

EARLY TEMPLES OF CENTRAL TIBET



ROBERTO
VITALI

Early temples of central Tibet /

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EARLY TEMPLES of CENTRAL TIBET

Roberto Vitali

Some 7000 Tibetan temples and monasteries were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. However, by good fortune, a few early ones of special significance survived and this study provides their first visual and scholarly documentation. It is conceived as a series of monographs on extant temples of the eighth to fifteenth centuries in Central Tibet, which together, and on occasion uniquely, represent successive, yet fundamental phases of Tibetan culture.

Chapter One presents Kachu (founded 728-739 AD) which may now be revealed as the only temple known to have survived from the Yarlung dynasty up to the present time. Kachu provides evidence of the cosmopolitan milieu to which the Yarlung empire, which extended well into Central Asia, belonged. The stucco images within the temple are the most ancient statues known to exist in Tibet.

Chapter Two discusses a group of temples, including Yemar and Drathang, that have mostly survived in a dilapidated condition, but which still bear witness to the resurrection of Buddhism in the eleventh century from the ashes of the Yarlung dynasty, and which provided the foundation for Tibet's culture until recent times.

Chapter Three is dedicated to the Jokhang of Lhasa and a little-known chapel found to exist within it. This chapel provides evidence for the early history of this famous site up to the twelfth century when the various Tibetan religious schools were established.

Chapter Four is devoted to Shalu, a temple which mirrors in its artistic styles the relations between Tibet and China during the Yuan rule of the country in the fourteenth century and which played a seminal role in the development of Tibetan art in the centuries to come.

Chapter Five records, through the virtually unknown nine-storeyed stupa of Riwoché and its many painted chapels, a period of Tibetan culture—evidently provincial—which manifested itself during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The art-historical appreciation of these temples has been approached through authoritative Tibetan literary sources. With a profusion of colour plates, this book records both those monuments and styles hitherto unknown to exist, and those others which survive, albeit precariously, but which have not been subjected to a thorough investigation in the past.

EARLY
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OF
CENTRAL
TIBET

Roberto Vitali

AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB
710 10th ST., SUITE
GOLDEN CO 80401
(303) 384 0112

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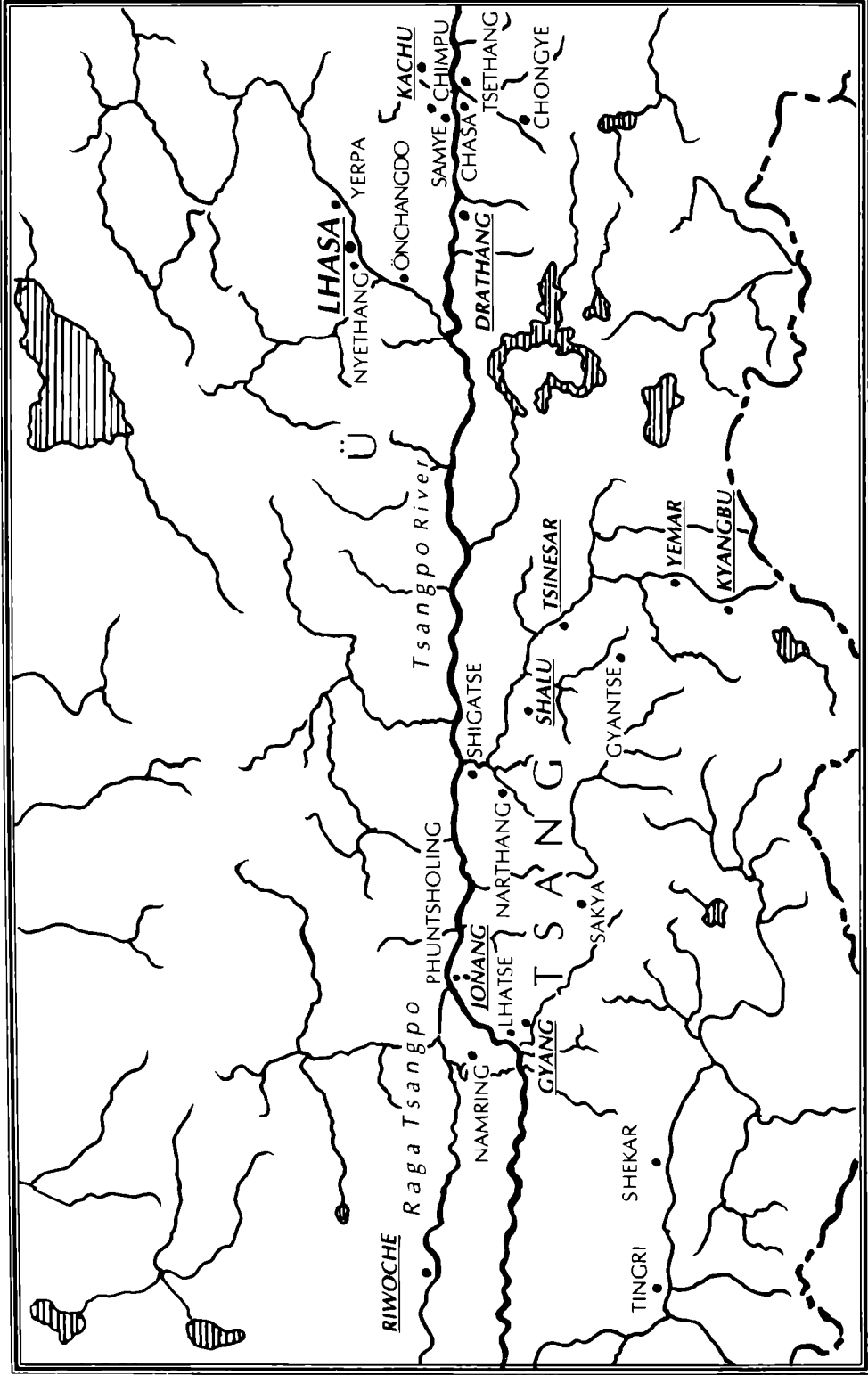
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Early Temples of Central Tibet

Preface

The conspicuous place occupied by temples within Tibetan culture, even before Buddhism was introduced, has been recognized by Tibetan tradition and literature throughout the centuries, for almost a millenium and a half. Tibetan sources have recorded constructions, their history, and the religious and lay patrons connected to them.

By the 11th century, when Buddhism started to permeate all aspects of Tibetan cultural life, temples were conceived as reflecting the “body receptacle” of the Buddhist trikaya system, their founders and benefactors ideally represented the “mind receptacle”, while the vast Tibetan literature was seen as a sign of the “speech receptacle”. Thus, it is not surprising that every pious act accomplished in furthering religious diffusion was considered part of an integrated whole represented by these ideas. The result of these dominating principles is that Tibet could boast of a vast quantity of temples and a wide literary *corpus*.

Now that Tibet’s living tradition has undergone such sudden change, the study of its monuments, and the literature surrounding them, has become crucial to the understanding of its heritage. The following pages aim at providing an assessment of some selected temples in Central Tibet (dBus.gTsang), the cradle of Tibetan civilization; their history, the circumstances of their founding and their art. This book is conceived as a series of monographs on extant temples, which represent, on occasion uniquely, successive, yet fundamental phases of Tibetan culture.

The chosen sites were initially identified through textual research and then investigated *in situ*. In the few fortunate cases where they were found to have survived the ravages of fate and men, albeit often barely, they became the object of further research to unravel the circumstance that led to their foundation.

Chapter One deals with Kwa.chu, which is revealed as the only temple presently known to have survived, basically untouched, from the Yarlung dynasty up to present time. This temple provides evidence of the cosmopolitan milieu to which the Yarlung empire, reaching well into Central Asia, belonged. Chapter Two discusses a group of temples, including g.Ye.dmar and Grwa.thang, now mostly in dilapidated condition, but which still bear witness to the resurrection of Buddhism in the 11th century from the ashes of the Yarlung dynasty, and which provided the foundation of Tibet’s culture until the recent past. Chapter Three is dedicated to the Lhasa Jo.khang and a little known chapel found within it. An attempt is also made to examine the early phases which the temple went through until the 12th century, when Tibetan sects were mainly established. Chapter Four is devoted to Zhwa.lu, a temple which mirrors in its artistic style the composite relations between Tibet and China during the Yüan rule of the country and which played a seminal role in the development of Tibetan art in the centuries to come. Chapter Five records, through the virtually unknown stupa of Ri.bo.che, a period of Tibetan culture—essentially provincial—which manifested itself during the 14th and 15th centuries.

Historical and artistic assessments have been attempted by means of authoritative Tibetan literary sources. So often Tibetan art has been studied purely from the aesthetic viewpoint. The study of monumental art enables one, with the help of archaeological and textual evidence, to reach firm historical frameworks in which to situate artistic expressions. Styles and trends are recognized *in situ* and historically verified, unlike movable objects, which, unless inscribed and dated, do not constitute conclusive evidence.

The illustrations are intended to document monuments and art styles hitherto unknown to exist and those others, surviving precariously, whose art has not received full justice through detailed research in the past.

Since the pioneering work of Giuseppe Tucci and Hugh Richardson, little scientific research has been attempted on temples and this branch of Tibetology has suffered much neglect for various reasons. In the last few years, fresh studies have been gradually appearing. To the effort of these

pathfinders and to the work of Western and Tibetan specialists in general I am particularly indebted: without their valuable studies my contribution would not have been possible.

To those scholars and others with an interest in Tibet, who have encouraged me I express my deepest gratitude, especially to Anthony Aris for his enthusiasm through all stages. In particular I wish to thank my daily companions in years of dedication to Tibetan studies; Victor Chan, with whom I shared the planning of research and walked the dusty tracks of Tibet in search of the past; bsKal.bzang rNam.rgyal, with whom I wandered through the pages of Tibetan literature, and finally this book is dedicated to my wife Cicci, who has shared every step of my work and travel. Thanks are due also to Malcolm Green for his painstaking work of editing my 'English' into English, and to Professor Fosco Maraini for generously permitting the publication of his splendid and now unique photographs from the 1937 Tucci expedition.

These monographs, focusing on relevant temples, historical phases and artistic trends, are but a drop in the vastness of the subject, which extends to many more periods and regions of Tibet. It is my hope that other studies will appear in the future and expand, on the basis of sound remaining evidence, our knowledge of the Tibetan heritage as expressed in the history of its monuments, their patrons and their art, and which will eventually be seen to form a unified whole, as it is in the eyes of Tibetan tradition.

Roberto Vitali
Pani Pokhari, Kathmandu
November 1989

Abbreviations

AA	Artibus Asiae
AAs	Arts Asiatiques
AO	Ars Orientalis
AOH	Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
AS	Asiatische Studien
BEFEO	Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême orient
BT	Bulletin of Tibetology
CAJ	Central Asiatic Journal
E&W	East and West
HJAS	Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
JA	Journal Asiatique
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JASB	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
JBORS	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (of Great Britain and Ireland)
MS	Monumenta Serica
MTB	Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko
OA	Oriental Art
RSO	Rivista degli Studi Orientali
SOR	Serie Orientale Roma
TJ	Tibet Journal
TP	T'oung Pao
TR	Tibetan Review
WW	Wenwu

Kachu:

History and Art of a Surviving Yarlung Dynasty Temple

The earliest historical documents relating to Buddhism date from the period between the 7th and 9th centuries, when the powerful Yarlung dynasty of Tibetan kings ruled extensive territories in Central Asia which reached well beyond the frontiers of Tibet proper. These sources are few and provide scant information, though significant among them are the *rdo.ring* [stone pillars],¹ engraved with the purpose of perpetuating their contents.² Most are well-known to Tibetologists, though discoveries in recent years have added new material which awaits investigation.³ Two famous *rdo.ring* inscriptions are especially important for their summary outline of religious activities during these three centuries.

The first is a stone edict placed at the entrance of bSam.yas temple during the reign of king Khri.srong.lde.btsan.⁴ As the temple was probably founded by him in the sheep year 779 AD,⁵ the *rdo.ring* was likely placed *in situ* around that time. In addition to the well-known proclamation of Buddhism as the state religion, a fundamental statement that marks the beginning of the early Buddhist diffusion [bstan.pa.snga.dar] in Tibet, the inscription mentions the existence of a detailed account of the edict, deposited separately. Fortunately, in his monumental work *mKhas.pa'i dga'.ston*, dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba has not only quoted the text of the *bka'.gtsigs* [sworn account], but also another document known as a *bka'.mchid* [authoritative exposition]. Both texts are probably quoted in their entirety, and possibly without corruption.⁶ Since the *bka'.mchid* has to be dated to the reign of Khri.srong.lde.btsan at about the time of the founding of bSam.yas, this interesting source of information ranks as the most ancient description of Buddhism in Tibet. According to the *bka'.mchid*, Srong.btsan sgam.po was the first king to introduce Buddhism to the country when he founded the Ra.sa *gtsug.lag.khang* [vihara].⁷ Following an interruption of five generations, Buddhism was again practised in the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, father of Khri.srong.lde.btsan, and the temple of Kwa.chu [Kachu] in Brag.dmar was built.⁸

The dating of Kwa.chu to the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan is confirmed by the second stone edict, which was placed by king Khri.lde.srong.btsan, popularly known as Sad.na.legs, at the temple of sKar.chung.⁹ This edict renews Khri.srong.lde.btsan's original vow to perpetuate Buddhism, and again states that Srong.btsan.sgam.po was the first religious king as the founder of Ra.sa *gtsug.lag.khang*. Interestingly, king Dus.srong mang.po.rje is introduced as a pious monarch and founder of the temple of gLing Khri.rtsa in mDo.Khams,¹⁰ in spite of other claims that he did not favour the Indian religion. In the account he is succeeded by Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, to whose reign the temple of mChims.phu, as well as that of Kwa.chu, both in the Brag.dmar area is also ascribed.¹¹ In the inscription, Sad.na.legs next pays homage to his father Khri.srong.lde.btsan, founder of bSam.yas, also in Brag.dmar, as well as other temples in the central and border regions. The genealogy concludes with Sad.na.legs himself and the founding of sKar.chung, where the *rdo.ring* was placed.¹² While there is no precise date for the erection of either the temple or the stone pillar, it certainly falls between the dragon year 804 and the sheep year 815, normally considered to be Sad.na.legs' regnal years,¹³ and arguably before 810.¹⁴ A *bka'.gtsigs* was also deposited for this sKar.chung edict, again accurately recorded by dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba,¹⁵ that represents a further source attributing the foundation of Kwa.chu to the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan.

On the basis of such sources as these *rdo.ring*, authoritative in both antiquity and authorship, it is reasonable to assume with a sound degree of certainty that the attributions and foundation periods given are generally accurate. This is of particular relevance to these pages, which are devoted to an historical and artistic assessment of Kwa.chu *lha.khang* [temple], which has to be considered the earliest virtually intact Buddhist religious edifice in Tibet. It is the only temple that can be safely attributed to the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, certified by Khri.srong.lde.btsan's 'deposited' document,

written some twenty years after the former's death (in a sheep year, 755), as well as by Sad.na.legs' accounts, which are at the most sixty years posterior to the death of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan.

Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and his time

The complexities of the Tibetan political situation reached a peak during the reign of this king, often known as Mes Ag.tshom.¹⁶ His rule was marked by struggles for power at the Tibetan court among mutually antagonistic clans, the manipulation of religion for temporal purposes, and an almost continuous state of war against fierce neighbours along the borders of the Tibetan empire.

The death of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's father Dus.srong mang.po.rje in the dragon year 704 while campaigning in the distant country of 'Jang¹⁷ instigated a period of significant political change. In the following year, the snake year 705, two heirs were designated to succeed the deceased king, around whom rival factions strove for dominance. Revolts broke out, and those responsible were sentenced to death.¹⁸ As one of the two heir-designates, the infant Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan was a spectator to the turmoil of that year.¹⁹ The *Tun-buang Annals*—a most authoritative Tibetan source on the period—give his date of birth as the dragon year 704,²⁰ while the equally authoritative *Tang Annals*²¹ state 705, affirming that he was chosen king in 712 when he was seven years of age.²² The date commonly appearing in later literature, indicating that he was born in the iron-dragon year 740, must be dismissed.²³ This contradicts the evidence of the most reliable ancient tradition in placing his regnal period so late as to render untenable the generally accepted reigns of succeeding incumbents. For reasons unknown to me, the year 704 quoted in the *Tun-buang Annals* has been interpreted by later Tibetan authors as the iron-dragon year 740: a miscalculation that has been repeated from source to source throughout the later tradition.

Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan emerged in 705 as the successful claimant to the throne. The *Tang Annals* confirm both the struggle between the different factions and his designation as heir,²⁴ while the *Tun-buang Annals* laconically record that Lha Bal.po, who is described as *gcen* [elder brother] and would thus seem to have had the right to rule, was dethroned.²⁵ Lha Bal.po is a mysterious figure, whose name probably implies foreign origin on his mother's side²⁶ and whose destiny remains completely obscure.

Because the new king was still at a tender age, his grandmother the all-powerful 'Bro Khri.ma.lod, who was apparently instrumental in his initial designation as the future king, became the *de facto* ruler of the country.²⁷ It is likely that she was not new to such power. It seems that she began to play a conspicuous role from the time when her son Dus.srong mang.po.rje recovered control of the state in 698, after ousting the mGar clan²⁸ who had been dominant in Tibetan affairs since the death of Srong.btsan sgam.po.²⁹ From 698 to the time of her death in 712, 'Bro Khri.ma.lod is mentioned quite frequently in the *Tun-buang Annals* as an active figure, and is certainly worthy of historical consideration. It is difficult to say how dominant her role was during Dus.srong's reign, as he nominally had a free hand to rule alone after the elimination of the mGar clan from the political stage. Following the king's death in 'Jang,³⁰ Khri.ma.lod overthrew his legitimate successor *gcen* Lha Bal.po while he was probably accompanying Dus.srong on his campaign³¹ and proclaimed her grand-nephew Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan as the future king.

The events of 705 lead one to surmise that the antagonism between the two clans, which ostensibly centred around king Dus.srong and his mother Khri.ma.lod, predated the troubles of that year. Owing to the power that she probably seized while her son was still in 'Jang,³² Khri.ma.lod was able to remain regent of Tibet until her death in the rat year 712.³³ She reintroduced the post of chief minister, an institution abolished by Dus.srong as a result of his overthrow of the mGar supremacy.³⁴ It is interesting to note that when her newly appointed chief minister Khu Mang.po.rje was disgraced, he was replaced by Khri.gzigs zhang.snyen, of the 'Tibetan' dBa's clan, Khri.ma.lod herself being of the 'foreign' 'Bro clan.³⁵ This episode further obscures the developments of this troubled year: was this an effort towards establishing a balance of power between struggling factions?

Arguably, Khri.ma.lod's chief political achievement was her success in establishing better political relations with China. In the absence of information in the *Tun-buang Annals*, the *Tang Annals* are

particularly useful in shedding light on the diplomatic moves between the two countries. In the year 703, before the birth of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, a Tibetan mission was sent to the imperial Chinese court to request a matrimonial alliance. The Chinese agreed, but no marriage was concluded.³⁶ Following the death of Dus.srong, Khri.ma.lod sent a later mission with the same purpose, but the proposal met with no reply.³⁷ From this it is apparent that no drastic changes were made in Tibet's foreign policy by Khri.ma.lod, at least with regard to China. She continued the policy of improved relations introduced a few years before by her deceased son Dus.srong, though the possibility that this policy was introduced by Khri.ma.lod herself cannot be ignored.

In that same year 705, the emperor Chung-tsung³⁸ was restored to the throne of China.³⁹ The rejection of the above-mentioned marriage treaty may have been due to a lack of definition in certain sensitive Chinese political issues, including relations with Tibet. Evidence of a degree of hostility towards Tibet, at least among some members of the T'ang court, is the fact that it was not until 708 that the mission was allowed to return to Tibet: that was on the express permission of the emperor, who would seem to have been less intransigent than his own courtiers.⁴⁰ Shortly afterwards, at the end of 708 or the beginning of 709, Khri.ma.lod renewed her marriage treaty request by again sending her chief minister to the T'ang court. The *Tun-huang Annals* identify this Tibetan envoy as Zhang bTsan.to.re, while the fragmentary *Azha Annals* also include 'Bro Khri.bzang and another minister of the Cog.ro clan.⁴¹ On this occasion the mission met with success, and the princess Chin-ch'eng (referred to as Kim.shang in the *Tun-huang Annals*), grand-niece of the emperor Chung-tsung, was selected as Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's bride.⁴² In later Tibetan sources she is known as Gyim.shing Kong.co, and is considered to be the daughter of Li Khri.bzher.lang.mig.ser.⁴³ According to the *T'ang Annals*, she was little more than an infant when she was chosen as the Tibetan king's bride, and the Chinese emperor was deeply touched to see her leaving for reasons of state. In the bird year 709, Khri.ma.lod sent the minister gNyag Khri.bzang yang.ton as envoy of the Tibetan court with the task of accompanying Kong.co to Tibet.⁴⁴ She finally reached Lhasa in the dog year 710.⁴⁵

Two decisive events took place in the rat year 712 which drastically altered relations between China and Tibet, and which left Kong.co in an uneasy situation at the Tibetan court. The death of Khri.ma.lod and a concomitant *coup d'état* in China, in which Hsüan-tsung came to power,⁴⁶ combined to eliminate the diplomatic conditions which had brought Kong.co to Tibet from the international stage.

The enthronement of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan proceeded automatically, without the internecine struggles that had characterised his designation as heir apparent in 705. In my view, this proves that no serious rivals to the political faction led by Khri.ma.lod remained at the Tibetan court. dBa's Khri.gzigs zhang.snyen was still chief minister, and all factors seem to indicate that the ruling party at the Tibetan court substituted Khri.ma.lod's regency with Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's rule. Of more direct significance than the death of Khri.ma.lod was the political orientation of the new Chinese emperor Hsüan-tsung, who adopted an intransigent militaristic approach, in particular with regard to Tibet, and was not inclined to treat his Tibetan enemies in the peaceful manner of his predecessor through political marriage. The peace treaty of 708-709 was to remain a lone episode in Sino-Tibetan relations of this period, and it was several years before Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan was able to propose a new treaty. Apparently, Kong.co found herself isolated from China and in some discomfort at the Tibetan court for many years to come. The reasons for her presence in Tibet had vanished,⁴⁷ and in the tiger year 714 the *T'ang Annals* report a major abrogation of the peace treaty, as well as the first evidence of Kong.co's unease when a Chinese general is sent to Tibet to calm her fears.⁴⁸ Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan later attempted to smoothen the difficulties by showing himself disposed toward a new peace treaty while blaming the border generals for instigating war for personal glory, but the Chinese emperor refused to be moved.⁴⁹ The years that followed saw renewed hostilities between the two countries, particularly in the western territories around the Pamirs, where the Tibetans were able to defeat the Chinese a number of times, thanks in large part to their alliance with the Western Turks.⁵⁰ In the summer of 723, Kong.co wrote a letter to the king of Kashmir, Chandrapida, who was a Chinese ally, requesting asylum.⁵¹ The Kashmiri king was under threat from the Tibetans in the western regions, and was ready

to attack them there with the assistance of the king of Zabulistan and the consent of the emperor of China, though nothing substantial came of this.

In the hare year 727, having reached maturity as a monarch, Khri.lde.tsug.rtsan removed the dBa's clan from the post of chief minister in favour of 'Bro Cung.bzang 'or.mang, a member of his grandmother's clan, which had supported him in his ascent of the throne.⁵² This appointment was made in the dragon year 728, and he kept the post until at least the dog year 746. In about 729, Kong.co received another Chinese delegation to investigate whether she had been gratefully received by the Tibetans.⁵³

Following the return of the 'Bro clan to active leadership, a new troubled peace was established with China.⁵⁴ However, the fact that Kong.co remained trapped between both sides is related in another episode of the time in the *Tang Annals*. She had apparently asked the Chinese court to send her some books, but they felt compelled to deny the request, assuming that the Tibetans had manoeuvred her in the hope that the books contained sensitive material to their own advantage.⁵⁵ In spite of Chinese hostility towards anything regarding Tibet, it seems that Kong.co was able to obtain some advantage from the return of the 'Bro clan to active power to improve her position at court. It should be remembered that the 'Bro clan would probably feel well-disposed towards Kong.co's clan since two of the three members of the delegation sent to China by 'Bro Khri.ma.lod to arrange her marriage—Zhang bTsan.to.re and Zhang Khri.bzang kha.che btang.dang—were also members of the clan.⁵⁶ For the horse year 730, the *Tun-huang Annals* note a political move directly involving Kong.co. Her personal minister Cog.ro Zing.kong was dismissed and replaced by Lang Gro.khong rtsan.⁵⁷ As a member of the Lang clan, besides being considered a Buddhist, he was a strict collaborator of 'Bro Cung.zang. No firm conclusions can be drawn, but it is tempting to see in this context of renewed 'Bro ascendancy a tentative move to grant favour to Buddhism and to Kong.co in a time of relative tranquility. This is reinforced by her invitation of Buddhist monks from Khotan with the apparent acquiescence of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, also around the same time. The monks had fled Khotan because of an obscure local persecution of the Buddhist community, and were instrumental to the presence of Buddhism in Tibet.

During the new period of peace between Tibet and China, which seems to have lasted up to the year 736, when the Tibetans invaded Bru.zha [Gilgit] in the north-west Himalayas,⁵⁸ Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan was able to obtain a crucial alliance from Kog.la.bong, king of Nan-chao.⁵⁹

In the hare year 739, the Khotanese *sangha* was expelled from Tibet by forces antagonistic to Buddhism (see below), and possibly also hostile to the pro-Chinese faction to which the Khotanese in all likelihood belonged. Furthermore, Kong.co met a mysterious death, and it seems more than a coincidence that during that same perilous hare year Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's son Lhas.bon also died.⁶⁰ From the time of Kong.co's death, the importance of the pro-Tibetan party, led by the sNa.nam clan, was increasingly felt at the Tibetan court. As a sign of the clan's rising power, Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's wife sNa.nam.bza' bore the king an heir in the horse year 742,⁶¹ who was to become the first great Buddhist king of Tibet: Khri.srong.lde.btsan. From the time of Kong.co's death to the end of his reign, Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan met with a series of crushing defeats at the hands of the Chinese, in particular on the north-east frontier. This was in large part because he could no longer rely on the help of his old allies the Western Turks, with whose cooperation the Tibetans had kept the Chinese occupied on the west Central Asian front.⁶² The king not only faced trouble on the borders, but also growing internal 'disaffection'.⁶³ It is a sad fact that there is a lacuna in the *Tun-huang Annals* for these years; nothing is known, for example, of the circumstances under which the long-time chief minister of the 'Bro clan left his post. However, both the *Tun-huang* and *Tang Annals* agree that Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan was assassinated in the sheep year 755.⁶⁴

It is now apparent that the above account of the events of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's reign is based upon the most ancient Tibetan and Chinese sources. This is due to the propensity for later Tibetan literature to confuse facts and present a misleading picture of the significant events.⁶⁵

The founding of temples during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan

Though Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan Mes Ag.tshom is portrayed in his son Khri.srong.lde.btsan's *bka'.mchid* [p.1] and by later literature⁶⁶ as a fervent Buddhist, to what extent this is true is difficult to say. While he is credited by later sources as the founder of a number of temples, all the most ancient sources (including the documents of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs) only indirectly attribute Kwa.chu to him, mentioning that it was built during his reign. A small number of Khotanese texts of considerable antiquity merit Kong.co alone with the the founding of temples, though they nevertheless describe Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan as a Bodhisattva. It is likely that he was more concerned with affairs of state than with religion, yet the oldest texts do mention his liberality towards the Buddhist faith.

It is important that the different traditions dealing with the foundation of Buddhist temples in Tibet during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan be taken into consideration at this stage. These traditions, recorded in sources which span several centuries, differ significantly as regards the origin of the religious insemination, the number of temples actually built, the personalities involved in such activities, and the historical circumstances under which the temples were founded. I will examine these differing traditions and endeavour to assess the milieu responsible for the temples' construction.

Later Tibetan sources relate narratives so similar in content that they seem to spring from the same basic source. Included among these later sources are *sBa.bzhed*, *lDe'u chos.'hyung*, *Nyang.ral chos.'hyung*, *Mes.dbon.rnam.thar*, *rGyal.po bka'.thang*, *Yar.klungs Jo.bo chos.'hyung*, *Deb.ther dmar.po*, *rGyal.rabs gsal.ba'i me.long*, *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston*, and *dPyid.kyi.rgyal.mo'i.glu.dbyangs*.⁶⁷ The narrative, with minor points of difference between the texts listed, runs as follows:

Mes Ag.tshom, being a king who was devoted to Buddhism, decided to send two of his ministers to India in order to invite masters who could diffuse Buddhist teachings in Tibet. On their way to India, the two ministers, identified in the *sBa.bzhed* as Bran.ka Mu.le.ko and gNyags Jnyana ku.ma.ra⁶⁸, heard that two renowned masters, gSang.rgyas gsang.ba and gSang.rgyas zhi.ba were meditating at Kailash. Upon reaching the holy mountain they extended an invitation to the Indian gurus to go to Central Tibet and teach Buddhism, whereupon they were met with a refusal. They then either memorized, or were given five texts, the interpretation varying among the sources;⁶⁹ named in the *sBa.bzhed* as *rNam.par.'byed.pa*, *gSer.'od.dam.pa'i.mdo*, and *kri.ya* and *u.pa.ya* texts.⁷⁰ The ministers then either brought back the actual volumes, or wrote the texts down from memory after their return, and offered them to the king. Five temples were built to house each of the books. On the basis of the above-named sources, these temples were: Kwa.chu, mChims.phu and mGrin.bzang in the area of Brag.dmar, mKhar.brag in the Lhasa area and Ma.sa.gong gtsug.lag.khang in Khams. Spelling varies among the texts, Kwa.chu often being recorded by the alternative Ke.ru;⁷¹ in spite of the fact that some sources omit a temple, the identification of the holy edifices is remarkably consistent.

