving or of protection.

The follows the group of the Mchod-paḥi-lha-mo/Pūjādevī and four custodians of the doors.

There are 87 figures in all.

III.13. The statues seen in this chapel represent Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus in the centre, Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva to his right, and Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma to his left. Therefore

(1) Their iconography differs according to the schools (Bu-ston op. cit. p 22).

Kumbum III.13

the chapel takes its name from Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus. In this chapel the maṇḍalas of the supplementary section of the Kun-rig/Sarvavid still continue. On the southern wall, in the centre, is the fifth of the eleven maṇḍalas listed by Bu-ston (p. 20, no. 338 of my list), it serves to favour the conversion of those creatures who can be converted through the cult of planets and of constellations. In the centre is the figure of Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajra-hūmkāra (fig. 340), surrounded by the images of the eight planets, of the 28 constellations, of the custodians of the doors as stated in the inscription.

On the northern wall, namely to the right of the door, is represented the seventh maṇḍala of the same supplementary section (no. 340 of my list). It has in the centre Khro-bo H̄jig-rten-gsum-rgyal/Krodha-Trailokyavijaya (fig. 341) with

(1) The iconography is different from the one already met with on pages 191 and 258, as can be seen from the following scheme:

Name	colour	right	left
Pa-sans/Śukra	white	kumuda	fruit
Mig-dmar/Aṅgāraka	red	vase	lamp
Phur-bu/Bṛhaspati	blue	book	hand resting on the hip
Sgra-gcan/Rāhu	grey	lotus	sword
Zla-ba/Soma	white	kumuda	
Ñi-ma/Āditya	yellow-red	lotus	club
Gzaḥ-lhag/Budha	yellow	mudrā of giving	utpala
Spen-pa/Śanaīscara	black	club	axe

Kumbum III.13

four hands (vajra, bell, vajra, bow) (1). This god is surrounded by:

Name	colour	symbol	śakti
Hjigs-byed Pra-mi-ta		gem	Tshañs-ma/ Brahmāñī
Hjigs Bhai-ra-va	blue	trident	Bde-sogs/Indrāñī
Hjigs Ku-be-ra	dark red	club with skull	Reu-dri-ma/Raudrī
Hjigs Ye-śes-bhai- ra-va (2)	dark green	disc	Keu-ri-ma/Gaurī
Hjigs Bhi-sa-nta	dark red	bow and arrow	Khyab-hjug-ma/ Vaiṣṇavī
Hjigs Bi-te	dark blue	axe	Va-ra-hi
Hjigs Ka-la-bhai- ra-va (3)	grey	sword	Ma-nu-ha-ra-ma Manoharā
Hjigs Gaṇapati	dark blue	vajra	Tsa-mu-ñdi/ Cāmuñḍī

To the left of the door, one below the other, there are four figures of Me-lha/Agni, namely: Zhi-baḥi-Me-lha/Śāntika-Agni, Rgyas-paḥi-Me-lha/Pauṣṭika-Agni, Dbañ-Me-lha/Vaśīkaraṇa-Agni, and Mñon-spyod-Me-lha/Ābhicāruka-Agni (fig.342), namely, the four forms of the Fire God presiding over the four different kinds of magic rites. They are those that serve to calm, to make one to prosper, to submit, and to suppress.

(1) System of Rtsa-skyā. The maṇḍala is described neither in the Sādhanamālā p.511 nor in the Krodharāja-trailokyavijaya-sādhana, Btsan-ḥgyur, Rgyud, LXXXIII. 67 p.111.

(2) Bu-ston p.20b Bhe-ra.

(3) Bu-ston: *bhe*. This list of divinities corresponds, at least partially, to the aṣṭabhairava of tantric Hinduism. They are so listed for instance, in the puraścaryārṇava, p.473. Asitāṅga (=Kālabhairava), Ruru, Caṇḍa, Krodha, Unmatta-bhairava, Kapālin, Bhiṣaṇa (=Bhiśānta of Bu-ston), Samhāra. Their śaktis correspond to the eight śaktis of the same tantric system: Brāhmī (Tshañs-ma), Maheśvarī (Keuri-ma=Gaurī), Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī (Khyab-hjug-ma), Vārāhī (id.), Indrāñī (Bde-sogs), Cāmuñḍā (id.), Mahālakṣmī (Manuharama = Manoharā). Without the last goddess, they are the seven mātṛkā about whom see Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* II/2. 379ff.

There are 98 figures in all.

III.14. With this chapel we pass again to another tantric cycle, although it is held by the Tibetan schools as belonging to the same group we have met till now: it is the Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara, a text strictly similar to the Tattva-saṅgraha.

The chapel has its name from Saṅs-rgyas-chos-ḥdzin-rgyal-po whose statue, alongwith those of his acolytes, is seen on the southern wall. He is the central divinity of the maṇḍala of the family of action (*las-kyi rigs, karma-kula*), the fifth maṇḍala of the complex maṇḍalas divided in mystic families exposed in synthesis (*bsdus-pa*, no.174 of my list), according to the Rdo-rje-rtse-moḥi rgyud/Vajraśekhara-tantra. Bu-ston speaks of it at length in his *Bśad-rgyud Rdo-rje-rtse-moḥi dkyil-ḥkhor-gyi bkod-pa*, p.8

The description of the chapel is contained in the inscriptions to which I refer. Moreover these maṇḍalas are all similar to those of the De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha to which one must refer in any case.

The maṇḍala reproduced on the eastern wall, south to the door, is the maṇḍala of the symbol of the verbal plane; around Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana there are, besides the many divinities of the Garbhadhātu, many symbolic figures, namely to the east, in place of Rdo-rje-hūṃ-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra a trident, to the south, in place of Rin-chen-hūṃ-dzad/Ratnahūmkāra a disc having a gem in the centre; to the west, in place of Rdo-rje-sde a lotus with the figure of vajra; to the north, in place of Las-kyi-hūṃ-mdzad/Karmahūmkāra a vajra surrounded by a double vajra.

The other divinities are the same as those occurring in the maṇḍala of the plane of action, which is represented in fact on the western wall.

Kumbum III.14

The divinity in the centre is Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana surrounded by four Hūṃ-mdzad/Hūmkāra and by gods of the Garbhadhātu in irate form (figs.343, 344).

There are 145 figures in all.

III.15. The chapel takes its name from Sañs-rgyas-sna-tshogs, main divinity of the fourth maṇḍala of the Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara, included in the maṇḍala representing in synthesis and simultaneously the five mystic families (no.174 of my list).

This maṇḍala is described at length by Bu-ston, op. cit., p.1ff. and it is composed of five maṇḍalas: one in the centre and four arranged around in the four directions. The central maṇḍala corresponds to the family of the Tathāgatas/De-bzhin-gśegs-rigs, the eastern to the Rdo-rje-rigs/Vajra-kula, the southern to Rin-chen-rigs/Ratna-kula, the western to Padma-rigs/Padma-kula, and the northern to las-kyi-rigs/Karma-kula. The entire maṇḍala comprises 189 divinities.

Every maṇḍala, patterned on the central one, is divided into five lotuses and comprises 33 gods. We have then a total of $33 \times 5 = 165$. Other twenty divinities, divided into four secondary maṇḍalas, have to be added to them. They are located in the four corners, and into four others located outside the external bounds. Altogether the maṇḍala has 189 divinities. For the purpose of our study I shall reproduce the first maṇḍala, the central one, namely that of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, on which the others are modelled, and then I give the list of divinities contained in the others.