The possibility that Indian Buddhist culture was responsible for any propagation of Buddhism during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan is slight and hardly tenable. The essence of the episode paraphrased above seems to be that the two Indian *panditas* refused to go to Central Tibet, and that Indian Buddhism was therefore not instrumental in this phase of temple building there. The links between India and Tibet were seemingly abandoned, as no Indian *pandita* is reported to have gone to Tibet until the first propagation of the doctrine [bstan.pa snga.dar] in the time of king Khri.srong lde.btsan, when Buddhism gained a firm hold in the country, owing in large part to the presence of Indian masters. No Indian would have been present in Brag.dmar, where three of the five temples are customarily located in the sources, or in Khams, where Ma.sa.gong is said to have stood, and would not have contributed to any building. Moreover, as will be seen below the artistic evidence offered by present-day Kwa.chu clearly refutes any direct influence from 8th century India.

In fact, the later Tibetan tradition records various kinds of contact with China,⁷² descriptions of which can be divided into two distinctive sub-narratives. The first of these, contained in such texts as the *lDe'u chos.'hyung* and the *Nyang.ral chos.'hyung*,⁷³ pertains to the invitation of Chinese masters, who introduced knowledge that was not necessarily religious. Ha.shang brought books on astrology and made arrangements for their translation, while Bi.ji bTsan.pa shi.ha.la brought books on medical sciences. The fact that this phase of Chinese insemination of Tibetan culture did not impinge upon

religion, but was restricted to lay sciences is particularly clear in the case of Bi.ji bTsan.pa shi.ha.la, who has been identified as the successor to the Greek physician Galenos. Originally from *Khrom* [Byzantium: Eastern 'Roman' Empire], he became the royal physician to Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan after a lengthy sojourn in China,⁷¹ and is credited with the introduction of Western medicine to Central Asia.⁷⁵ The strictly secular character of these contacts is emphasised by the fact that no mention is made of the founding of temples in this context. The second sub-narrative is more pertinent to religious contacts with China, and is probably ultimately derived from the *sBa.bzbed*.⁷⁶ It tells of the virtuous activities of sBa Sang.shi, himself of Chinese origin, in bringing books on the Buddhist dharma from China to Tibet by command of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. Sang.shi was able to gain the sympathy of the Chinese emperor and several leading Chinese Buddhist masters,⁷⁷ and could thus fulfil the wish of his king to acquire Buddhist texts. On his way back to Tibet, he was told the king had died and that some of the temples that had been built earlier in his reign had been destroyed by anti-Buddhist forces.

Clearly, even this second narrative is hardly useful in shedding light on events decisive to the establishment of temples during the time of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. At the very least it contains irreconcilable shortcomings. The temples were built before sBa Sang.shi could have brought Chinese religious influence to Tibet, as the *sBa.bzbed* mentions that they were established prior even to his departure for China; moreover, some were destroyed before his return to Tibet.⁷⁸ It should be stressed that no Chinese masters were present in Tibet: only texts made the journey there.

Although only two have thus far been defined, there is a third order of narratives to be examined which possesses the great advantage of antedating all others so far considered, and is broadly datable to the latter period of the Yarlung dynasty. The group in question is the well-known body of texts written in Tibetan on the religious history of Khotan.⁷⁹ Some of these are of great help in gaining a better understanding of religious developments during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, since they relate to specific contemporary events. In addition, they introduce in detail a direct link between Khotan and Tibet. Of particular relevance among these texts are *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa* ['The Prophecy of the Arhats of the Li Country', erroneously rendered by F.W. Thomas as 'The Prophecy of the Li Country'], *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyis* ['The Religious History of the Li Country'],⁸⁰ and *dGra.bcom.pa.dge.'dun.'phel.gyis.lung.bstan.pa* ['The Prophecy of the Arhat Sanghavardhana'].⁸¹ The first and last belong to the prophecy genre, and thus refer to future events. Yet they both actually describe a migration of Khotanese monks from Li.yul [Khotan] to Tibet which took place at the time of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and Kong.co. As the title suggests, the second text is a history of religion in Khotan, in which the episode of the migrating monks differs slightly in certain details from that related in the other two. It has been possible to broadly date *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa* by virtue of it being known that Chos.grub (770-858) worked on a Chinese edition of it around the dragon year 848,⁸² while the composition of *dGra.bcom.pa.dge.'dun.'phel.gyis.lung.bstan.pa* must predate the dragon year 812,⁸³ making it relatively close to the events it describes.

The contents of the prophecy underlying these narratives are too well known to require extensive description here. A brief note of those details pertaining to the question of the founding of Buddhist temples in Tibet will suffice. The prophecy states that Buddhism would be first introduced to Tibet by a Bodhisattva king, usually identified as Srong.btsan sgam.po,⁸¹ and that the dharma would be restored to the country in the seventh generation following him by another Bodhisattva king married to a Chinese princess called Kong.co. Though Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan is not specifically named, and did not rule in the seventh generation after Srong.btsan sgam.po, no other Tibetan king after Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan married a Chinese princess called Kong.co. It will become clear how the number seven fits into context.⁸⁵ At this time a young king would be ruling in Khotan who would persecute Buddhism. The majority of the monks would leave for Tibet, while others would find refuge in neighbouring countries such as An.se [Kucha],⁸⁶ Shu.lig [Kashgar], Bru.zha [Gilgit], and Kha.che [Kashmir]. The Khotanese monks making for Tibet would be stopped at the frontier, but Kong.co would intercede for them with the king and they would eventually be permitted to enter. Seven monasteries would be built for the Khotanese *sangha*. Three or four years later an infectious plague would spread through Tibet and cause Kong.co's death. Before dying, she would plead with the king to continue protecting the Khotanese monks, but some ministers would accuse them of having spread

the disease and oblige the king to expel them. The monks would flee first to Gandhara and then to Kausambi, where they would mysteriously slay each other.⁸⁷

The *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* describes the migration more succinctly, and adds some other interesting points. The first is that Kong.co built only one temple for the Khotanese monks, and gave them estates to support themselves. The text adds that at this time Mahayana superseded Vajrayana in Tibet: a fact that finds confirmation in the episode of Kong.co substituting the statue of Mi.lskyod.rdo.rje [Akshobhyavajra] placed by the Nepalese wife of Srong.btsan.sgam.po in the Jo.khang, with the statue of Shakyamuni brought by Wen-ch'eng kung-chu, his Chinese wife, which was originally placed in the Ra.mo.che.⁸⁸ The text goes on to say that the Khotanese *sangha* had been staying in Tibet for twelve years, when two groups of demons provoked a discord in the country which was 'worse than smallpox'.⁸⁹ According to the *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus*, the cause of the expulsion would therefore seem to be connected more with disharmony at the Tibetan court than with an actual spread of disease. *dGra.bcom.pa.dge.'dun.'phel.gyis.lung.bstan.pa* presents a less detailed account of the events as given in *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa*, but seems to stress that the persecution, though instigated by a king of Khotan hostile to Buddhism, was due also to the decaying moral standards of the *sangha* in east Turkestan.

These three texts contain several elements of no minor importance: they confirm the actual presence of Khotanese monks in Tibet, whereas those in the first two orders of sub-narratives mention no physical presence of any Buddhist from another country. They also refer to the construction of a temple or temples sponsored by Kong.co, and connect this fact directly to the sojourn of the Khotanese *sangha*. One deficiency is that no temple is named, but as will be shown below, deductions can be made from previously examined Tibetan documents produced by the kings who succeeded Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. The figure of seven given in *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa* for the number of temples built by Kong.co for the monks sounds as doubtful and unrealistic as the figure of five built during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan given in later Tibetan literature, when compared with the evidence of the records of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs. The repetition of the number seven throughout *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa*—seven generations of kings after the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, seven temples built for the monks of Khotan, and other examples in different parts of the text⁹⁰—seems to indicate a figure more symbolic than actual. The *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* attributes to Kong.co the sponsorship of only one temple for the Khotanese *sangha*, a figure which appears more likely when compared with the official records of the Yarlung dynasty described at the beginning of this chapter, in which the temple of Kwa.chu, and with the possible addition of mChims.phu, is attributed to the time of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. To pursue this narrower line of thought: if Kong.co built one temple for the monks of Khotan, this may well have been Kwa.chu. This does not exclude the possibility that more temples were built during Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's reign, but archaeological evidence does reinforce the idea that Kwa.chu was the only temple intended for the Khotanese monks, as discussed below.

At this stage, consideration should be given to a very important point in *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas.lung.bstan.pa*. When the ministers accused the Khotanese monks of responsibility for the spread of the disease, they told them: "Previously, there was no such disease in the realm of Tibet; but now, since many wandering monks of Lho.bal have come, Kong.co has passed away and many ministers and children of ministers have died." F.W. Thomas' translation of *Lho.bal* as 'the southern country of Nepal' would seem to be out of context.⁹¹ Nowhere in the prophecy are Nepalese monks cited; moreover, their sudden appearance denudes the phrase of sense. From the corresponding passage in the *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus*,⁹² though the provenance of the monks responsible for the plague is not directly stated, it is clear that the reference is to the Khotanese monks. Prof. R.A. Stein shows that the term *Lho.bal* has no connection with Nepal; he restores the common Chinese expression *jong-yi*, which stands for 'stranger', or pejoratively 'barbarian'.⁹³ The term *Lho.bal* is encountered several times in Tibetan documents, including the rdo.ring edict proclaiming the peace treaty between China and Tibet dating to 821-822, where it is the turn of the Chinese to be addressed as *Lho.bal* [foreigners, barbarians].⁹⁴ An early administrative document has led prof. Stein to interpret *Lho.bal* as meaning 'strangers of the Tun-huang area'.⁹⁵ As already stressed by him with the prophecy in mind, the *Lho.bal* of our passage must be addressed to the monks of Khotan. The context of the corresponding passage

in the *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* reinforces such a reading. In my view, Lho.bal is a generic term which identifies all strangers to the Tibetans, and in this particular context refers to strangers of Central Asian origin. It is context which determines the provenance of those to whom the term is addressed, in this case Khotan.

This interpretation produces a very significant consequence. Khri.srong.lde.btsan's bka'.mchid, after mentioning the foundation of Kwa.chu, adds that at the time his father went to heaven, ministers hostile to Buddhism destroyed it, saying that the religion and gods of Lho.bal were not to be respected.⁹⁶ Equating Lho.bal with Khotan, the possibility that the Khotanese monks were instrumental to the presence of Buddhism in Tibet and to the founding of temples finds final and decisive confirmation in the most reliable source available to us. Furthermore, the statement seems to establish a distinction between religion and its images which would suggest that not only did Buddhism come from Khotan, but also the representation of its deities. This interpretation will be found to hold true when the art of Kwa.chu is stylistically examined.

Further conclusions can be drawn regarding the date of the flight of the Khotanese monks and, consequently, the reappearance of Buddhism in Tibet. Two orders of chronological calculation can be considered. The prophecy states that three or four years after the arrival of the monks from Khotan the plague spread, Kong.co died, and the monks were expelled. Since the *Tun-huang Annals* record the death of Kong.co in the hare year 739, the year of the monks' arrival in Tibet should be placed in the rat year 736 or the ox year 737. The temple of Kwa.chu may thus have been built between the years 736 and 739. The second order of calculation derives from *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus*, which states that the monks' stay in Tibet was twelve years, which would place it between the dragon year 728 and the hare year 739. If this was the case, then Kwa.chu could have been built even before 736. However, just as the number seven frequently reappears in the prophecy, repetition of the number twelve in *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus*⁹⁷ suggests that it too may be more symbolic than actual. Even so, this period of residence (728-739) seems more likely, as Kong.co's invitation falls around the very time political change favoured the 'Bro clan over the dBa's in the dragon year 728. As we have seen, this change determined the advent of a pro-Buddhist, pro-Chinese attitude (thus also favourable to Kong.co) which lasted until the hare year 739, when the Khotanese *sangha* was expelled.

All the Tibetan texts about Khotan itself describe events in a rather apocalyptic manner. Prof. Stein has connected them to the *Chandragarbha-sutra*, and has maintained that they were stylistically modelled after it.⁹⁸ Though their prose may be a literary genre, the documents refer to a political situation in Khotan which was conducive to a local persecution of Buddhism. *Li.yul.gyi.dgra.bcom.pas lung.bstan.pa.* stating that part of the *sangha* fled to neighbouring countries, suggests that the persecution was centred on Khotan alone, possibly without serious destructive consequences since Buddhism survived in that country up to the early 11th century.⁹⁹ This seems to exclude the possibility of any military occupation of these border territories, otherwise there would have been some persecution of Buddhism in those lands also.¹⁰⁰ The *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* disputes this point when describing that monks from the sTod.mkhar bzhi [Four Garrisons] were gathered in Khotan to avoid the menace, and subsequently had to leave for Tibet in any case. Finally the second prophecy, that of the Arhat Sanghavaradhana, emphasizes the aspect of a progressive moral decay among the monks and their sponsors in east Turkestan, which led to those monks who respected their vows quitting the country. In my view, these contradictory pieces of information purport to describe what was probably a simple invitation to Tibet in tones appropriate to the prophetic literature which the respective texts are examples of.

Significantly, the prophecy includes mention of a community of Tibetan monks which was in existence at this time. Could this be a Tibetan addition to the true extent of the facts? It has been shown that ministers and not monks were sent to Kailash by Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan to invite Indian *panditas* to Tibet. The Fifth Dalai Lama states that, though the Khotanese monks were revered, they were not able to engender a Tibetan *sangha*.¹⁰¹ It is not unreasonable to assume that Buddhism was known and welcomed among a limited number of people in Tibet from the time of Srong.btsan.sgam.po to that of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan.¹⁰² Though Buddhism may have been only marginally diffused during the late part of the latter's reign, what little dharma there was became seriously endangered. On this matter too, the Tibetan texts on Khotan disagree with later tradition.



Fig.1 The temple of Kwa.chu, situated in the 'On valley, and dating from the time of the Yarlung dynasty (Courtesy of H.E. Richardson).