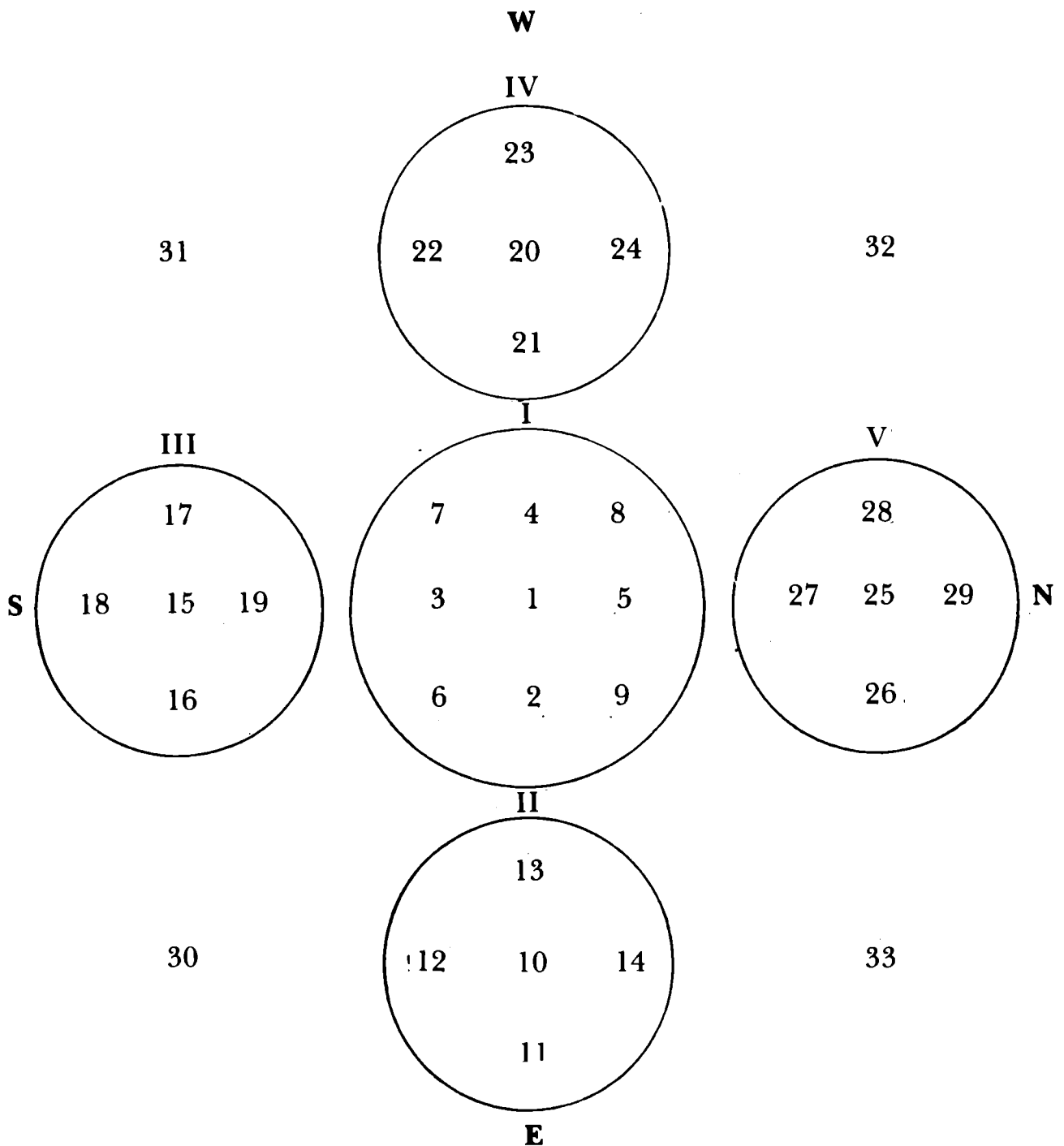


Fig. C.

Central maṇḍala (De-bzhin-gśes-rigs) of the great maṇḍala of the five families according to the *Rdo-rje-rtse-moḥi rgyud/Vajraśekhara-tantra*.

- I.1 Rnam-par-snañ mdzad/Vairocana
four faces, two hands in bodhyagrī-mudrā
- 2 Rdo-rje-sems-pa/Vajrasattva, white, vajra and bell
- 3 Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna, vajra with gem and bell
- 4 Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma, lotus in left which the
right opens
- 5 Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, viśvavajra and bell
- 6 Rdo-rje-sems-ma/Vajrasattvī
- 7 Rdo-rje-chen-ma/Mahāvajrī
- 8 Rdo-rje-padma/Vajrapadmā
- 9 Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma.
- II.10 Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya
- 11 Rdo-rje-sems-dpañ/ Vajrasattva
- 12 Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja
- 13 Rdo-rje-legs/Vajrasādhu
- 14 Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga.
- III.15 Rin-chen-ḥbyuñ-ldan/Ratnasambhava
- 16 Rdo-rje-rin-chen/Vajraratna
- 17 Rdo-rje-bzhad-pa/Vajrahāsa
- 18 Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid/Vajraketu, sun
- 19 Rdo-rje-rgyal-mtshan/Vajraketu, standard.
- IV.20 Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha
- 21 Rdo-rje-chos/Vajradharma
- 22 Rdo-rje-rnon-po/Vajratīkṣṇa, sword and book
- 23 Rdo-rje-smra-ba/Vajrabhāṣa, adamantine tongue
- 24 Rdo-rje-rgyu/Vajrahetu, disc.
- V.25 Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi
- 26 Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma
- 27 Rdo-rje-bsruñ-ba/Vajrarakṣa, armour
- 28 Rdo-rje-khu-tshur/Vajrasandhi, vajra
- 29 Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, hand on the mouth.
- 30 Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā
- 31 Phreñ-ba-ma/Mālā
- 32 Glu-ma/Gītā
- 33 Gar-ma/Nṛtyā.

Kumbum III.15

II.EAST: RDO-RJE-RIGS/VAJRA-KULA, also divided in five groups:

1) In the centre: Sañs-rgyas-gzugs-can, blue; has the vajra in his hand posed in the tirintiri mudrā (both thumbs inserted in the palms of the hands). On the sides:

Khro-bo-rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ,

Khor-gñer-can.

In the four intermediate points:

the four Khro-mo-sems-maḥ

2) East: Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, four faces and eight hands: vajra and bell, bow and arrow, hook and chain, vajra and noose. He is surrounded by:

Khro-bo-rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Krodha-Vajrasattva,

Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja,

Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga,

Rdo-rje-legs-pa/Vajrasādhu.

3) South: Khro-bo-khro-gñer-can (gem in the right hand).

He is surrounded by:

Khro-gñer-can,

Ñi-ma/°Sūrya,

Rgyal-mtshan/°ketu,

Bzhad-pa/°hāsa.

4) West: Khro-bo-rdo-rje/Krodhavajra (lotus in the right hand). He is surrounded by:

Khro-bo-chos/Krodha-dharma,

Rnon-po/°tīkṣṇa,

Rgyu/°hetu

Smra-ba/°bhāṣa.

Kumbum III.15

5) North: Khro-bo-Rdo-rje-dran/Krodha-Vajrasṃṛti, with the viśvavajra in the right hand, surrounded by:

Rdo-rje-las-rab/Vajra-karma,

Bsruñ-ba/°rakṣa,

Gnod-sbyin/°yakṣa,

Khu-tshur/°sandhi.

In the four corners: Khro-mo-sgeg-mo/Krodha-lāsyā, Khro-mo-phreñ-ba/Krodha-mālā, Khro-mo-glu-ma/Krodha-gītā, Khro-mo-gar-ma/Krodha-nṛtyā.

III.SOUTH: RIN-CHEN-RIGS/RATNA-KULA

1) In the centre: Sañs-rgyas-ñi-ma; in his two hands has an ivory rosary and has a standard on the thumb. Around him are the four Rin-chen-gyi-sems-dpaḥ/Ratnasattva, and in the intermediary points the four Sems-ma/°Sattvī, according to the same iconographic scheme.

2) East: Nor-buḥi-ḥod-can (touches the earth with the vajra adorned with gems), surrounded by:

Rin-chen-sems-dpaḥ/Ratnasattva,

Rin-chen-rgyal-po/Ratnarāja,

Rin-chen-chags-pa/Ratnarāga,

Rin-chen-legs-pa/Ratnasādhū.

3) South: Rdo-rje-rin-chen-bzañ-po (holds the vajra in the right hand in varada-mudrā), surrounded by:

Rin-chen/°ratna,

Gzi-brjid/°tejas,

Rgyal-mtshan/°ketu,

Bzhad-pa/°hāsa.

4) West: Pad-ma-rin-chen (lotus in the hand in samādhi-mudrā), surrounded by:

Pad-ma.

Kumbum III.15

Rnon-po/°tīkṣṇa,
Rgyu/°hetu,
Smra-ba/°bhāṣa.

5) North: Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi (holds the viśvavajra in the hand in abhaya-mudrā), surrounded by:

Las/°karma,
Bsrūn-ba/°rakṣa,
Gnod-sbyin/°yakṣa,
Khu-tshur/°sandhi.

In the four corners the same goddesses as in the other maṇḍalas.

IV. WEST: PAD-MAḤI-RIGS/PADMA-KULA.

1) In the centre: Sañs-rgyas-sna-tshogs-gzugs-can; his hands in samādhī-mudrā hold a lotus. He is surrounded by four Pad-maḥi-sems-dpaḥ/Padmasattva and by four Sems-ma/°Sattvī.

2) East: Sna-tshogs-ḥkhor-lo/Viśvacakra, with eight hands. He is surrounded by the same bodhisattvas as in maṇḍala III, but of the mystic family of the lotus.

3) South: Rin-chen-pad-ma/Ratnapadma (with twelve faces and twelve hands), surrounded by:

Khro-gner,
Ñi-ma/°tejas,
Rgyal-mtshan/°ketu,
Bzhad-pa/°hāṣa.

4) West: Ḥod-dpag-med Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Narteśvara Amitābha (with twelve faces and a thousand hands and thousand eyes), surrounded by:

Pad-maḥi-sgrol-ma/Padma-Tārā.

Gzhon-nu Gdoñ-drug/Ṣaṇmukha Kumāra, with four hands (sword, book, spear, lotus).

Kumbum III.15

Mthu-can (equivalent to Pad-maḥi-rgyu); four hands: disc, club, spear, lotus.

Pad-maḥi-smra-ba/Padmabhāṣa (equivalent to Tshaṅs-pa/Brahmā); four faces and four hands: rosary, stick, lotus and kamaṇḍalu (fig. 366).

5) North: Pad-maḥi-las/Padmakarma (six faces and twelve hands), surrounded by:

Pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Padma-narteśvara, with four hands: hook, noose, trident and chain,

Pad-maḥi-bsruñ-ba/Padma-ṛakṣa, with four hands: abhayamudrā, lotus, armour, (sic)

Gnod-sbyin/°yakṣa,

Khu-tshur/°sandhi.

Around him the four goddesses Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā etc.

V. NORTH: LAS-KYI-RIGS/KARMA-KULA.

1) In the centre: Chos-ḥdzin-rgyal-po with the double vajra, surrounded by the four Las-kyi-sems-dpaḥ/Karmasattva and in the intermediate points by the four Sems-ma/°Sattvī.

2) East: Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, surrounded by the four corresponding bodhisattvas.

3) South: Rin-chen-las/Ratnakarma (right hand in varadamudrā), surrounded by the four corresponding bodhisattvas.

4) West: Pad-maḥi-las/Padmakarma, surrounded by the four bodhisattvas.

5) North: Las-kyi-rgyal-po/Karmarāja, surrounded by the four bodhisattvas.

In the intermediate points: Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā etc.

In the intermediate corners, between maṇḍala and maṇḍala, there are four minor maṇḍalas with five gods each, namely:

Kumbum III.15

I. South-east: Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, surrounded by:

Rdo-rje-lha-mo-sgrog-pa, embraced by the Buddha,
Rdo-rje-don-yod-dgaḥ-ma, bow and arrow,
Lha-mo-gzi-brjid,

Dgaḥ-baḥi-rdo-rje, embraced by the Buddha, and in his right hand is a standard which has the image of a sea-monster (*makara*).

II. South-west: Pad-maḥi-sems-dpaḥ/Padmasattva, with eight arms, surrounded by:

Lha-mo Rdo-rje-dpal/Devī Vajraśrī,
Rdo-rje-dkar-mo/Vajragaurī,
Rdo-rje-sgrol-ma/Vajra-Tārā,
Rdo-rje-spyan-ma/Vajra-locanī.

III. North-west: Rin-chen-sems-dpaḥ/Ratnasattva, surrounded by:

Nam-mkhaḥ-rdo-rje/Ākāśavajrā,
Skye-rguḥi-bdag-mo/Prajāpatī,
Rin-chen-dpal-ldan-ma/Ratnaśrīmatī,
Rigs-mdzes-ma.

IV. North-east: Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma, surrounded by:

Las-kyi-rdo-rje-ma/Karmavajrī,
Rin-chen-ma/Ratna,
Las-ma/Karma,
Chos-ma/Dharma.

Outside the group of maṇḍalas: Chu-lha/Varuṇa, Me-lha/Agni, Sa-lha/Pṛthvī and Rluṅ-lha/Vāyu.

On the western wall is painted the first maṇḍala of the second

Kumbum III.16

group of the section of Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara: which serves to eliminate wrath by wrath, and it is meant for persons able to understand the truth if it is explained to them in a lengthy way (no.185 of my list). The central divinity represents Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana (Bu-ston, op.cit., p.15b), surrounded by the symbols of the four Hkhor-los-bsgyur-ba/Cakravartins, in the middle of a halo of flames. He holds in the hands vajra, gem, lotus, double vajra.

Then in the centre of the maṇḍala in the east of this first maṇḍala: Hūm-mdzad/Hūmkāra with four faces and eight hands, surrounded by: Khro-bo-rdo-rje-sems-dpañ/Krodhavajrasattva, Khro-bo-rgyal-po/Krodharāja, Khro-bo-chags-pa/Krodharāga, Khro-bo-legs-pa/Krodhasādhu.

In the centre of the maṇḍala to the south: Khro-bo Khrogñer-can, surrounded by Khro-bo-rin-chen/Krodharatna, Khro-bo-gzi-brjid/Krodhatejas, Khro-bo-rgyal-mtshan/Krodhaketu, Khro-bo-bzhad-pa/Krodhahāsa.

In the maṇḍala to the west: Khro-bo-rdo-rje-sde, surrounded by Khro-bo-rdo-rje-chos/Krodhavajradharma, Khro-bo-rnon-po/Krodhatīkṣṇa, Khro-bo-rgyu/Krodhahetu, Khro-bo-smra-ba/Krodhabhāsa.

In the maṇḍala to the north: Khro-bo-rdo-rje-ḥbab-pa, surrounded by: Khro-bo-rdo-rje-las/Krodhavajrakarma, Khro-bo-bsruñ-ba/Krodharakṣa, Khro-bo-gnod-sbyin/Krodhayakṣa, Khro-bo-khu-tshur/Krodhasandhi.

In the intermediate corners the four Khro-mo-rdo-rje-sems-ma/Krodhavajrasattvī (figs.341-350).

There are 209 figures in all.

III.16T. The divinity giving his name to this temple is Mi-bskyod-pa/Akṣobhya, whose statue is in the cella, surrounded by those of the four bodhisattvas of the mystic family of the vajra, namely, Rdo-rje-rigs/Vajra-kula, Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrajāja, Rdo-rje-legs/Vajrasādhu, Rdo-rje-chags-pa/Vajrarāga.

This temple, which is one of the best for richness of decoration, is dedicated to the Rdo-rje-rtse-moñi-rgyud/Vajraśekhara-tantra and is the maṇḍala expressing comprehensively the five mystic families and whose scheme I have already given above.

Kumbum III.16

It is therefore enough to read the inscriptions with notes to have an idea of the succession of cycles.

I will only say that on the walls of the cella is represented to the left the maṇḍala of the family of Tathāgata (de-bzhin-gśe-gs-rigs =no.174 of my scheme; see fig.C on p.271, figs.351, 352). On the wall to the left that forms a wing to the cella is represented the maṇḍala of Rdo-rje-Hūm-mdzad/Vajra-hūmkāra, namely of Sañs-rgyas-gzugs-can. On the right wall of the cella is the family of the lotus. On the wall on the right that forms a wing to the cella (fig.353) Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajrahūmkāra, surrounded by the sixteen irate Bodhisattvas.

On the southern wall, the maṇḍala of the mystic family of the gem, rin-chen-rigs/ratna-kula (fig.354) surrounding Sañs-rgyas-ñi-ma.

On the right of the door are the gods of the external maṇḍala (figs.355, 356, 357, 358).

This maṇḍala is summarily hinted at in the inscriptions; but since there are very scanty descriptions it is not inopportune to describe it in brief.

All these divinities are named by the generic name of rdo-rje-rigs/vajrakula “divinities of the family of the diamond”, and are included in the external maṇḍala. In fact they have to be painted in the border surrounding the five maṇḍalas described in the scheme reproduced above: in this case, then, on the rdo-rje-ra-ba/vajrāvalī, namely, on the girdle of diamonds protecting the maṇḍala and the entire consecrated place from bad and contrary influences.

These divinities include, first of all, the cycle of the Bskal-bzani/Bhadrakalpa; of the series of the 249×4 Buddhas bodhisattvas, according to a usage to which I have hinted at above, only sixteen Bodhisattvas may be reproduced, four for

Kumbum III.16

each direction, that is to say the same as listed above on p.249, iconographically represented as Rdo-rje-las/Vajrakarma.