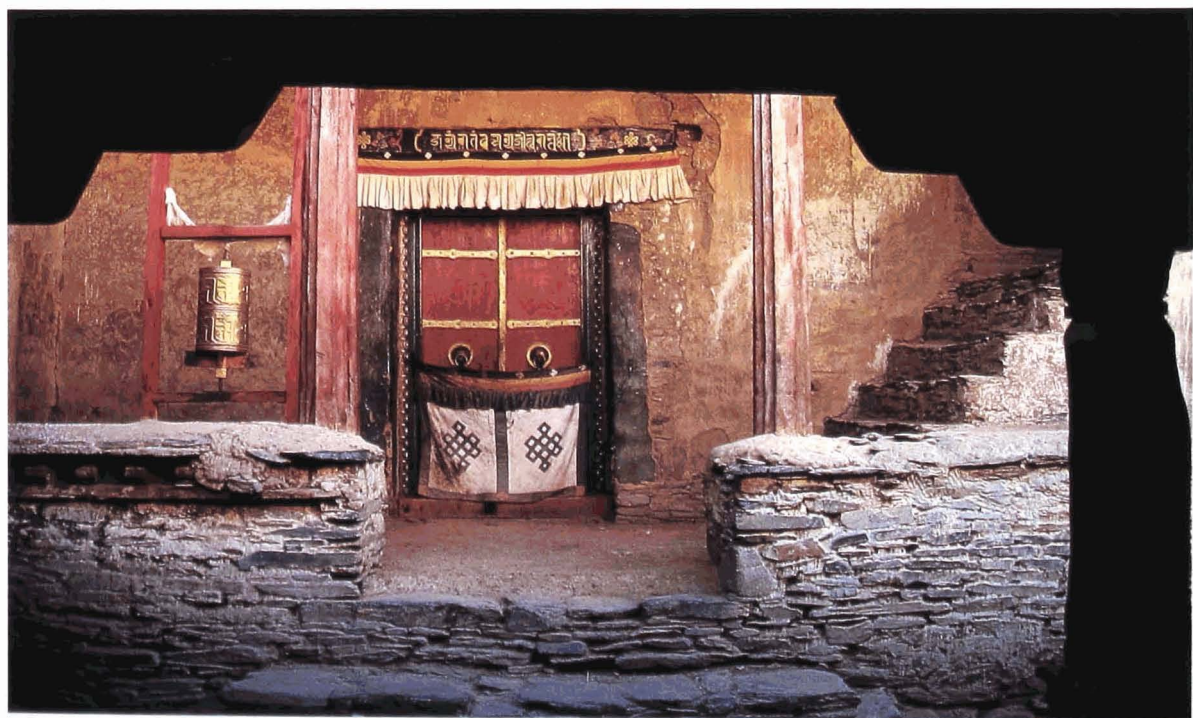


Plate 1 The entrance to the ancient temple founded between 728 and 739 A.D. by the Chinese princess Kong.co



Plate 2 Kwa.chu's main image, the monumental Buddha in clay. Made between 728-739, it is possibly the oldest surviving statue so far known in Central Tibet.



Plate 3 The Buddha's head. The statue is contemporary with the temple's founding by the Chinese princess Kong.co for Khotanese monks.



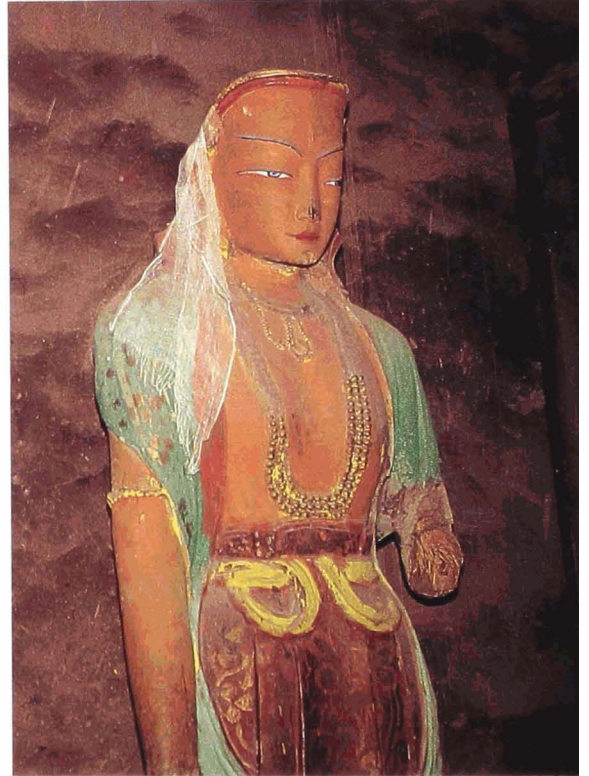
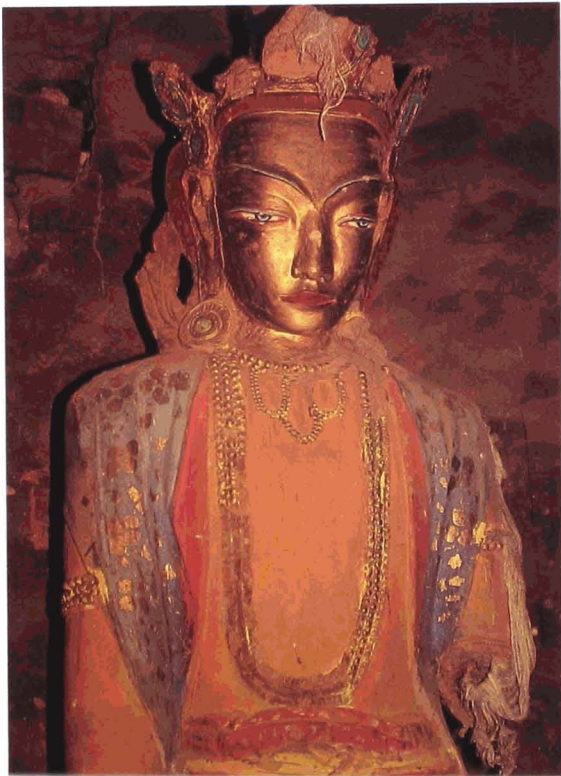
Plate 4 The Buddha and flanking Bodhisattvas.



Plates 5 & 6 Facing rows of standing Bodhisattvas. These statues were made during a second building phase which took place after 822.



Plate 7 Detail of plate 5. The temple was renovated and the Bodhisattvas installed by the great Tibetan general 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje to purge himself of the defilements of his campaigns.



Plates 8a & b Images claimed by locals to portray king Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and his wife Kong.co. The statues are contemporary to the standing Bodhisattvas.

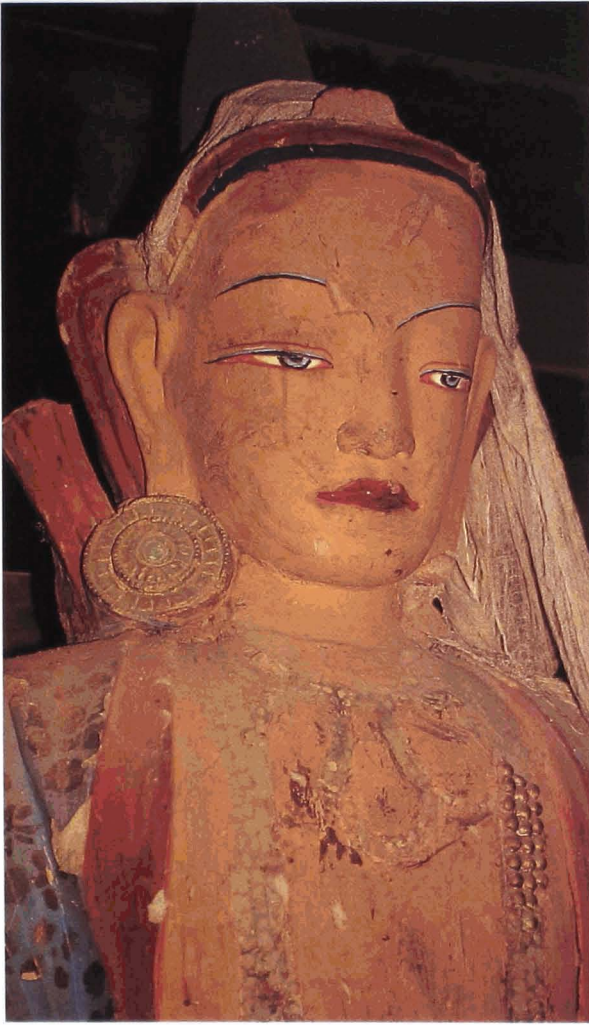


Plate 9 Detail of a Bodhisattva.



Plate 10 The best preserved Bodhisattva, whose ancient features can still be detected under thick layers of repainting which took place through the centuries.



Plate 11 Vajrapani, who guards the cycle of Kwa.chu deities. The other guardian, a Hayagriva, has suffered substantial damage (second phase after 822).



Plates 12 & 13 Capitals with a winged tiger or a chimera, and flaming jewel motif (728-739).



Plate 14 Lotus medallion of Central Asian origin (728-739) on the main Buddha's throne, the only painted fragment surviving at Kwa.chu.

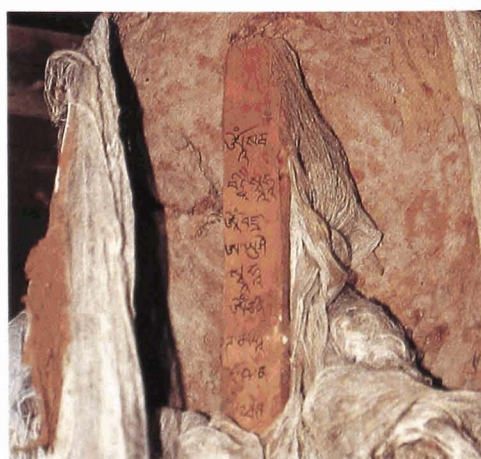


Plate 15 Dharani (formula) inscribed on a statue's consecrational pole (after 822). The statues, dating to 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje's phase, reveal, when damaged, similar inscriptions on their inner cores.



fig.2 Seated Buddha. Painting on wood.
From Domoko. National Museum New Delhi.



fig.3 Standing Shakyamuni. Painting on wood.
From Farhad-Beg-Yailaki. National Museum
New Delhi.



fig.4 Hariti. Fragment of a mural from Farhad-Beg-Yailaki. Central Antiquities Museum New Delhi.

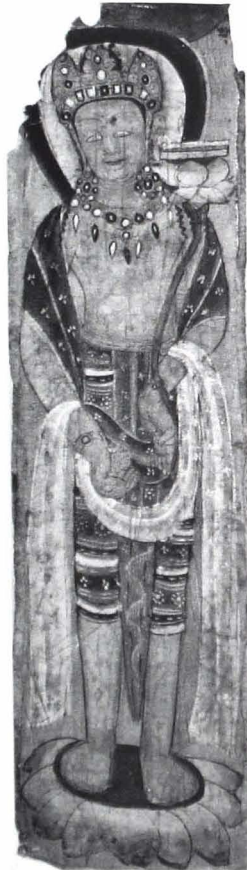


fig.5 (*left*) Mañjushri. Banner from Tun-huang. National Museum, New Delhi



fig.6 (*right*) Bodhisattva. Banner from Tun-huang. National Museum New Delhi.

which portrays events as taking place in a religious atmosphere. Though Buddhism may well have been persecuted after Kong.co's death, the account—in particular as represented in the *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus*—describes events in terms of direct action against the Khotanese *sangha*. This text contains a meaningful passage that succinctly illuminates the situation in those times. As noted before, it describes two groups of demons as having caused discord that was 'worse than smallpox'. This is a common Tibetan expression used to convey the sense of a political component being involved,¹⁰³ and therefore the passage certifies that two antagonist factions instigated a struggle. The turmoil ended with Kong.co's death, probably by murder, and the defeat of the pro-Chinese party to which the Khotanese monks, in the light of the long relationship between Khotan and China, may well have belonged. The account in the *sBa.bzbed*,¹⁰⁴ where the adventures of Sang.shi are related, tells of a full anti-Buddhist swing that developed in the years after 739. It seems that the pro-*Bon* party progressively gained the upper hand, and that the situation lasted for several more years after the assassination of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan in 755.¹⁰⁵

Following their expulsion, the Khotanese monks found refuge in Gandhara. The move was justified in terms of political expediency in that Gandhara, or the kingdom of Kabul as it was by this time known, was ruled by the pro-Buddhist Turki Shahi dynasty. The episode of the brief influence of Khotanese Buddhism on Tibet and Kong.co's contribution to the presence of dharma in her adoptive country which resulted in the building of the temple of Kwa.chu, was over.

Kwa.chu—the first art phase

The temple of Kwa.chu [fig.1] is located in the 'On valley, part of the ancient territory of Brag.dmar, which was one of the chief seats of the Yarlung dynasty. Well known places such as bSam.yas, mChims.phu, lDan.mkhar, mGrin.bzang and 'Om.bu.tshal were important royal seats within Brag.dmar, which has a particular connection with Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, as the *Tun-buang Annals* note a large number of royal sojourns in the area between 704 and 746, when Brag.dmar was chosen as a winter residence.¹⁰⁶ Kwa.chu is the easternmost monument known to us in Brag.dmar, the 'On valley being on the Brag.dmar-Dags.yul border.¹⁰⁷

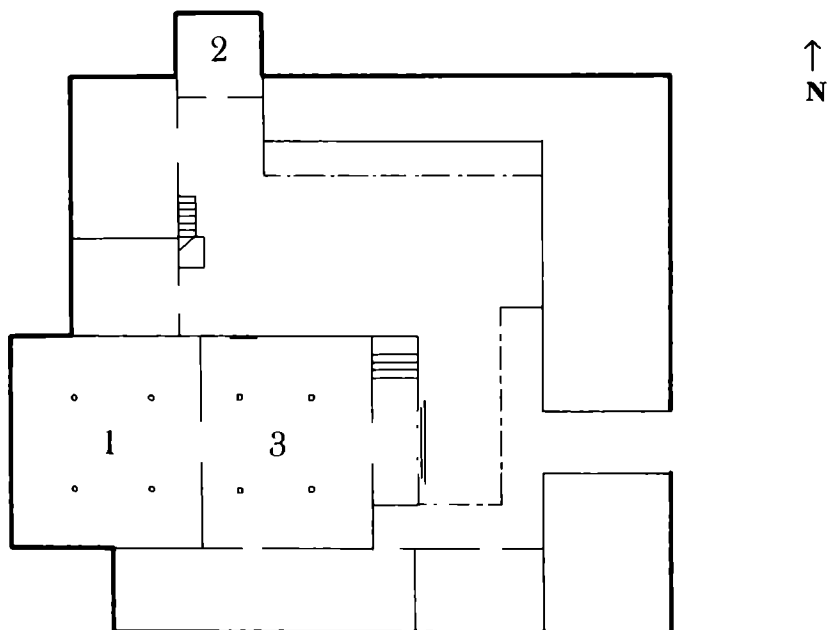
Apart from the broad consideration that Kwa.chu is located in one of the areas most favoured by the Yarlung dynasty, another factor proves of particular significance in its siting. The *Mes.dbon rnam.thar*¹⁰⁸ states that at the time of the later diffusion of Buddhism in Central Tibet [bstan.pa.phyi.dar], the great master kLu.mes, one of the teachers instrumental to its reintroduction in the territory of dBus.gTsang from the eastern regions, was offered a number of decaying monasteries to reestablish in the Brag.dmar area. He refused all, with the sole exception of Kwa.chu, since it was located on the boundary between dBu.ru (Lhasa and its environs) and g.Yo.ru (the Yarlung area), the two territories that together represented the cradle of the Yarlung civilisation.¹⁰⁹ The location of Kwa.chu lha.khang was no random choice, but was geo-politically strategic.