Then it is prescribed that the gods of elements be represented next: fire, earth, water and wind, then four adoring goddesses: Bdug-pa-ma/Dhūpā, Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā, and they have to be repeated five times for each cardinal direction: five instead of only once, because five are the maṇḍalas included in the external girdle.

Regarding the fortysix divinities, both masculine and feminine, recorded in the inscription, they form a well-defined series, and it is summarily described by Bu-ston in his treatise on the Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara (p.11), but at greater length in his other volume on the liturgy of the De-ñid-bsdus/Tattvasaṅgraha, p.17a:

EAST:

1-2. Drag-po/Rudra (Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/Maheśvara), white, with four hands: with the first right he embraces Umā, the other hand is in varada-mudrā and holds a vajra; those on the left hold a trident and a sword.

3. Khyab-ḥjug/Viṣṇu (equivalent, according to Bu-ston, to Sgyu-ma-rdo-rje/Māyāvajra), traditional iconography.

4. Rdo-rje-ser-mo, identical with the preceding.

5. Rdo-rje-dril-bu/Vajraghaṇṭa, red, with six faces, on a peacock (equivalent to Gzhon-nu/Kumāra); he has four hands: to the right spear and vajra, to the left a hen and the bell.

6. Rdo-rje-gzhon-nu-ma/Vajrakaumārī, identical with the preceding.

7. Thub-pa-rdo-rje/Munivajra (according to Bu-ston, identical with Tshañs-pa/Brahmā), yellow; he has four faces and four hands. Symbols and vehicle of Tshañs-pa/Brahmā.

Kumbum III.16

8. Rdo-rje-zhī-ba-ma = Tshañs-ma/Brahmāñī.
- 9 Rdo-rje-mtshon-cha/Vajrāyudha (equivalent to G.yuñ-druñ), yellow; shakes a vajra and rides a white elephant.
10. Rdo-rje-khu-tshur-ma/Vajrasandhī, like the preceding.

SOUTH:

1. Rdo-rje-ḥkhyil-ba, red; in the right: lotus and vajra; in the left: disc of sun on a lotus flower; he is on a chariot drawn by seven horses.
2. Rdo-rje-bdud-rtsi-ma/Vajrāmṛtā, identical with the preceding.
3. Rdo-rje-ḥod/Vajraprabha, white; in the right: a vajra; in the left: lunar disc on lotus; he is on a swan.
4. Rdo-rje-ḥod-ma/Vajraprabhā, identical with the preceding.
5. Rdo-rje-dbyug-pa/Vajradaṇḍa, blue; in the right: a vajra; in the left: club; he is on a frog.
6. Rdo-rje-dbyig-pa-ma, identical with the preceding.
7. Rdo-rje-ser-smug (or: Ser-skya = equivalent to Mig-dmar/Āṅāraka), red; in the right: red vajra; in the left: human head; he is on a ram.
8. Rdo-rje-rked-chiñs-ma, identical with the preceding.

WEST:

1. Rdo-rje-glañ-sna (or: Myos-pa), white; in the right: vajra; in the left: plough; he is on a bull.
2. Rdo-rje-ḥju-ba-ma, identical with the preceding, but with the khaṭvāṅga.
3. Rdo-rje-phreñ-ba/Vajramāla, green; in the right: vajra; in the left: garland of flowers; he is on a chariot drawn by cuckoos.
4. Rdo-rje-za-ba-ma, identical with the preceding, but in the left the trident.

Kumbum III.16

5. Rdo-rje-dbañ, pale yellow; in the right: vajra; in the left: standard with the figure of a sea monster; he is on a boar or a chariot drawn by horses or by parrots.

6. Rdo-rje-sgo-ba-ma, identical with the preceding, but red in colour.

7. Rdo-rje-rnam-rgyal (Tshogs-bdag/Gaṇapati), white; in the right: vajra; in the left: sword; he is on a frog.

8. Rdo-rje-dgaḥ-ba-mo, identical with the preceding.

9. Pho-ñā-rdo-rje-tho-ba, yellow; in the right: vajra; in the left: pestle contrasigned by a vajra; he is on a chair decorated with flowers.

10. Rdo-rje-pho-ñā-mo/Vajradūtī, identical with the preceding, but she has the khaṭvāṅga in the left hand.

11. Pho-ñā-rdo-rje-rluñ, blue; in the right: vajra; in the left: small flag; he is on an antelope.

12. Rdo-rje-mgyogs-ma, identical with the preceding.

13. Pho-ñā-rdo-rje-ma/Dūtavajrī, red; in her two right hands: vajra and sacrificial spoon; in her two left hands: club and sacrificial vase.

14. Rdo-rje-ḥbar-ba-mo, identical with the preceding.

15. Pho-ñā-rdo-rje-ḥjigs-pa, blue; in the right: vajra; in the left: club; he is on a lemur.

16. Rdo-rje-ḥphyor-ma, identical with the preceding, but in the left a noose.

NORTH:

1. Rdo-rje-lcags-kyu/Vajrāñkuśa, blue; in the right: vajra; in the left: hook, with the head of a boar; he is on a serpent.

Kumbum III.16

2. Bran-mo-rdo-rje-kha, blue, boars head; in the right: vajra; in the left: sword; he is on a human body.

3. Bran-rdo-rje-dus, black; in the right: vajra; in the left: club; he is on a buffalo.

4. Rod-rje-dus-ma, identical with the preceding, but in the left: khaṭvāṅga.

5. Bran-rdo-rje-bgegs-kyi-gtso-bo, white, elephant's head; in his two right hands: vajra and axe; in the left two: trident and elephant's tooth.

6. Pho-ña-mo rul-ma, blue; in her right hand: vajra; in the left: spatula (*chags-sin*); she is on a rat.

7. Bran-rdo-rje-klu, yellow or white; in the right: vajra; in the left: standard with the figure of a sea-monster; he is on a sea-monster.

8. Chu-srin-ma, white, with serpent's head; right: vajra; left: as before.

South-east: Ma-mo-hjigs-ma, green; in the right: vajra; in the left: sword and shield.

North-east: Dpal-mo, yellow; in the right: vajra; in the left: lotus.

North-west: Dbyaṅs-can, white; in the right: vajra; in the left: lute.

South-west: Dgaḥ-zlog-pa, green; is on a lion; in the right vajra and disc; in the left: trident.

The same cycle continues on the wall left to the door (figs.359, 362).

On the northern wall, around Chos-ḥdzin-rgyal-po, the maṇḍala of the mystic family of action (=no.178 of my scheme, figs. 363, 364). Other details in the figures 365-367.

Kumbum III.17

In this temple there should be 317 figures in all.

III.17. This chapel completes the preceding one because it has partly new maṇḍalas of the Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara and partly it repeats some of those we have already met with. It is known by the name of chapel of Sañs-rgyas-ñi-ma, from the statue of this divinity which, surrounded by two acolytes, is seen on the northern wall. Sañs-rgyas-ñi-ma is, as we have seen, the central divinity of the maṇḍala consecrated to the family of the gem, namely the one south of the series of the five maṇḍalas composing the great maṇḍala comprehensively expressing the five mystic families.

Therefore, on its walls, beginning with that to the west, there follow the various maṇḍalas of the mystic families taken separately, beginning from those of the Tathāgata; always remaining in this group, there are then the four maṇḍalas addressed to those people who are able to understand truth if expounded in a diffuse form (nos.175-178 of my scheme).

These maṇḍalas are used to eliminate passions in beings having passion, by recurring to the transfer of the very same passion. They centre themselves on the four fundamental signs: namely those of the physical, verbal, spiritual and active planes. In these chapels are reproduced the first three maṇḍalas. The first is almost equal to that of the Rdo-rje-dbyiñs/Vajradhātu (figs.368-370), and the disposition of the divinities in them is changed only partially.

The maṇḍala of Gzuñs-ma lha-mo is composed of five lotuses; in the central one (Bu-ston, op. cit., on the Rdo-rje-rtse-mo/Vajraśekhara p. 14b) is Rdo-rje-dbyiñs-kyi-dbañ-phyug-ma/Vajradhātviśvari.

Kumbum III.17

East: Rdo-rje-thugs-ma; surrounded by Kun-tu-bzañ-mo/Samantabhadrī, De-bzhin-gśegs-lcags-kyu-ma, Dgaḥ-ba-la-chags-ma, Legs-ldan-ma.

South: Rdo-rje-dbañ-skur-ma, surrounded by Rin-chen-gtso-mo, Rin-chen-sgrol-ma/Ratna-Tārā, Rgyal-mtshan-rtse-moḥi-dpuñ-rgyan-ma/Dhvajāgra-keyūrā, Bzhad-ldan-ma.

West: Rdo-rje-mtshon-cha-ma, surrounded by Rdo-rje-padmo, Kun-ḥdzin-ma, Hkhor-lo-thams-cad-ma, Zlog-pa-ma.

North: Rdo-rje-kun-ma, surrounded by Dños-grub-kyi-gtso-mo, Thams-cad-bsruñ-ba-ma, Mdañs-slar-ḥphrog-ma, Gzuñs-kyi-phyag-rgya-ma.

The third maṇḍala is like the corresponding maṇḍala of the De-ñid-bsdus/Tattva-saṅgraha.

In this chapel there are 162 figures in all.

III.18. This is more than a chapel and can be termed a vestibule, an entrance hall, because from here one can ascend higher floors. It is therefore called “the temple of access to the city of the great liberation”. The paintings are very spoiled. Here are seen the eight types of mchod-rtēn/stūpa, the 35 Buddhas of Confession, and many bodhisattvas.

The author of the dkar-chag had counted 51 figures in all.

III.19. With this chapel we come back to the cycle of the Dpal-mchog/Paramādyā. It is clear, however, that if one would have followed the order of the author of the dkar-chag, which is the one followed by the person who created the Kumbum, there would not have been such a discontinuity in the order, because it is the rule of ritualistics to consider the side toward the sacrificer or the meditating person as east. Therefore, one has to begin with the southern temple, which is also the first I have described, and then one goes to the two chapels on the right and again to the two on the left. Therefore, these are

Kumbum III.19

ideally connected with the main temple of which they form the wings. By following this order one can pass regularly from one tantric cycle to the other, without this undue return that I am obliged by the uninterrupted course from right to left that I chose to follow in my description.

This chapel takes its name from Me-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Jvālānala, whose statue is on the small wall to the west, in the centre, to whose right is Rdo-rje-mtshon-cha-ḥdzin and Gduñ-chen-ḥdzin-ma to the left.

On the main wall, that to the north, is represented the third maṇḍala taken from the first group of the Rtog-pa-thams-cad-bsdus-paḥi-rtsa-baḥi-rgyud, second section of the same tantra used to eliminate wrath with the transference and sublimation of wrath. In the centre is seen Rdo-rje-ltar-ḥbar-ba/Vajrānala, blue (fig.371), with two hands holding the vajra and the bell (no.223 of my list).

Around him is the cycle of his acolytes, of whom there are the principal ones (figs.372, 373, 374, see Bu-ston, op. cit., on Dpal-mchog, p.21b):

Name	colour	right	left
EAST:			
Rdo-rje-mtshon-cha-ḥdzin-ma		vajra	leans on the seat
SOUTH:			
Gduñ-chen-ḥdzin-ma		trident	"
WEST:			
Mdzod-ḥdzin-ma		sword	mudrā of menacing

Kumbum III.19

Table continued

Name	colour	right	left
NORTH:			
Zhags-ḥdzin-ma		noose	cranial skull
INTERMEDIATE POINTS			
Mdaḥ-ḥdzin-ma		arrow	bow
Khaṭvāṅga-ḥdzin-ma		khaṭvāṅga leaning on the seat	
Ḥkhor-lo-ḥdzin-ma		disc	"
Ba-dan-sna-tshog- ḥdzin-ma		bell with flying bands	bell
4 Rdo-rje-gtsug-tor	blue	tuft	mudrā of menacing
4 Rdo-rje-rig-paḥi- rgyal-po	white	tuft of hair bet- ween the eyebrows (<i>mdzöd - spu</i>)	
Rig-pa-mchog	blue	lotus mar- ked by vajra	"
Khro-bo-ṭak-ki	blue	bow	"
Gśin-rje-gśed	black	sword	"
Khro-bo-ka-na	red	sword	"
Rdo-rje-lcags-kyu	blue	hook	"
Rdo-rje-zhags-pa	yellow	noose	"
Rdo-rje-ki-li-ki-la	green	vajra	"
Rdo-rje-sñems-pa	blue	vajra	"
Rdo-rje-bsdams	yellow	vajra	"
Rdo-rje-khu-tshur	red	vajra	"
Rdo-rje-sde	white and red	lotus signed by vajra	"

Name	colour	right	left
Rdo-rje-gtshug-ḥchan	red	bow	arrow
Rdo-rje-phyag-ḥtshal	blue	vajra	mudrā of menacing
Rdo-rje-rkañ-gdub	blue and red	anklets (<i>nūpura</i>)	"
Rdo-rje-sgrog	white and red	chain	"
Rdo-rje-rnon-po	blue	vajra	"
4 Rdo-rje-mgon-po		vajra	"
4 Lha-mo/Devī			leans on the seat
4 Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vaj-rarāja (=Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva)			"
4 Lha-mo/Devī	blue		
Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā	white	cuirass	
Bzhad-ma/Hāsyā	white	spear	
Glu-ma/Gītā	green	sword	
Gar-ma/Nṛtyā	yellow	noose	

On the eastern wall is represented the first four of the esoteric maṇḍalas, the one serving in the conversion of those creatures who can be converted through Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/Maheśvara (no.206 of my scheme). This maṇḍala (Bu-ston op. cit. p.14a) revolves around Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/Maheśvara represented with four faces and eight hands (trident, khaṭvāṅga, rosary and svastikā, repeated twice) and continues with the following divinities:

Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla	with trident
Dgaḥ-byed-dbañ-phyug/Nandikeśvara	with drum
Dril-chen	with bell
Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Narteśvara	with spear

Kumbum III.19

Thod-pa-bzañ-po	with skull
Gtum-paḥi-dbañ-phyug	with trident, sword, khaṭvāṅga, skull
Khaṭvāṅga	with khaṭvāṅga and skull
Ba-lañ-rna-baḥi-dbañ-phyug/ Gokarṇeśvara	with trident
Drag-mo/Raudrī	with trident
Tshañs-ma/Brahmāṇī	with roary
Khyab-ḥjug-ma/Vaiṣṇavī	with disc
Gzhon-nu-ma/Kaumārī	with bell
Nag-mo/Kālī	with sword
Nag-mo-chen-mo/Mahākālī	with knife (<i>chu-gri</i>)
Zhi-ba-mo/Śivā	touching her tooth
Srin-mo	with khaṭvāṅga
Zhi-ba-mo	with skull
Bheruṅḍā, with a noose made of bones	(<i>rus-paḥi lu-gu rgyud</i>)
Gtum-po	with vulture
Hjigs-byed-ma/Bhairavī	with cat.

Below is seen the cycle of the Ma-mo/Mātrkā running around Nag-po-chen-po/Mahākāla, with ten arms (khaṭvāṅga and sword), surrounded by Drag-mo/Raudrī, Tshañs-mo/Brahmāṇī, Khyab-ḥjug-ma/Vaiṣṇavī, Gzhon-nu-ma/Kaumārī, Nag-mo/Kālī, Nag-mo-chen-mo/Mahākālī, Zhi-ba-mo/Śivā, Sprin-mo. Further below is painted the Rdo-rje-rigs/Vajrakula, namely, Dbañ-phyug/Īśvara, Tshañs-pa/Brahmā, Lha-chen-po/Mahādeva, Khyab-ḥjug/Viṣṇu, Kartika, Brgya-byin/Indra, Zla-ba/Soma, Ņi-ma/Āditya, Spen-ba/Śanaīścara, Mig-dmar/Aṅgāraka, Stobs-kyi-lha/Baladeva, Dpyid-kyi-lha/Vasanta, Rgyal-ba/Jaya, Rnam-par-rgyal ba/Vijaya, Nor-sbyin/Dhanada, Rluñ-lha/Vāyu, Me-lha/Agni, Lus-ñan-po/Kubera, Gśin-rje/Yama, Tshogs-kyi-bdag/Gaṇapati, all accompanied by their śaktis (Bu-ston, op. cit., p.4b, figs. 375-379).

Kumbum III.20

The other maṇḍalas on the walls to the right and to the left of the door and on the eastern side, are described in the inscriptions.

There are 222 images in all.