The temple contains a single structure of great antiquity.¹¹⁰ Several other chapels have been built around it which are generally considered to date from the time of Jo.bo.rje Atisha¹¹¹ and onwards. In its present condition, no trace exists of any remains that can be dated to Atisha's time. The chapel supposed to have been founded by him contains murals of a much later date depicting him with two of his disciples.¹¹² With the exception of a very late 'du.khang [assembly hall] adjoining the Yarlung dynasty chapel, the rest of the temple buildings have been completely destroyed. I shall thus concentrate on the very early objects that remain in this remarkable small chapel [pl.1]:

1. The main image is a monumental clay Shakyamuni Buddha sitting on a huge throne that occupies almost all of the far wall from the entrance [pl.2].¹¹³ The ceiling is extraordinarily high for the diminutive size of the room in order to accommodate the massive Buddha and its huge base. As a result, the room has a most unusual vertical elongation.

2. A fragment of a painting on the Buddha's throne, hidden below modern wooden scaffolding, depicts a lotus painted in dark blue on a yellow/orange background of a type well known in Central Asia [pl.14].
3. Four tall wooden pillars sustain the ceiling, crowned by capitals on which decorative subjects are carved among highly stylized motifs. The carvings adorn only their 'front' surface, visible from the door [pls.12 & 13].
4. A group of clay statues stands along the side walls, consisting of four Bodhisattvas and one guardian [sgo.srung] on each side [pls.5,6 & 11]. On the left of the entrance against the door wall there is a pair of standing male and female clay images which are similar in appearance to the Bodhisattvas [pls.8a-b].
5. Book shelves of thick, solid wood line the side walls, the Bodhisattvas and guardians being anchored into them. No trace of murals can be detected on any of the walls.

The Temple of Kachu



1. Chapel dating from the Yarlung dynasty. 2. Atisha chapel. 3. *du.khang* (assembly hall)

The main image and the pillar capitals will be examined first, then the side wall images and the problems associated with them. The capitals make it evident that the present-day structure of Kwa.chu is the original structure of the temple. Their carvings represent a very archaic rendition of mythical animals—a lion, a tiger (or perhaps chimera, as it is winged) and a dragon—as well as a *chintamani* [pls.12,13]. Such decorations are expressions of a phase more ancient than the one represented by similar zoomorphic decorations on the rdo.ring of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs,¹¹⁴ and stylistic evidence points to these pillars having been made in Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's time. (The evolution of these animal motifs will be discussed below.) If the carved capitals have supported the ceiling from the time of the temple's inception, then it follows that the structure was originally conceived to house the great figure of Shakyamuni Buddha to whom the temple is still dedicated.

Turning back to the question of Kong.co's sponsorship of a temple and of the stay of the Khotanese monks in Tibet as mentioned in literary sources, from the perspective of art history it seems that the earliest certified Buddhist edifices in Tibet according to textual sources, such as the Jo.khang and the Ra.mo.che in Lhasa, were the products of foreign modes.¹¹⁵ All sources invariably attribute the Jo.khang to Nepalese workmanship, while the Ra.mo.che temple is always considered a Chinese

edifice. Of the early temples which survived up to the recent past, Khra.'brug showed a structure that was modelled after the Jo.khang pattern, and should also be considered foreign in style.¹¹⁶ Since the building of Buddhist structures was extremely sporadic from the time of Srong.btsan sgam.po to the accession of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan, it is highly improbable that a native school of Tibetan art could have evolved before the regnal years of the latter king.¹¹⁷ While local artists able to create painted and sculpted images had not yet appeared, or at least no trace of their work has survived, a flourishing school of the minor arts was well established in Tibet. This is testified to by the decorations on the Kwa.chu pillars and the rdo.ring of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs, as well as by certain literary references, one of these concerning a gift by Kong.co and Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan to the Chinese emperor Hsüan-tsung,¹¹⁸ in which a prospering Tibetan production of precious metal objects, mainly animals, is mentioned.¹¹⁹

The work of the master artists involved in the creation of images of the deities and that of the artisans responsible for the minor decorative arts in gold, silver and wood, among other media, is constantly distinguished in Tibetan literature and tradition from the time of Srong.btsan sgam.po to the present. Master artists [lha.bzo.ba mkhas.pa] worked on images of the deities, while artisans [bzo.ba] worked on the decorative elements of the temples. The use of foreign artists from Srong.btsan sgam.po to Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's time does not, of course, exclude the possibility that Tibetan artisans could also have been employed in producing images in some isolated cases. However, it does seem that when a temple associated with royal patronage was built, the esteem in which foreign artists were held meant that it was they who were invited to perform the task. Kwa.chu itself offers concrete evidence of this practice. The main image appears to be foreign, not so much in its differences from known Tibetan styles (which probably did not exist at this time) as in the deep traces of Khotanese influence it shows. My own opinion is that the Kwa.chu Buddha is an example of the balance between Indian and Chinese modes of expression achieved by the Khotanese idiom in differing degrees of intensity. The latter style owes its uniqueness to a masterful capacity for recreating elements from those two great artistic traditions in a highly individualized synthesis. The art of post-Gupta India and that of T'ang China found in Khotan a fresh and innovative meeting point. The Kwa.chu Buddha combines post-Gupta spiritual aesthetics with the solemnity of certain T'ang models, yet neither predominates, as the result is assertively Khotanese in a Buddha that is both serene and intense [pls.2,4]. It is to be lamented that the facial details of the statue are obscured and stiffened by thick layers of cold gold [pl.3].¹²⁰

Though surviving works of art from Khotan are not extensive, what remains does allow comparison to help trace the Kwa.chu Buddha's stylistic provenance. Examples which show affinities with this Buddha include some of the art from the oasis of Domoko and its sub-site Farhad-Beg-Yailaki.¹²¹ Of particular note is the fragment of a mural depicting Hariti [fig.4] (F.XII.004) and a standing Shakyamuni [fig.3] (F.II.iii.002, obverse) from Farhad-Beg-Yailaki, and the painting on wood showing a seated Buddha [fig.2] (U.M.01) from Domoko.¹²² Though all are paintings and lack the third dimension, they nevertheless reveal several similarities with the Kwa.chu Buddha. The spherical shape of the head, with surfaces arranged in a smooth continuum devoid of angles and broken planes [pl.3], find parallel in the round outlines of the faces in the paintings, resulting in remarkably similar expressions. In both cases the hairline is rendered in a semi-circular line; the *ushnishbas* [the head protuberance, one of the 32 *lakshanas*, or marks of the Buddha] are compact and appear integral to the skull; the noses are straight and vigorous, with well-defined perpendicular nostrils. With the exception of the standing Shakyamuni from Farhad-Beg-Yailaki, the eyes all have extremely elongated lines and appear not to be fully open: a device that adds intensity to the expression. While lacking the definite ethnic characterization of Chinese art, the eyelids of the Kwa.chu Buddha and Hariti are slightly swollen, yet no longer appear Indian. The eyebrows of both the Kwa.chu Buddha and the Khotanese images show the same neat form. The lips of the Domoko Buddha show greatest similarity to those of the Kwa.chu Buddha of the Khotanese paintings under consideration, with a well-arched upper lip and a straight lower lip. All the images share the same upturned corners of the mouth resulting in a restrained smile. In all cases the chins are small, subdued and well-suited to the absence of marked planes which is a general distinctive feature of the Kwa.chu Buddha's head. A thick, short neck is a feature common to the Kwa.chu Buddha and the Hariti mural, and in lesser degree to the Domoko Buddha and the

standing Shakyamuni of Farhad-Beg-Yailaki. In addition, the Kwa.chu Buddha has the same earlobes as the Domoko figure, with a slight upward curl at the lobes. The hands are large and disproportionate, not unlike those of the standing Shakyamuni. Finally, the imposing, stocky body of the Kwa.chu Buddha extending along the horizontal plane mirrors that of Hariti and conveys an impression of scale and permanence [pl.4].

Among those archaeological sites falling under the artistic and cultural influence of Khotan, it can be seen that Domoko and Farhad-Beg-Yailaki probably constitute the stylistic source of the Kwa.chu Buddha, and help to establish the existence of direct contact between the Khotan oasis and Kwa.chu.¹²³ Khri.srong.lde.btsan's statement that Kwa.chu was founded, and the gods and religion of Khotan adopted during the reign of his father finds conclusive corroboration at the temple itself, where literary and archaeological evidence coincide.

At first glance, the temple at Kwa.chu appears to be devoid of any murals, but a thorough search reveals a fragment of painting on the throne which is completely hidden by the modern wooden scaffolding which supports the Buddha's base. As the lotus medallion represented in the fragment [pl.14] is integral to the layout of the great Buddha, there is no reason to suspect that it does not form part of the original decoration of the throne. The lotus medallion is an ornamental motif that has been adopted far and wide throughout Central Asia. In places such as Tun-huang, where a large number of murals have survived, this kind of ornamentation was used profusely to decorate lantern ceilings, as well as empty spaces in painted scenes.¹²⁴ However, the surviving Tun-huang lotus medallions, which date from the T'ang period, are noticeably different from that at Kwa.chu, and the paucity of surviving painted specimens means that virtually no parallels can be found in Khotan. The exception is a decorative pattern which appears on the vest and the throne of a painted image of the Silk God from the Khotanese site Dandan-Oilik (D.VII.6, verso),¹²⁵ which bears a striking resemblance to the central part of the Kwa.chu lotus medallion. The latter is in the shape of a bud composed of a double set of four conjoining petals surrounded by a ring of further petals. The central pattern of the Kwa.chu lotus is slightly more complex than that of the floral decoration on the image of the Silk God, but remarkably their conception and outline are identical, and while this in itself cannot be considered conclusive, it offers a minor piece of evidence in support of the existence of artistic intercourse between Khotan and Kwa.chu.

While the presence of this lotus medallion may lead to the assumption that it is part of an extensive pictorial scheme, existing evidence acts as a constraint. On the grounds of the evidence provided by this only surviving example, it has to be assumed that painting at the time of the foundation of Kwa.chu was conceived as a decorative element of architecture and sculpture. This is far from the purpose of mural painting, which possesses an integral religio-iconographic function. This lotus flower exercises no autonomous function as part of the Buddha's throne. It is a finishing touch applied to a sculptural element within the temple, and as such it is likely that the artist responsible for the execution of the medallion was a sculptor rather than a painter.

The lion, dragon, tiger/chimera and *chintamani* emblems [pls.12,13] carved on the capitals of the four pillars are typical decorative features also to be found on rdo.ring-s.¹²⁶ Their association with royalty and status as royal insignia is proven by their presence on the stone pillars of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs at 'Phyong.rgyas. That they are also found at Kwa.chu should be anticipated in the light of the latter's royal sponsorship. It is no surprise to find such distinctly Chinese influenced decorations in the carvings, since Tibetan artisans were conversant in this zoomorphic style which, while born in China, had become the common property of peoples throughout Central Asia.¹²⁷ The animal carvings on the Kwa.chu capitals maintain a close fidelity to the idiom used for similar decorations from Sui to T'ang times in China. Their highly stylized mode of portrayal indicates a proximity to their models which becomes progressively tenuous in the later carvings on the rdo.ring of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and later Sad.na.legs. On the former there is a carving of a lion that still shows an imaginative rendition that remains essentially Chinese, though already distant from the Kwa.chu animals, and one of a dragon that seems reminiscent of a similar example on the Sad.na.legs rdo.ring. These carvings appear to constitute an evolution from the style of the Kwa.chu capitals, still echoed by Khri.srong.lde.btsan's lion, to the style seen on Sad.na.legs' rdo.ring, embryonically represented by

the dragon. In fact, the Sad.na.legs dragon is definitely more distant from the Tang prototypes, having lost the 'S'-shaped body characteristic of all Kwa.chu animals.

The Kwa.chu carvings, unlike the zoomorphic examples described above which already begin to display elements of a vernacular rendition of the subject, appear to belong to an earlier 8th century phase when Tibetan wood carvers followed the Chinese model more strictly.

One further detail on the capitals remains to be noted. The beautifully executed reliefs of circular cloud motifs represent a kind of decoration that has survived through the centuries to recent times. Very late capitals exist with the same cloud design, though far less finely carved.

Finally, the Khotanese artistic contribution to Kwa.chu pertained to sculpture alone, while the Tibetans themselves were probably responsible for the actual building work and the pillar carvings. It is hardly credible that Khotanese artists would have used materials and resources familiar to them unless a major construction programme was involved. Kwa.chu lha.khang did not fall in the category of an extensive edification, therefore the building materials used—stone and lime—were definitely Tibetan in origin.

Later developments concerning Kwa.chu

In comparison to the Buddha image, the Bodhisattvas and guardians in the chapel [pls.5,6] appear grossly provincial and stylistically distinct. As the Buddha belongs to the earliest phase at Kwa.chu, it follows that these figures originate from a different time, and a different cultural and artistic environment. The substantial artistic diversity among the Kwa.chu statues compels research into Tibetan records to consider any evidence of other building activities and cultural connections relating to Kwa.chu, since it is highly improbable that such a diminutive chapel could have been the product of two different, yet contemporary schools of art.

From the time of Kong.co's death, a period of Buddhist obscurantism emerged in Tibet. It is not clear whether this persecution refers solely to the expulsion of the Khotanese monks, or also involved other strata of Tibetan society. Khri.srong.lde.btsan's bka'.mchid connects the Buddhist persecution directly to the expulsion of the gods and religion of Lho.bal (Khotan), and as such it is quite possible that it was part of a widespread uneasiness in Tibet determined by profound political factors.¹²⁸ It is also conceivable that other circumstances engendered these developments. By this time the Chinese had begun a full-scale offensive against the Tibetans, who no longer had the support of their old allies, the Western Turks. Indeed, the Chinese were able to inflict crushing defeats for over a decade.¹²⁹ Under these conditions the pro-Tibetan party at court must have found the presence of the pro-Chinese faction, represented by Kong.co and the Li.yul monks, particularly galling. The sNa.nam clan would have played a major role in the pro-Tibetan party, which in turn must have induced a gradual change in the Tibetan political balance, though the long-serving first minister 'Bro Cung.bzang remained in his post at least until the dog year 746, when he was replaced by his associate 'Bal sKyes.bzang llong.tshab. The latter was reputedly one of those who had assassinated Khri.lde gtsug.rtsan in 755, when the situation went against the ruling party at court, and a ban on Buddhism was imposed. The possibility that the 'Bro minister saved his position by sacrificing his sympathy for the pro-Chinese party and adopting a less Buddhist-orientated stance cannot be dismissed. Perhaps it is coincidence that lJang.tsha Lha.dbon died in 739, the same year that Kong.co passed away and the Khotanese monks were expelled.¹³⁰ It may well be another coincidence that three years later in the horse year 742, the sNa.nam wife of Khri.lde gtsug.rtsan, described in the *Tin-buang Annals* as 'all-powerful', gave birth to the new heir, who was to become king Khri.srong.lde.btsan.¹³¹ An incongruous and anachronistic myth contained in the later sources concerning a quarrel between sNa.nam bza' and Kong.co (who was by this time dead) over who had given birth to the child can be seen as a meaningful record of the wider struggle between the sNa.nam and Kong.co factions.¹³² It can be further deduced from the *Tin-buang Annals* that the sNa.nam clan played an increasingly dominant role, and that in the sheep year 743 disagreements continued.¹³³ The *sBa.bzbed* also describes events of that period in following the adventures of sBa Sang.shi, sent to China to collect

Buddhist books:¹³⁴ it is possible that he was removed from the centre of power as both a Buddhist and of Chinese origin. After the assassination of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan in 755, his two ministers 'Bal sKyes.bzang ldong.tshab and Lang Nyes.gzigs, both ostensibly pro-Buddhist, were charged with the murder.