III.20. The chapel takes its name from the Bde-ba-can rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Sukhāvātī-vajrasattva who, surrounded by Rdo-rje-kili-ki-la-ya-ma/Vajrakilikila and by Rdo-rje-dran-ma/Vajrasmr̥ti, is on the small wall to the west. This divinity gives its name to the first maṇḍala of the cycle described in the first group of the second section of the Dpal-mchog/Śrīparamādyā (no.210 of my scheme). This maṇḍala is composed of sixteen gods beside the central one:

In the four directions:

- Rdo-rje-mtshon-cha (or Yid-las-ḥbyun-ba/Manasija)
- ” ki-li-ki-li/Vajrakilikili, white
- ” dran-pa/Vajrasmr̥ti, yellow
- ” sñems-pa/Vajradarpa?, blue

In the intermediate points:

- Rdo-rje-dpyid/Vajravasanta, yellow
- ” sprin/Vajramegha, white
- ” ston/Vajraśarat, yellow
- ” dgun/Vajrahemanta, blue

Outside the maṇḍala:

- Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā, red
- Bzhad-ma/Hāsyā, white
- Glu-ma/Gītā, yellow
- Gar-ma/Nṛtyā, blue
- Rdo-rje-lcags-kyu/Vajrāṅkuśa, red
- ” zhags-pa/Vajrapāśa, white
- ” lcags-sgrog/Vajrasphoṭa, green
- ” ḥbebs/Vajrāveśa, yellow.

Kumbum III.20

The other cycles are described in the inscriptions to which I shall refer.

There are 130 images in all. Therefore, summing up the images which have been counted in the various chapels we have a total of 3400 images [in the third floor].

§51. *The fourth floor, the dome and the campana of the Kumbum.* The fourth floor follows the same plan as the preceding ones and is seven and a half cubits high.

It contains twelve chapels: now we are not faced by definite cycles, but by long series of masters divided in schools. The history of Buddhism is visibly reproduced through the images of the most important figures: monks and kings, ascetics and doctors multiply on the walls. The statues of the saints and of the divinities to whom the temples are dedicated are surrounded by painted hangings on which is depicted the secular continuity of the doctrine which is perennially vivified by new faithful interpreters.

Not all the chapels are accompanied by inscriptions: only chapels I, II, V, VI, VIII, X and XII have long panegyrics, mostly eulogies of the masters to whom they were dedicated.

Of great interest is the VII chapel which is named after the three Chos-rgyal, namely Sroñ-btsan, Khri-sroñ-lde-btsan and Ral-pa-can.

It is enough to read the inscriptions published in the appendix to have an idea of this floor: we are not reproducing them because the pictures add nothing to our knowledge of Tibetan iconography, nor do they have such an artistic value which surpasses or is equal to the frescoes already studied.

The author of the dkar-chag has counted in it 1268 images in all.

Kumbum, dome

Here is the end of the four main floors of the Kumbum, over which emerges the bum-pa, namely the dome (literally the pot), symbol of the seven coefficients of supreme illumination: in it there are four great temples dedicated to Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, Rdo-rje-gdan/Vajrāsana, Śākyamuni and Yum-chen-mo/Prajñāpāramitā.

The great statues dominate the solemn temples with their golden grandeur, surrounded by those of acolytes: they are very many.

In the temple of Rdo-rje-gdan/Vajrāsana, Thub-chen/Mahāmuni is surrounded by two figures of Sphyan-ras-gzigs/Avālokita, by the Buddhas of the ten directions, by the sixteen arhats.

In the temple dedicated to Śer-phyin/Prajñāpāramitā, namely to Yum-chen-mo, around the goddess and her two secondary acolytes, is represented the cycle of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions with as many statues.

On the wall are maṇḍalas partly already met with in the floor below, with the only difference that, while in the chapels below the figures were flowing into one another freely without always obeying the scheme imposed by the liturgy of the maṇḍalas, here the maṇḍalas are scrupulously executed according to the rigid design imposed by the liturgic rules.

Along this dome, which is compared to a blooming lotus flower, there runs the usual corridor that the author of the dkar-chag says is 128 cubits in length.

Inside the chapels, the maṇḍalas multiply completely covering the walls with the wonderful vividness of their colours so as to let them look as if illuminated. Unfortunately many maṇḍalas have suffered; water coming down on the walls from openings or cracks in the dome has erased the frescoes: in many cases, hurried restorations have not saved the ancient

Kumbum, dome

paintings; elsewhere there have been attempts to substitute new frescoes on points perished.

In this case too the inscriptions give a good list of the maṇḍalas reproduced: and the author of the dkar-chag repeats or completes their information. As I have said, these maṇḍalas generally are the ones we have already met with in the preceding chapels. For this reason and also because their own condition does not always allow a clear and useful photographic reproduction, I refer without hesitation to the summary description in the inscriptions published in the appendix.

But just to give an idea of the patient work of the artists labouring in these temples I shall reproduce as a sample of paintings, a maṇḍala of the Śākyamuni temple (fig. 330) and I shall refer to the number of divinities reproduced in these chapels, according to the calculations of the patient author of the eulogy.

The temple of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana had 7781 figures; that of Rdo-rje-gdan/Vajrāsana to the south 367; that of Śākyamuni to the west 5653; that of Yum-chen-mo/Prajñāpāramitā 5085. That is to say that in this dome of the Kumbum were painted 18,886 figures of gods in all. This number gives a sufficient idea of the extreme care with which the artists frescoed the walls of this greatest sanctuary.

CAMPANA (Tib. ḥbre/droṇa)

Then, one enters through a narrow staircase to the first floor of the campana which is named ḥbre (droṇa) in Tibetan (1).

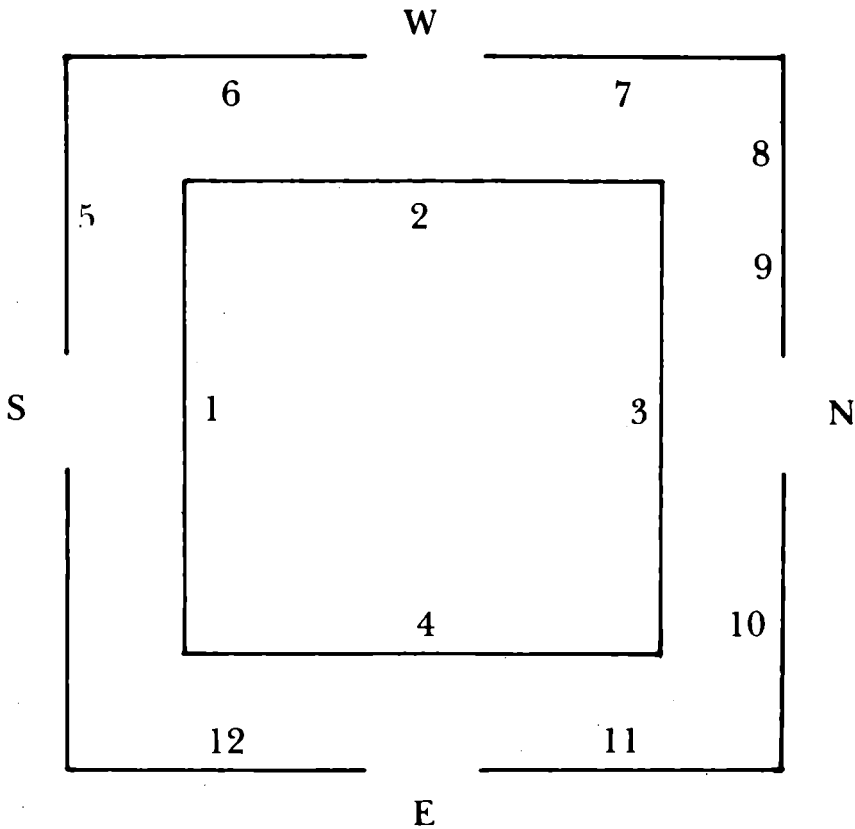
The corridor narrows down and runs around a central block, on whose walls are depicted various divinities of terrific aspect, pertaining mostly to the Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka cycle. This is

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* I.40, 41; and La Vallée Poussin, *Staupikam* in HJAS. 2.276 no. 2 who however does not seem to know my work.

Kumbum, campana

the symbolic expression of the experiences described in that category of Tantras dealing with the first of the two supreme coefficients of illumination, that is to say of the praxis or medium (*thabs*), namely of compassion.

It would be clear to reproduce the scheme of this chapel and to point out briefly the cycles or divinities represented on its walls.



1. Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, red, in the maṇḍala of the five gods, namely, Ser-sna-Gśin-rje-gśed/Mātsarya-Yamāntaka, Gti-mug-Gśin-rje-gśed/Moha-Yamāntaka, etc. in which recur deities already met with at Tsaparang (1) and taken from the

(1) See note on next page 294

Kumbum, campana

19th chapter of the De-bzhin-gśeḡs-paḡi rigs khro-bo gśin-rje-gśed dmar-poḡi rgyud (2) according to the explanations of Virūpa (figs.381, 382) (3).

2. Rdo-rje-ḡjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava, with nine faces and thirty-four hands, taken from the seventh rtog-pa of the De-bzhin-gśeḡs-paḡi rigs-kyi khro-bo ḡjigs-byed-kyi rgyud, according to the liturgical system of the lotsava of Rva (4) (figs.383, 384 detail).

3. Gsaḡ-ba-ḡdus-pa Mi-bskyod-pa/Guhyasamāja Akḡobhya, in the maḡḡala of thirtytwo divinities, according to the system of Rdo-rje-ḡphags-pa (5).

4. Dpal-gsaḡ-ba-ḡdus-pa ḡjam-paḡi-rdo-rje/Guhyasamāja Maḡjuvajra, with his maḡḡala of nine deities, according to the liturgical system of Ye-śes-zhabs/Jḡnānapāda (6).

(1) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.90.

(2) Toh.474, 475, and 476.

(3) Bstan-ḡgyur XLIII.96, 97 Rakta-yamāri-sādhana. Cf. Bu-ston, *Gśin-rje-gśed dmar-poḡi lha-lḡaḡi mḡnon-par-rtog-pa Gśin-rje-kun-ḡjoms*.

The central deity, red, with two arms, is surrounded by:

Gti-mug Gśin-rje-gśed/Moha-Yamāntaka, white, embraced by Tsartsika/Car-
cikā

Ser-sna Gśin-rje-gśed/Mātsarya-Yamāntaka, yellow, embraced by Phag-mo/
Vārāḡi

ḡdod-chags Gśin-rje-gśed/Rāga-Yamāntaka, red, embraced by Dbyaḡs-can-
ma/Sarasvatī

Phrag-dog Gśin-rje-gśed/Īrḡyā-Yamāntaka, green, embraced by Gaurī

While in the cycle of the thirteen divinities found at Tsaparang the divinities of the same name are represented with three faces and six arms, in this maḡḡala they have only one face and two hands. The symbols in the whole cycle are: in the left hand a skull, and in the right a club.

(4) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.76ff.

(5) *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.182.

(6) About Gsaḡ-ḡdus ḡjam-paḡi-rdo-rje/Guhyasamāja Maḡjuvajra, see Bu-ston, complete works THA: (a) *Gsaḡ-ḡdus ḡjam-rdor-gyi sgrub-thabs ḡjam-dbyaḡs yid-ḡphrog* and (b) *Gsaḡ-ḡdus ḡjam-rdor dkyil-cho-ga ḡjam-paḡi-dbyaḡs-kyi byin-rlabs-kyi rnam-phrul*. According to the first work, describing the meditative and liturgic process through which the images of the maḡḡala are evoked with the imposition of special mystic syllables in one's own body, the god is yellowish in colour, has two heads, with the two main hands embraces his śakti, identical with him, and in the other two holds a sword and a lotus.

Besides the main divinities and their acolytes, there are represented the most known masters of the mystic revelations, inspired by the experiences symbolized by these gods (details visible in fig.385, to the left)..

On the external wall of the corridor there are:

5. Khro-bo phyag-na-rdo-rje hkhor-lo-chen-po/Krodha-mahācakra-vajrapāṇi, pertaining to the mystic family of Mi-bskyod-pā/Akṣobhya, in the maṇḍala of eighteen divinities; it is taken from the Drag-po-gsum-ḥdul-gyi rgyud interpreted according to the liturgic system of Dsa-ba-ri-pa (1).

6. The maṇḍala of Spyan-ras-gzigs/Avalokita having nineteen gods, taken from Gsañ-ba-ḥdus-pa/Guhyasamāja, according to the interpretation of Atīśa. Around it are represented the yab-yum images of the sacred pentad in the same iconographic type as that found in Tsaparang (2) (fig.386).

7. Gśin-rje-gśed Ḥjam-dpal-rdo-rje/Yamāntaka Mañjuvajra, with three faces and six hands, surrounded by four acolytes: inspired by the Gdoñ-drug-gi-rgyud/Ṣaṅmukha-tantra (3).

8. Ḥjam-dpal gśin-rje-gśed/Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka, with six faces and six hands in a maṇḍala of nine divinities.

9. Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, black, of the mystic family of Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana.

10. Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, red, in a maṇḍala of thirteen divinities, taken from the 22nd chapter of the Gśin-rje-gśed dmar-poḥi rgyud (fig.385) (4).

(1) See Bstan-ḥgyur XLIV.71 Mahāyakṣa-senāpati-nīlāmaradhara-vajrapāṇi-mahācakra-maṇḍala-devagaṇa-stotra. Cf. Bu-ston, *Phyag-rdor hkhor-chen-gyi bstod-pa bstod-pas don-thams-cad sgrub-pa*, complete works, vol.THA.

(2) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.64.

(3) This cycle corresponds, except for slight variants, to the first five acolytes of the cycle of Vajrabhairava, already described in *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.90.

(4) The complete description of this maṇḍala is found in the *Bcom-ldan-ḥdas gśin-rje-gśed dmar-po lha-bcu-gsum-gyi ḥjoms-paḥi mtshon-cha dañ rgyud-ḥdebs smon*

Kumbum, campana

11. Gśin-rje-gśed dgra-nag taken from the Dgra-nag-gi rgyud (fig.387) (1).

12. Many bla-mas and minor divinities, among whom are the fifteen Phyogs-skyoñ/Dikpālas.

In this lower portion of the campana 391 images in all could be counted.

Now we ascend to the upper portion where the paintings want to express through symbols those tantric experiences that guide to the realization of the absolute and undifferentiated unity of the coefficients of supreme illumination, namely the praxis and the mystic gnosis (*śes-rab*).

In order to clarify its brief description, I add the schematic plan of this chapel, marking by numbers the various tantric cycles represented here and their order:

1. Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo/Kālacakra with four faces and twentyfour hands, surrounded by the gods of the cycle of the spiritual plane, the four symbols and the ten vases (fig. 388) (2).

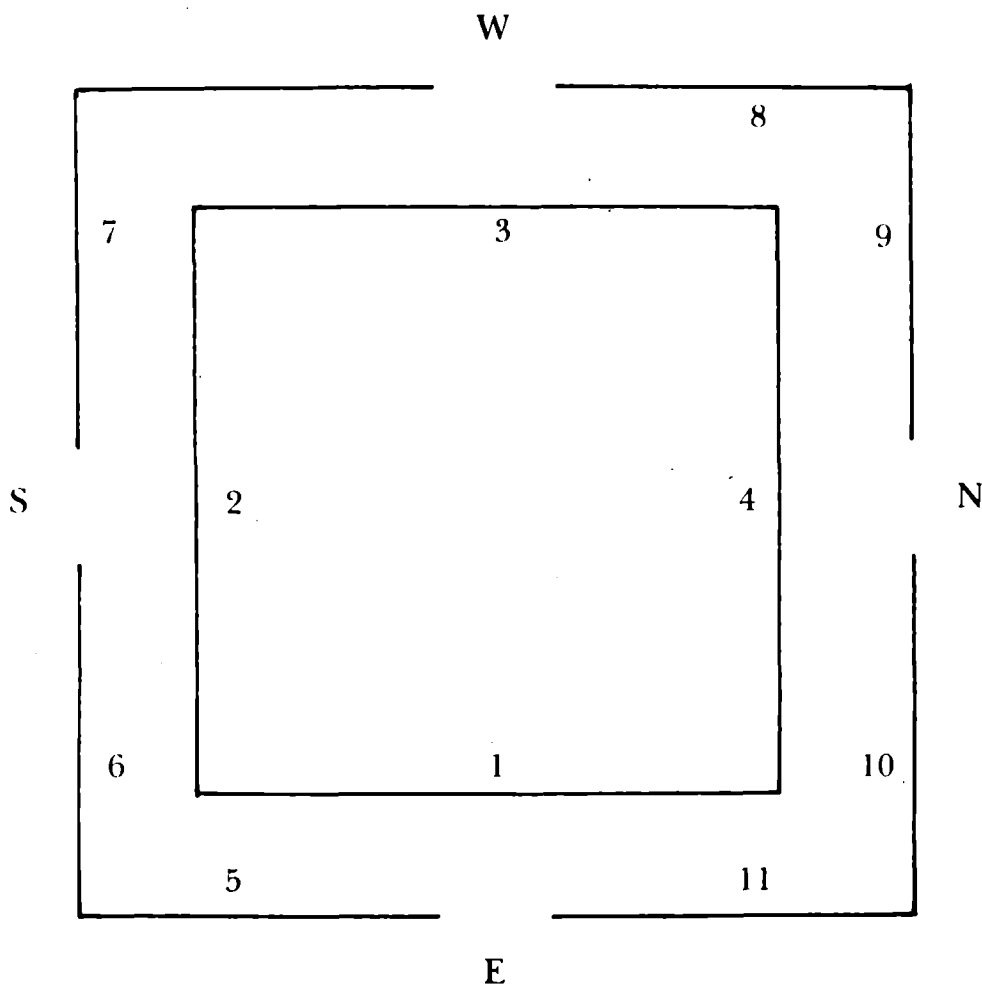
lam śis-brjod-bcas of the eighth Dalai Lama. The iconography of the god is as follows: red in colour, two arms; in the right club; in the left skull; vehicle: the buffalo on which there is the figure of Yama holding club and noose. He is embraced by his śakti Rdo-rje-ro-lañs-ma/Vajravetālī. See also Bu-ston, *Gśed-dmar lha-bcu-gsum-maḥi dkyil cho-ga de-ñid gsal*, complete works, Vol. THA.