The real nature of the political situation and of the events which occurred at the death of the king represents one of the most obscure pages of Tibetan history. The Zhol rdo.ring inscription¹³⁵ eulogizing sTag.sgra klu.khong claims that the supposed murderers were accused owing to his personal intervention. The *Tin-buang Annals* in fact record their prosecution as taking place in the year 755.¹³⁶ Another ancient document, the bka'.mchid of Khri.srong.lde.btsan, states that Buddhism was banned at that time.¹³⁷ This statement is arguably reliable, as Khri.srong.lde.btsan would personally have witnessed the events in his youth; moreover, the nature of the text itself seems to suggest an objective description. Since the later literature is Buddhist, claims that the ministers were innocent and falsely accused can be no surprise.¹³⁸ A few certain facts can be deduced:

- A veritable *coup d'état* occurred in 755, since one of the two ministers charged with the murder was the chief minister; a change in the government ensued.
- The pro-Buddhist faction was removed, and the anti-Buddhist faction came to power.
- Buddhism was banned, and *kbrims.bu.chung* [a form of martial law] was enforced.
- Khri.srong.lde.btsan was enthroned to ensure political continuity, but did not become ruler *de facto* until he was 20 years old.

Other information that can be gleaned from the episode emerges from the typical dichotomy of contrasting interpretations of a revealed controversy. It may be true that the two ministers were innocent and were accused to assist the coup, their prosecution being used by the usurpers both to legitimize the new authority and discredit Buddhism. It may be equally true that the two ruling ministers resorted to the desperate gambit of regicide to secure the already vanishing power to themselves and assert their rule by any means. The case remains open, and the explanations presented to date on the basis of the available evidence are far from satisfactory.

Details on the fate of Kwa.chu are indirectly obtainable from certain literary sources reporting on the period of the 755 revolt and the death of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. Some of the Buddhist monuments attributed to Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan by later literature, but not by the royal documents issued by his son and Sad.na.legs, were seemingly destroyed at this time. The *sBa.bzbed*,¹³⁹ which is basically dedicated to the life and activities of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and thus concerned with giving an accurate description of events which took place during the king's youth, and dPa'.bo gtsug.lag' 'phreng.ba's *mKhas.pa'i dga'.ston*, are both precise in identifying Lhasa mKhar.brag and Brag.dmar mGrin.bzang as temples that were dismantled during the persecution. Most of the other later sources also agree on this matter.¹⁴⁰ The exception is Nyang.ral, who in his *Chos 'byung*,¹⁴¹ states that the temples which suffered ravage by men were the Lhasa mKhar.brag and Kwa.chu. This is unconvincing, not only because the presence of the Khotanese-style Buddha statue gainsays this claim of destruction, but also because Nyang.ral contradicts himself in his *Mes.dbon.rnam.thar*,¹⁴² where he states that Lhasa mKhar.brag and mGrin.bzang were the temples actually demolished. It would seem that Kwa.chu survived the persecution.

During the reigns of kings Khri.srong.lde.btsan, Mu.ne btsan.po and Sad.na.legs, no activity focused on the temple.¹⁴³ The former and the latter were both great Buddhist kings, but their energies were channelled into the building of new monasteries, and Kwa.chu was neglected. A short reference to Kwa.chu is found in Nel.pa pan.di.ta's list of temples whose foundation is attributed to ministers of the Yarlung kings.¹⁴⁴ Under the minister Pa.tshab sTong.bar sdom.dzam, Nel.pa pan.di.ta says that in order to cleanse the karmic defilements accruing to him following his seizure of sTod.khar bzhi [sic], he founded the gLing mKhas.pa *mchod.rten* [stupa] in Byang, built Man.dha.ra.ba'i lha.khang in gTsang, and renovated Brag.dmar lha.khang in dBu.¹⁴⁵ In another text, the anonymous and possibly later *rGyal.rabs.sogs.Bod.kyi.yig.tshang*, a similar list of foundations by royal ministers is given. Here, the gLing mKhas.pa mchod.rten in Byang, and also the construction of Brag.dmar Kwa.chu [spelled here Ka.chu, rather than Kwa.chul] are attributed to the same Pa.tshab sTong.bar.¹⁴⁶ However, he is virtually an unknown figure in Tibetan history, and as a consequence it is very difficult to assess both

the man himself and the context of his life. However, his seizure of the 'sTod.mkhar bzhi', which is the standard Tibetan for the Four Garrisons in East Turkestan, permits some comment.¹⁴⁷ The only occasion when the Tibetans held all the Four Garrisons concurrently after the reign of Khri.lde gtsug.rtsan, and thus after the foundation of Kwa.chu, was for a short period around 791, during the reign of his son Khri.srong.lde.btsan.¹⁴⁸

These obscure references find clarification and a different assessment in the *IDE'u chos. 'hyung*, an earlier work than Nel.pa pan.di.ta's text, from which the latter seems to have drawn inspiration. *IDE'u chos. 'hyung* contains a thorough classification of the temples founded by the various ministers under the heading *kber.brgyad*, and defined as the eight gtsug.lag.khang built in dedication to the victims of war by eight great Tibetan commanders in order to purify their defilements.¹⁴⁹ What is useful about this classification is that all eight gtsug.lag.khang are carefully identified, and their builders noted. It reveals that Nel.pa pan.di.ta abridged this list and confused the builders of the temples, linking temples with commanders who had no part in their construction. In the light of such revelations, the reliability of Nel.pa pan.di.ta's statements regarding Pa.tshab sTong.'bar as the renovator of Kwa.chu should be reconsidered. It can be ascertained that Pa.tshab sTong.'bar and sTong.'byams built only the Man.dha.ra.ba'i gtsug.lag.khang and no other temple, in dedication to the victims of the seizure of sTod.mkhar bzhi. The most relevant information in *IDE'u chos. 'hyung* regarding Kwa.chu, is the attribution of its renovation not to the Pa.tshab minister, but to the famous 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang in dedication to the war victims of 'zhang.po rGya'. This Tibetan expression, literally meaning 'China's maternal uncle', describes the relationship of the emperor to the Tibetan kings after the dynastic marriages to Chinese princesses. It will be seen that archaeological evidence also supports the assignment of this new phase of activity at Kwa.chu to the time of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, and later than that of Pa.tshab sTong.'bar. 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje appears in the sources as one of the chief ministers of king Khri.gtsug.lde.btsan, commonly known as Ral.pa.can, though his political career began earlier.¹⁵⁰ *IDE'u chos. 'hyung* indirectly supplies us with the information that he was posted to the Chinese frontier, and that he must have fought the Chinese. From what we know about him, 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje personified the spirit and the ideas adopted by Ral.pa.can for his reign in an exemplary manner: bold military successes juxtaposed with a longing for peace and a keen devotion to Buddhism. Among all the kings of the Yarlung dynasty, Ral.pa.can, together with Srong.btsan sgam.po and Khri.srong.lde.btsan, is credited as one of the three who did the most for the Buddhist dharma.¹⁵¹

Born in the dog year 806,¹⁵² Ral.pa.can ascended the throne in the sheep year 815,¹⁵³ on the death of his father Sad.na.legs. He was the middle of five sons. The eldest, Lha.sras gTsang.ma, took Buddhist vows, while the second son, gLang.dar.ma, is laconically indicated by the sources as 'unfit to reign'.¹⁵⁴ The decision to favour Ral.pa.can was plausibly taken by the ministers, and the above statement would appear to hide a competitive candidacy for the throne between the two brothers, and provide another example of two factions struggling for power so common to early Tibetan history. That Ral.pa.can had to face internal opposition is a fact that all the sources make plain. His two younger brothers, Lhun.rje and Lhun.grub, died young, and were thus not entitled to royal burial.¹⁵⁵

In the early part of Ral.pa.can's life, Tibetan foreign policy was addressed towards an aggressive military approach to relations with its neighbours. He brought the empire to its maximum physical extent,¹⁵⁶ conquering parts of India, Nepal, Khotan, sBal.ti, Bru.zha, dMang Zhang.zhung, Hor.yul,¹⁵⁷ Sog.yul,¹⁵⁸ Yu.gur, and Ka.mi.log.¹⁵⁹ Yet Ral.pa.can's greatest political achievement was the 821-822 peace treaty with China, which brought a period of lasting stability in the ever-strained relations between the two countries.¹⁶⁰ The Sino-Tibetan border was demarcated at Gong.gu rMe.ru, and two temples were built on the spot, one Tibetan and one Chinese. rDo.ring bearing the bilingual text of the peace edict were set up at Ra.sa gtsug.lag.khang, Ke.shi khri.sgo (the imperial palace in the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an) and Gong.gu rMe.ru itself.¹⁶¹ The name of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang appears on the edict as commander-in-chief of the army, and the second most important signatory after the supreme monk-minister Bran.ka dPal.gyi.yon.tan.¹⁶² While this inscription describes 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje as holder of the highest military rank, the list of ministers in the *Tun-huang Chronicles* names him as chief minister during the reign of Ral.pa.can.¹⁶³ However, because of a lacuna in that line of the treaty edict pertaining to 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, it cannot be ruled out that a further

title position was attached to his name. At the same time, the evidence provided by the list of chief ministers in the *Tan-huang Chronicles* cannot be dismissed in view of their known accuracy. Hence a kind of joint rule has to be envisaged, with Bran.ka dPal.gyi.yon.tan possibly dealing more specifically with administrative matters and 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje with military affairs. This interpretation already holds true for the sKar.chung inscription. In its 'sworn account' [bka'.gtsigs] we find Sad.na.legs' chief minister 'Bro Khri.gzu ram.shags subordinated to two high ranking monks in his government in the list of signatories: the very same Bran.ka dPal.gyi.yon.tan, with Myang Ting.nge.'dzin bzang.po.¹⁶⁴ A further reason why Bran.ka dPal was given preeminence in the inscription is that he was probably the architect of the Sino-Tibetan treaty.¹⁶⁵

The career of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang can be outlined from the different sources in some detail. He was possibly a simple *dmag.dpon* [army officer] at the time of the sKar.chung edict, as evident from its bka'.gtsigs noted above, which he appears to have signed under an abridged form of his name, Zhang 'Bro sTag.¹⁶⁶ Soon after the fifth month of the year 810 he received a letter from the emperor of China, who asked for the restitution of three prefectures in the hands of the Tibetans. He is addressed therein as 'great minister'.¹⁶⁷ By this time he is likely to have been the commander of the Tibetan troops on the north-east frontier. In 816 he directed a raid into Yu.gur [=Uighur] territory to a distance of two days' journey from their capital Ordubaliq.¹⁶⁸ In 819 he attacked the Chinese town of Yen-chou, by which time he is recorded as 'first minister'.¹⁶⁹ While negotiations were under way for the peace treaty with China in early 821, there was a violent Tibetan incursion into Chinese territory¹⁷⁰ documented in the *Nyang.ral chos. 'byung*.¹⁷¹ resulting in a great slaughter of Chinese perpetrated by Tibetan troops from the ru.bzhi. An unknown, yet strategically sited castle called gCes.[lCes] mkhar [Ch. Ch'ing-sai] was overrun with the consequence that a network of Chinese outposts fell into Tibetan hands.¹⁷² It is not clear whether 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje led the incursion, but as the highest Tibetan military authority, he must have been involved in it. Another peace treaty with the Chinese and the Yu.gur was signed by Ral.pa.can in 823.¹⁷³ that had possibly been arranged by 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje in person.¹⁷⁴ In the prayers discovered at Tun-huang, 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, the king and the minister Zhang lha.bzang are eulogized on the occasion of the erection of a rdo.ring and temple at De.ga g.yu.tshal in the border area of dByar.mo.thang, where the treaty is said to have been signed. This is another example showing the powerful 'Bro minister in his other aspect as a pious Buddhist who was part of Ral.pa.can's religiously-orientated policy.

With the signing of the two treaties, a lasting and productive peace was achieved with the former enemies of Tibet. For the first time in decades there was no conflict on the borders, and the remaining twenty years or so of Ral.pa.can's reign were no longer under the threat of war.¹⁷⁵ In the latter part of his life, the king and his ministers were able to devote themselves to Buddhist activities, and the *lDe'u chos. 'byung* accredits Ral.pa.can with a number of religious foundations carried out in remission of defilements.¹⁷⁶ The passage reads like a statement taken by lDe'u from the above mentioned kher.brgyad classification, which also included Ral.pa.can's minister 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, among others.

Buddhism during the reign of Ral.pa.can

With the preeminence he accorded Buddhism and Buddhist monks, Ral.pa.can can be considered the true founder of Tibetan theocratic power. He perfected a political system which had first been adopted by his father Sad.na.legs. Though his politico-religious model did not last long, it did introduce the concept and demonstrate the potential ability of Buddhism to be the cultural focus of almost every aspect of society, politics and daily life. The religious life combined with political perspectives, and the precepts of the Buddhist dharma became the rules to be applied and strictly observed,¹⁷⁷ supplanting the previous order. Royal favour was bestowed upon the monks, so that the highest positions in the political and administrative structure of the Tibetan state were often occupied by the clergy. Taxes were collected in favour of the *sangha*, and seven families were allocated for the sustenance of a single monk.¹⁷⁸ Ral.pa.can is also quoted as having encouraged conversion to Buddhism,¹⁷⁹ but it is difficult to assess the degree of compulsion.

One of his most significant religious achievement was to bring to completion an enterprise started by Sad.na.legs, proclaimed in an edict of 814. A definitive Tibetan lexicon was conceived, to be utilized in the translation into Tibetan of Buddhist works in foreign languages.¹⁸⁰ The work was feasibly formulated in the dragon year 824¹⁸¹ and resulted in the renowned *Mahavyutpatti*. It consists of a Sanskrit-Tibetan glossary of religious terms, with a translation into a contemporary 'modern' Tibetan [skad.gsar] and a commentary explaining the meaning of the more difficult technical terms. The preparation of the *Mahavyutpatti* is alluded to in a passage quoted by a number of later sources, which describes how Buddhist texts from foreign languages, specifically those of China, Khotan, Central India, Za.hor and Kashmir, had first been translated into the original language in which the Buddha had preached his doctrine.¹⁸² A number of great Indian masters were consulted prior to translation, and then a committee of Tibetan *lo.tsa.ba* [translators] was appointed to carry out the actual translation work. It comprised 'Bro Ka.ba dPal.brtségs, Cog.ro kLu'i rgyal.mtshan and sNa.nam Ye.shes.sde, who had all already been translating during the latter part of Khri.srong.lde.btsan's reign.¹⁸³ Ral.pa.can thus added the latter stages to a work that had been started around the end of the eighth century. Using this new lexical standard, the mistakes and misinterpretations of the older translations were corrected, and omissions were restored. Overtranslated works were reduced, and previously untranslated works were put into Tibetan.¹⁸⁴ The final amendments to the *Mahavyutpatti* were carried out by the four great Indian panditas Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Bhiryakaraprabha and Dhanashila, who were asked to correct the work of the Tibetan translators. When the translations were completed, they were proclaimed definitive and no further revisions permitted. The king ordered the work classified into two sections, Mahayana and Hinayana, and the compilation of an index. Three editions were made, and installed at pho.brang lDan.mkhar, 'Phang.thang and mChims.phu.¹⁸⁵

Under Ral.pa.can, particular emphasis was given to the establishment of new temples and the renovation of decaying ones. Nyang.ral dates this activity from the dog year 818 onwards.¹⁸⁶ According to the *Nyang.ral chos 'byung* the most significant among the new temples were rTsihs lha.khang, Gur.mo, Gang.par, bTsan.thang, and Nyang.ro.¹⁸⁷ In Lhasa, rMe.ru and dKar.ru were built to the east, dGa'.ba and dGa'.ba 'od to the south, and Bran.khang and Bran.khang tha.ma to the north.¹⁸⁸ In his native 'On.chang.do, an old royal residence, Ral.pa.can built the 'On.chang.do dpe.med bkra.shis.'phel lha.khang, his most important foundation and a temple that he intended to make worthy of the greatest achievements of his ancestors.¹⁸⁹ Regrettably, nothing remains of the temple today: it was an unusual structure by Tibetan architectural standards, with a nine-storeyed sloping roof which description (gilded roofs, external decoration, fountains and wind chimes) in my view suggests a Nepalese style pagoda. The three lower floors, for the king and ministers, were in stone; the three middle floors, for the translators and scholars, were in brick; and the three upper floors, for the gods, were in leather and wood. Renowned artists were summoned from countries famed for their artistic traditions: Nepal, India, China, Kashmir, Khotan and Tibet itself.¹⁹⁰ Some sources, such as *Nyang.ral chos 'byung*¹⁹¹ and *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston*¹⁹² give prominence to the Nepalese artists, while also mentioning the Khotanese stone carvers as having played a major role. However, amongst this information the most noteworthy is the mention of a local Tibetan school. With the exception of artisans working in the minor arts, Tibet formerly had to depend on foreign creativity to produce images from the pantheon.

'On.chang.do offers us a glimpse of the cosmopolitan artistic milieu of Ral.pa.can's reign. Though distinctly provincial, the renovation of Kwa.chu by 'Bro Khrim.gsum.rje was, in a limited way, representative of these exchanges with neighbouring countries.

Kwa.chu—the second art phase

It has been noted that the attendant group of the eight standing Bodhisattvas [pls.5,6,7], the guardians [sgo.srun] [pl.11] and the pair of standing statues [pls.8a-b] represent a dramatic departure from the stylistic criteria adopted for the main image. Their features have very little in common with the Shakyamuni to whom the temple is dedicated. It has been proven by the literary sources that these images cannot be considered a simple aesthetic deviation in style from the main image: it is now

known that 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje renovated the chapel during the reign of Ral.pa.can, long after its foundation under Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. The standing Bodhisattvas [pl.10] and the pair of standing statues [pls.8a-b] have a stiffness and a frontal emphasis which is completely lacking in the main image, where a powerful sense of mass is obtained through a masterful absence of planes. The Bodhisattvas' heads [pl.9] have nothing in common with the smooth spheroid of the head of the Buddha. The faces are flat, wide at the forehead and with marked chins, conveying a two-dimensional impression, and the skulls also lack any sense of rounded volume. The wide foreheads tend to squarishness at the temples. The hair line is straight. The noses are markedly flat, with rounded but not bulging tips. The eyes are styled with a straight lower lid surmounted by a more curvilinear upper lid. The present painted surface can be misleading in that it shows an elongation of the eyes which is absent in the original sculptural conception. Indeed, the painted remnants on the standing statues as they are today convey a generally misleading impression, since an attempt has apparently been made to copy the main Buddha's features. Further examples of these later efforts to harmonize the Bodhisattvas' physiognomy with that of the Buddha are encountered in the painting of the mouths, wider than those of the underlying statues, which have small mouths and lack the curled corners of the Buddha's lips. The eyebrows also imitate those of the Buddha. Returning to the underlying features of the statues, the elongated ears do not share the curl at the earlobe and firmly adhere to the head, while the *ushnishas* protrude much higher above the skulls than in the Buddha image. The torsos are broad, markedly deep and quite wide at the waist, but never as purposefully massive as that of the main image. The long arms, thin hands, elongated fingers and the legs all appear excessively stiff. The feet are left unworked, and rest on small, round pedestals. The vestments leave the chests bare and consist of two pieces: a shawl that covers the shoulders to below the armpits, and a garment that covers the lower extremities. These garments include fabric belts which form a knot at the waist, then hang stiffly between the legs to the ankles. The lower garments display heavy vertical pleats at the sides, and double circular ones on the thighs. Jewellery is used profusely: the Bodhisattvas wear large, round earrings, five-leaved crowns (later remakes), and necklaces and bracelets made of large beads that look more like *mallas* than jewels.¹⁹³ All the Bodhisattvas have lost their characteristic implements, with the exception of the Maitreya image, who still holds the flask in his outstretched hand [pl.4].

Turning to the two guardians [pl.11], they display features rarely encountered in Tibetan art of any period. Their bodies in particular have a muscular quality and an attention to anatomical detail which extends beyond the normal Tibetan depiction of wrathful divinities.¹⁹⁴ They convey a definite feeling of physical strength, which is supplemented by the menacing expression on the face of one (that of the other is lost), its mouth agape in a furious grin. The eyes are big, round and bulging in accordance with Tibetan custom, while the lower part of the face—the mouth and jaws—is unusually square for a Tibetan image of this kind. Snakes adorn the statues as necklaces, armlets, bracelets and threads around the chest. Also expressive are the tiger skins over their hips, especially the heads of beasts, which are held by belts similar to those of the Bodhisattvas, yet in dynamic harmony with the dramatic stance of the guardians. The contrast between the group of Bodhisattvas and these guardians is pronounced, the latter being exuberant, while the former are frozen in hieratic attitudes.

It is a difficult task to establish the stylistic source of the Bodhisattvas, since they constitute the first known example of a local idiom. The style betrays a high degree of provincial adaptation from a source of inspiration that was not completely mastered. There are no direct prototypes so far known in Tibet that could antedate the Bodhisattvas and help to establish the origin of their inspiration.¹⁹⁵ They do, however, appear to be eminently eighth century Newar, but the slenderness of Newar Bodhisattva representations has turned into stiffness, the balance of the elements comprising the head has given way to an awkwardness, the lotus-petalled eyes have been adapted to local physiognomy, *dhotis* have been substituted by bulky lower garments, the flowing scarves have adhered to the bodies, and *tribhanga* has been superseded by frontality. However, the essence of the Kwa.chu Bodhisattvas seems to have come from the south: post-Gupta art that has first travelled to Nepal, then to Tibet.¹⁹⁶ The Bodhisattvas look like the products of an immature Tibetan school of art that was alive and active in dBus district, as certified also in *mKhas.pa'i.dga'ston*, *lDe'u chos. byung*, *Nyang.ral*

chos. byung, and others, which mention an involvement of local artists at 'On.chang.do. These Tibetan artists seem to have been responsible for the second art phase at Kwa.chu.

This second phase, in the time of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, finds a counterpart at Tun-huang, which was conquered by the Tibetans in the bird year 787 and remained in their hands up to the dragon year 848.¹⁹⁷ In the walled library at the Qian-fo-tung caves, a group of painted banners was found, several with Tibetan inscriptions. Some of them bear a remarkable similarity to the Bodhisattva statues at Kwa.chu, yet there are a few contrasting details,¹⁹⁸ particularly the presence in the Tun-huang banners of Indo-Nepalese style *dbotis*, a slight impression of *tribhanga*, a more evident sense of slenderness, and a more restrained use of jewellery [figs.5.6]. These elements display a closer adherence to the inspirational prototypes than the Kwa.chu statues do. However, among the many points of similarity, the most obvious are the same head and face structure, similarly shaped eyes, identical construction of the upper torso, elongation of the arms, and very similar shawls and pedestals.

These banners are generally considered to be products of Tun-huang's Tibetan tenure, and some¹⁹⁹ carry a short Tibetan inscription in *dbu.can* script to identify the deity portrayed; two of them²⁰⁰ in particular offer another small clue to their Tibetan origin. On these banners a small *dbu.can* inscription appears over the head of the deities: the single word *gcen* [elder brother]. This word would seem to have no religious function, unlike the other inscriptions in the same group of banners, but rather seems to imply a destination for the painting. From the fact that both paintings were destined for some unknown elder brother, we can deduce that banners in the Tibetan style were made for the use of a Tibetan community at Tun-huang. The assumption that the banners were painted during the Tibetan occupation is thus reinforced. The two banners bearing the same word *gcen* look like different variations of the same style. This leads to the notion of a Tibetan community of artists at Tun-huang between 787 and 848, whose finer touches differed slightly.

On the basis of the style of the Kwa.chu Bodhisattvas and the Tun-huang banners, it is highly conceivable that close contact in terms of the diffusion of a Tibetan artistic idiom was established between Central Tibet and Tun-huang during the first part of the ninth century, when the Tibetans had already occupied the area. In particular, certain elements in the Bodhisattvas, such as the ankle-length garments, the frontal emphasis of the images and in particular the almost entirely stylistic conception of the *sgo.srung* [guardians], seem to represent a Central Asian/Chinese contribution to the Tibetan style of the banners, which was adopted at Tun-huang and then transferred to Kwa.chu.²⁰¹ The Kwa.chu guardians are almost completely rooted in Central Asian idiom, especially in their treatment of muscular anatomy, and their menacingly open, squarish mouths. Some elements which can be considered local in comparison to later Tibetan examples do appear, particularly the large, round eyes which contrast with the protruding eyes of Tun-huang guardians.²⁰² The Bodhisattvas are influenced by a style which in its broad outline is alien to Central Asia, the matrix being Indo-Nepalese, while in the case of the guardians a Central Asian style was adopted. In other words, different foreign styles influenced Kwa.chu's Tibetan artists when they had to work on different iconography. It follows that the Tun-huang banners must have pre-dated Kwa.chu's second art phase, since the above-mentioned Central Asian elements present in the Bodhisattvas and guardians were absorbed after the banners had been painted.

The final, decisive confirmation of the artistic contact between Tun-huang and Kwa.chu is to be found in historical evidence. 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje, Ral.pa.can's army commander and chief minister, had close personal links with Tun-huang. Of particular importance is a letter²⁰³ written by a Chinese officer to a 'Zhang Khri.gsum.rje'. The letter eulogizes Khri.gsum.rje and his patrilineal ancestors, and the achievements that it ascribes to him help in identifying him beyond doubt as 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang. He is described as first minister and commander-in-chief: ranks that only he held concurrently. His military successes against the Yu.gur are recalled, and he is described as a pious founder of edifices dedicated to Buddhism and his king, which could hardly be closer fitting. An important career detail is also included, that he chose Tun-huang as his residence and built a temple there. No date is given for his residence in Tun-huang, but from the facts about his life that are known to us, we can infer that this took place at the beginning of his successful service in the Tibetan administration, around the time when his name was attached to the sworn account of Sad.na.legs' sKar.chung edict as a simple *dmag.dpon* (see p.18). More precisely, the Tun-huang sojourn must have

taken place before he was promoted to the rank of state minister, that is before the year 810, when he was addressed as 'great minister' in the letter from the Chinese emperor. 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje could not have resided at Tun-huang after becoming a state minister and general of the north-east army, he must have stayed at a town like Kwa.chu, since Tun-huang, as a *kbrom* [minor prefecture] would have been subordinate to Kwa.chu, which was a *kbrom chen.po* [major prefecture].²⁰⁴

His posting at Tun-huang during his early career must have been favoured by his father Zhang bTsan.ba, who is also remembered in the letter in which the family's genealogy is praised.²⁰⁵ The letter states that 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje built the monastery of Cheng-kuang-sseu at Tun-huang when he was in residence there, which must therefore have been during his youth.²⁰⁶ In all likelihood, his concern for Buddhism began during the reign of Sad.na.legs, before his role in the fully-developed theocratic power of Ral.pa.can's reign, when he patronized the emerging of the style encountered first at Tun-huang and later at Kwa.chu. The period of about twenty years noted in the sources between his Buddhist activities at Tun-huang and Kwa.chu, indicates that the Tibetan style represented by the Tun-huang banners must have taken the same period of time to absorb the Central Asian features discussed above and develop into the style seen at Kwa.chu.

Finally, this same letter seems to contain a hint which can indirectly help to explain his interest in Kwa.chu. His grandfather is mentioned and possibly identified as 'Zhang Khri.bzang',²⁰⁷ more fully 'Bro Zhang Khri.bzang kha.che btang.dang, one of the Tibetan dignitaries dispatched to invite Kong.co to Tibet.²⁰⁸ As Kong.co originally sponsored the building of Kwa.chu, 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje could have taken a personal interest in the temple as a family matter. Hence, the dependence of Kwa.chu's second art phase on Tun-huang is proven in the name of its instigator, 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje. As his activities at Kwa.chu were to cleanse the karmic defilements accruing to him as a result of the Chinese wars lasting up to 822, the period immediately following this date is a sound *terminus post quem* for the second art phase. I believe that Kwa.chu was renovated not long after 822, during the aftermath of the peace treaty.

Some consideration remains to be given to the other objects which form part of the Kwa.chu renovation. The presence of the pair of standing statues [pls.8a-b] is particularly striking, not for their style—which is similar to that of the Bodhisattvas—but for their location within the temple. Both statues are placed outside the cycle of deities which is protected and completed by the presence of the two guardians (also curiously placed, along the side walls rather than in the customary position next to the door: possibly another clue to Kwa.chu's antiquity). The pair of standing statues is positioned inside the chapel, on the left of the door; the equivalent position to the right of the door is devoid of images, and no traces of tenons, holes in the wall or pedestals remain to suggest the presence of sculptures in ancient times. The two statues stand isolated. Their heavenly attire proclaims them as deities, yet the question arises as to which deities they represent, as they are not included within the general cycle. No ready answer is available. Local oral tradition claims that they are representations of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and Kong.co depicted as a Bodhisattva and Tara, respectively.²⁰⁹ If this were the case, the statues would represent a posthumous celebration of the royal couple.²¹⁰ Of course Tibetan kings who showed favour to Buddhism were deified; the Khotan texts describe, for example, the same royal couple as a Bodhisattva and an incarnation of Tara, but there are no known examples of deified royal personages being iconographically depicted as gods. The official portraiture of deified kings was in royal garb. Examples include the images of Srong.btsan sgam.po and his queens in the Jo.khang²¹¹ and Po.ta.la²¹² which, though very difficult to date, are likely to be much later than this Kwa.chu pair of statues. Similarly, the three statues of Srong.btsan sgam.po, Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Ral.pa.can conceived as the Rigs.gsum ngon.po in rGyal.rtse dPal.khor chos.sde,²¹³ depict the kings in their royal attire. In Tun-huang, one wall painting depicts a Tibetan king in royal garb mourning the *parinirvana* of the Buddha, and in another a king is shown with his court,²¹⁴ dressed in a distinctive secular manner, with robe and the typical orange turban. In spite of their odd location outside the cycle of deities, it would still be very controversial to identify the pair of statues at Kwa.chu as the royal donors. Throughout the centuries, gods have been portrayed in Tibet in royal attire; it has never been known for deified kings to be depicted as gods.

A further relevant feature of the later phase at Kwa.chu is the rows of thick, wooden book shelves fitted to the walls behind the Bodhisattvas and the guardians. The prominence given to these book shelves goes beyond the traditional importance accorded to them in libraries in Tibetan monasteries to the extent that the Kwa.chu second art phase is, remarkably, totally without murals, their place being taken by these imposing shelves; (the first phase included painted decoration). The extent of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje's renovation, which touched three of the four sides of the room, conveys the impression that Kwa.chu had never hosted murals. It seems, therefore, that the book shelves constituted a primary cult object which integrated and even preceded the placing of the Bodhisattvas and guardians. In fact the figures are not anchored to the walls, but to the shelves by means of long wooden tenons. Such prominence given to the installment of Buddhist texts in Kwa.chu lha.khang could well testify to the prominence given to the translation and classification of the texts of the Buddhist canon into a conclusive corpus during the reign of Ral.pa.can. It is known that a set of this newly-edited canon was deposited at lDan.mkhar, at 'Pang.thang and at mChims.phu, but it cannot be ruled out that further sets were prepared and kept in other temples.

Indicative of the religious and cultural activities which took place at the time of the second art phase at Kwa.chu is the presence of consecration formulae on the Bodhisattvas' and Guardians' *srog.shing* [life-tree; the internal wooden pole that supports each statue] in the cases where the statues have sustained sufficient damage to allow their inner cores to be seen [pl.15].²¹⁵ Broken *ushnisbas*, faces and chests render the *srog.shing* visible, and neatly written dbu.can characters which transliterate consecrational and invocational Sanskrit formulae can be seen. *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston* is precious in noting that, apart from the new vocabulary adopted for the translations, a new orthographic system was also introduced to shorten the syllables comprising words.²¹⁶ Certain peculiarities pertaining to the previous orthography were abandoned. In particular, the text states that the *ma.mya* (the underscribed *ya.btags*), the final *da.drag*, and the underscribed *'a.brten* were omitted, though the latter sign can still be found in Sanskrit transliterations. The *Nyang.ral chos. 'byung* also adds an interesting consideration. During the considerable efforts devoted to textual and orthographic revision, the problem of the restitution of the Sanskrit *dbaranis* was also broached.²¹⁷ The system adopted was based upon Indian phonetics, referred to literally as 'Indian sounds' in *Nyang.ral chos. 'byung*. Sanskrit *mantras* have been correctly written in the Tibetan script since the time of Ral.pa.can. It is tempting, though far from certain, to see in these *srog.shing dbaranis* at Kwa.chu an almost contemporary exercise in the use of the newly formulated system of restitution of Sanskrit formulae; all the more so in that to date no such profuse occurrence of *srog.shing* consecration formulae has been discovered so far elsewhere in Tibet.²¹⁸

While the season of great effort expended in giving Tibet a final, complete understanding of Buddhist knowledge and of establishing Buddhist institutions represents the apex of Ral.pa.can's reign, a season of disruption followed that was to reduce the kingdom, and the Yarlung dynasty, to ashes.²¹⁹ Not long after 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje had renovated Kwa.chu, the theocratic system adopted by Ral.pa.can instigated a reaction from forces antagonistic to Buddhism which had been excluded from political power and the king's favour. Resentment towards the all-powerful monks and the strictness of Buddhist law, which had not been universally accepted, grew into overt hostility against the king and the clergy.²²⁰ These rivalries, ostensibly born of different religious views but actually rooted in the struggle for political dominance, erupted in virulent opposition to the king, his family and the *sangha*. The king's position weakened appreciably, and the *New Tang Annals* mention that after 831 the king was superseded by his councillors.²²¹ Too great a reliance upon his ministers had caused him to lose touch with power, and he was unable to deal with the situation.²²² As a result, his elder brother the monk Lha.sras gTsang.ma was exiled to sPa.gro mon.yul;²²³ his minister, the great Bran.ka dPal.gyi.yon.tan, and his senior queen Cog.ro.bza' dPal.gyi.ngang.tshul, were the subjects of a sordid accusation.²²⁴ The fate of Ral.pa.can's elite is described in the sources with tragic overtones.²²⁵ Mised by courtly slander, the king condemned Bran.ka dPal.gyi.yon.tan, and the queen committed suicide. Ral.pa.can himself met his death at the hands of Cog.ro Lha.lod and sTangs lDong.btsan at the Lan.mkhar palace on the instigation of dBa's rGyal.to.re and Cog.ro Legs.sgra.lDong.²²⁶ The dates horse year 838²²⁷ and bird year 841²²⁸ are found for his death in the various sources. Very little is

known of the fate of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje. It is laconically mentioned in one source that he was also accused during the slanderous campaign against Bran.ka dPal, and that he possibly shared the same fate,²²⁹ but this claim remains unsubstantiated by further evidence, as is also the case for the claim that he died at the unrealistic age of thirty-five, in the pig year 831.²³⁰

Kwa.chu lha.khang: a two-fold significance

The second art phase gains increased relevance in the light of above events in that it is an exemplary achievement of the flourishing years of Ral.pa.can's tenure, prior to the inauspicious end to his reign. Yet the restoration of Kwa.chu is a symbol not only of this final prosperous period of his rule, but also of *bstan.pa snga.dar* [the early diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet] and of the timeless power of the Yarlung dynasty. Following the brief interlude of king gLang.dar.ma, both had come to an end. The relevance of the first art phase at Kwa.chu should not be forgotten, as it marked the resurgence, albeit limited, of Buddhism following its embryonic inception at the time of Srong.btsan sgam.po.

From the perspective of art history also, Kwa.chu has a two-fold importance. It is the only surviving temple from the reigns of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and Ral.pa.can: two artistic periods of the Yarlung dynasty are represented in the same building. The first phase is a rare case of direct insemination of a Central Asian/Khotanese style. The second phase represents an example of the earliest certified Tibetan autonomous style so far known, which travelled back and forth between Tibet and the Chinese Central Asian outpost of Tun-huang, dominated by Tibet for a few decades.

Notes

1. The best known rdo.ring inscriptions are discussed in Richardson, 1985; individual inscriptions are treated by the same author in various publications - refer to Bibliography.
2. The bSam.yas and Zhwa'i.lha.khang rdo.rings mention that stone inscriptions were carried out for this purpose as well as for their universality. See Richardson, 1985, 38-39,48-49.
3. See in particular the inscriptions from Brag Lha.mo in the lDan.khog district of Khams, and from the vicinity of 'Dus.byung near Do.ba rdzong in Lho.brag; Richardson, 1987.
4. First published in Tucci, 1950. See also Richardson, 1985, 26-31.
5. The actual date is a source of dispute among Tibetan writers throughout history, as well as modern Tibetologists. One of king Khri.srong.lde.btsan's accounts, the so-called bka'.mchid, gives the date as a sheep year during the latter's reign; see KPGT I, ff.108b. Richardson, 1980, judges this to be the sheep year 779, and considers it the most reliable date for the completion of bSam.yas.
6. Both appear in KPGT I, ff.108b-111b; and KPGT II, 370-376.
7. The temple is traditionally ascribed to the efforts of Srong.btsan sgam.po and his Nepalese queen Lha.geig Khri.btsun, the building being undertaken with the participation of Nepalese artists. According to the most reliable later Tibetan sources, the Jo.khang was begun in the pig year 639 and apparently took one year to complete in its original form.
8. Kwa.chu is very often spelled 'Ke.ru' and sometimes 'Ka.ru'. I have opted for the present spelling inasmuch as it is rendered thus in the oldest source available to us: the bka'.mchid of Khri.srong.lde.btsan. In the light of this document, it is possible to deduce that the Brag.dmar temple mentioned in Khri.srong.lde.btsan's bSam.yas edict (see Richardson, 1985, 28-31) is Kwa.chu, since no other temple in Brag.dmar is ever mentioned by any of the documents deposited by the king in connection with the bSam.yas edict.
9. On this edict see Richardson, 1985, 72-79; 1973, 13-20.
10. A date can tentatively be given for the foundation of the temple of gLing Khri.rtse. Dus.srong spent two consecutive winters there in the ox year 701 and the tiger year 702. It is likely that the temple was built during that period, as there is no other mention in the Tun-huang Annals of a further sojourn there by Dus.srong; see Bacot, et al., 1940, 39-40. It is worthwhile noting the peripheral location of the temple. Apart from the fact that he was actively campaigning in that territory during these years, the building of the temple may also be indicative of the pressure of his powerful mother Khri.ma.lod driving him to the margins.
11. The later sources are almost unanimous in dating the foundation of mChims.phu to Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's reign. The temple was destroyed in the revolt of 755, later rebuilt, and consecrated by Gu.ru. Rin.po.che.
12. The sKar.chung temple and rdo.ring were built in the little village of Ra.ma.sgang, on the southern bank of the sKyid.chu downstream from Lha.sa. See Richardson, 1973, 12-20, & 1985, 72-81; Tucci, 1950, 14.
13. In the absence of early Tibetan sources on the reign of Sad.na.legs, the monkey year 804 given as the year of accession by the Old Tang Annals (Bushell, 1880, 510) is the most reliable. Also credible is the Zhwa'i.lha.khang inscription (Richardson, 1985, 43-61), from which it can be understood that Sad.na.legs was designated king in the dragon year 800, but did not begin his rule until the monkey year 804. His death is customarily given in the sheep year 815 by the later Tibetan sources, while the Old Tang Annals state that the news of his death reached the Chinese court in the dog year 817 (Bushell, 1880, 512). The reign of his successor Ral.pa.can is generally considered to have begun in the sheep year 815, though Sa.skya.pa historians have placed it in the year 817. It therefore seems likely that Sad.na.legs reigned from 804 to 815. For a treatment of the subject see Demiéville, 1952, 232, n.1; also Tucci, 1947, 319-322.
14. Examination of the career of Ral.pa.can's first minister and commander-in-chief 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang facilitates a confident assessment of the date of the sKar.chung edict, and indicates that it was made some years before 810. This matter is extensively discussed later in the chapter.
15. KPGT I, ff.128b-130b; & KPGT II, 409-413.
16. A variety of spellings exist for the last syllable of his name: btsan, brtsan, rtan and even rten; I have adopted the form rtsan as it seems the most widespread among the earliest sources. The appellation Mes Ag.tshom is known from almost all later sources, and means 'bearded ancestor', a reference to a

description of him as an old man, ugly in appearance, looking more like a *bram.ze* [Indian rishi] than a Tibetan king.

17. Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40.

18. *Ibid.*; Bushell, 1880, 456.

19. He was born to *Dus.srong's* wife *bTsan.ma Thog.thog.steng* (spelled as in Bacot, et al., 1940, 82,88) of the *mChims* clan. Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40, gives his original name as *rGyal gTsong.ru*, and reports that he took the royal name *Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan* on his enthronement. His place of birth is given as *Kho.brang.tsal* (Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40), which could be a corruption of *Pho.brang.tsal* [palace garden], though this does not indicate any actual locality. Later literature gives his place of birth as *lDan.mkhar*, and there is no reason not to identify *Pho.brang.tsal* with *lDan.mkhar*.

20. Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40.

21. Bushell, 1880, 456.

22. Petech corrects a widespread interpretation of an Old T'ang Annals passage (Petech, 1988, 1086, n.27), according to which *Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan* may have been born in 698 or 699, thus contradicting the date given in the *Tun-huang Annals*. He says that the relevant passage should be interpreted to mean that *Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan* was seven years old when he was enthroned in 712, and not that he was seven in 704, thus concurring with the *Tun-huang Annals*.

23. Among the later sources giving this date are DTMP, 36; YLJCh, 30; GRMML, 196; KPGT II, 293.

24. Bushell, 1880, 456.

25. Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40 mentions for the snake year 705 the dethronement of the otherwise mysterious heir apparent *Lha Bal.po*. Petech proposes the notion that the latter fought for 'a long period' to defend his right to rule (Petech, 1988), based on a corresponding passage in the *Old T'ang Annals* (Bushell, 1880, 456). However, there is a contradiction between the two sources, the *Tun-huang Annals* stating that he lost his throne in 705, while the *Old T'ang Annals* say that he continued to assert himself as the true heir for 'a long period'. In view of the total silence of the sources regarding *Lha Bal.po* after 705, it is tempting to think that he had, indeed, disappeared from the scene, leaving his supporters to oppose the accession of *Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan*.

26. It is no easy task to understand his origin solely on the basis of the etymology of his name. It is possible that he was the son of a queen of foreign origin. *Dus.srong mang.po.rje* had three consorts: the Turkish princess *Qatun*, '*Dam.gyi Cog.ro.bza'*, and *mChims.bza' bTsan.ma Thog.thog.steng*. Since the latter was the mother of *Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan*, it seems likely that *Lha Bal.po* was the son of either the Turkish princess or the *Cog.ro* wife. As Beckwith (1987, 73) suggests, the apparently foreign cast of his name could indicate that he was the son of *Qatun*. His being 'gcen' would make *Qatun* the senior queen, and the *Old T'ang Annals* say that it was the son of the senior queen who fought against the other sons for the succession (Petech, 1988, 1086).

27. Direct reference to her role in Tibetan political strategy is made in the *Tun-huang Annals* for the years 700-712; see also Bushell, 1880, 456.

28. Bacot, et al., 1940, 18, 39.

29. It is significant that the name '*Bro Khri.ma.lod* does not appear in the *Tun-huang Annals* before the dog year 698, when the supremacy of the *mGar* clan was brought to an end by *Dus.srong*. By this time the authority of the king had been seriously challenged by his powerful mother, who took upon herself a leading role in state affairs.

30. Identification of the precise location is difficult. The country of '*Jang* is usually identified with the territory of *Mo.so* in the south-west border area between *Nan-chao* and *Tibet*; see Petech, 1988, 1080-1085; Beckwith, 1983, 4, n.9; Backus, 1981, 43. In spite of the efforts of a variety of scholars regarding the location of *Ni.po.lo.men*, a territory which must have been adjacent to '*Jang.yul* and which rebelled against the king, no resolution has been reached. The matter is discussed in Petech, 1967, 251; 1984, 25; and 1988, 1082-1085.

31. It is quite evident that *Lha