(1) Namely Kṛṣṇayamāri-tantra. This peculiar form of Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāri is described for instance in the *Dpal-ldan gśin-rje dgra-nag-gi mñon-par-rtogs-pa gsod-byed-paḥi ḥjigs-run* by Bu-ston, complete works, vol.ŚA: black colour, three faces: the central one black, the right one white, and the left one red; his two main hands embrace his śakti, Śes-rab-ma/Prajñā, identical with him iconographically, holding in the right the *gri-gug* and the skull; in the other two to the right: sword and vajra; to the left: disc and lotus.

(2) Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo is well known. See Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, 2nd ed., p.146.

Kumbum, campana

2. Kyai-rdo-rje/Hevajra, according to the initiatic system known by the name of Dpal-ldan lhan-cig-skyes-pa mi-ḥgyur-ba-chen, in the maṇḍala of nine divinities surrounded by the four mystic families of Kyai-rdo-rje/Hevajra (fig.389) (1).



(1) In this cycle of nine deities, in the middle is Heruka with eight heads, sixteen hands and four legs; in the sixteen hands there are as many skulls in which there are several gods and animals: elephant, horse, ass, bull, camel, man, antelope, Varuṇa, etc. Around him are the eight acolytes, namely the eight Khro-mo-chen-mo/Mahākrodhī already met with: Gaurī, black (*gri-gug* and fish); Tsauri/Caurī, red (little magic drum and boar), Vaitālī, yellow (tortoise

Kumbum, campana

3. Dpal-ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pa/Cakrasaṃvara according to the system of Nag-po-pa (1) in the maṇḍala of sixtytwo divinities.

4. Same cycle, but according to the liturgical system of Luyipā (fig.390) (2).

5. Thirteen divinities of the cycle of Heruka mchog: four skulls (fig.393).

6. Maṇḍala of the five gods taken from the Mahāmāya-tantra: four symbols, eight mystic letters (fig.392) (3).

7. The gods of the Rdo-rje-gdan-bzhi/Catuṣpīṭha (4).

and skull); Ghamsmarī, green (serpent and skull); Pukkasī, blue (lion and skull); Ri-khrod-ma, white (monk, disc); Gdol-pa-ma, blue (disc and skull); Gyuñ-mo, of various colours (vajra, mudrā of threatening). In his form of Chos-kyi-dbyiñs ye-śes-kyi ño-bo rgya rdo-rje-ḥdzin-pa, the god is white in colour; see *Dpal Kyai-rdo-rje sgrub-thabs ḥkhrul spon* by Dge-legs-dpal (complete works, vol.NA). About Lhan-cig-skyes-pa-rdō-rje/Sahajavajra see *Dpal Kye-rdo-rje-lhan-cig-skyes-paḥi sgrub-thabs byin-rlabs man-ñag dan-bcas*, written by Hjam-dbyaṅs-mkhyen-brtse, according to the Sa-skya tradition and included in *Sgrub-thabs kun-btus*, vol.NA.

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.27ff. Bu-ston, complete works vol.JA: *Dpal-ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi sgrub-thabs-kyi ḥgrel-ba ḥkhrul-ba spon-bar-byed-pa*.

(2) Fully described in *Indo-Tibetica* III/2.27 note.

(3) This maṇḍala is also described by Bu-ston in his *Sgyu-ḥphrul-chen-moḥi mñon-rtogs rgyas-paḥi sgyu-ḥphrul-chen-mo ḥbyuñ-ba*, complete works, vol.JA. The central divinity of this cycle is a special form of Heruka, who, in the inscriptions of the Sku-ḥbum, is called Mñon-med Heruka, but who in the text of Bu-ston is called Sgyu-ḥphrul-chen-po rdo-rje sñiñ-rjeḥi stobs. Iconographically he is blue in colour, with four faces (see fig. 387): the central one blue, the others yellow, white, green; in his two main hands, embracing the śakti, he has a khaṭvāṅga and a skull, and with the other two puts an arrow in the bow. On the head an image of Akṣobhya. The śakti also has four faces and the same symbols as the god.

(4) Already quoted above on p.162.

On this cycle and its liturgy Bu-ston has written a small treatise *Dpal gdan-bzhi-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor-paḥi sgrub-thabs mi-brjed-par dran-byed-pa*, complete works, vol.JA. The central divinity of this maṇḍala is represented by Rnal-ḥbyor-nam-mkhaḥ/Yogāmbara, blue, with three faces and six hands: right one holds an arrow, presses the breast of the Śakti and holds a vajra;

Kumbum, campana

8. The twentyfive gods of the maṇḍala of Saṅs-rgyas-thod-pa/Buddhakapāla (fig.393).

9. The gods of the cycle of Bde-chen-rañ-gcig.

10. The divinities of the mystic family of the Gur-mgon with his mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/ḍākinī (fig.394 reproducing Saṅs-rgyas-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma yab-yum).

11. The divinities of the maṇḍala of Spyan-ras-gzigs padma-dra-ba/Padmajāla Avalokita (fig.395).

In all there are 577 images.

On the extreme top of the building in a dark cell, whose walls are also covered by paintings no longer visible today, the statue of Rdo-rje-ḥchañ/Vajradhara smiles his mysterious smile, he who is the symbol of the absolute in its immutability. Having thus completed the ascension to the monument, and having reached before the supreme principle of all things, the visitor has gone through the various degrees of phenomonic exis-

left: bow, skull, and bell. He embraces Ye-śes-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Jñāna-ḍākinī, white, with a face and two hands, in which she holds a khaṭvāṅga and a skull.

Besides the five Tathāgatas of the supreme pentad, Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Vajraḍākinī yellow, Ro-laṅs-ma/Vetālī red, Gtum-mo/Caṇḍī blue, Drag-mo dbu-skra/Raudrī yellow, also belong to this cycle. All have the same symbols as the main śakti.

(1) This cycle is also described by Bu-ston in his *Thugs-rje-chen-po pad-ma-dra-baḥi sgrub-thugs-rjeḥi hod-zer ḥbyuñ-ba*, complete works, vol.JA. The god is white in colour, with three faces and eight hands. With his two main hands embraces the śakti keeping in the left a lotus flower which he opens with a vajra held in the left (sic). In the other hands to the right: hook, skull, khaṭvāṅga, in those to the left: noose, head, gem. On top is the figure of Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha. The śakti is Rig-ma Gos-dkar-mo/Pāṇḍaravāsini, iconographically identical with the god.

Around it there should be the cycle of the thirtysix goddesses: Pad-maḥi-spyan-ma, Rin-chen-Pad-ma, Rdo-rje-can, Pad-ma-sgrol-ma, Pad-ma-gos-ma, Padma-ḥbar-ba, Pad-ma-Khro-gñer-can, etc.

Kumbum, campana

tence, and traversing mystic knowledge has transcended them uniting himself with that cosmic consciousness, colourless and undifferentiated, of whom Rdo-rje-ḥchan/Vajradhara is the symbol. Having reversed the evolutive process that lets everything be born, the mystic has nullified it by his awareness, becoming himself that light that gives life to everything.

//SARVA-MANGALAM//

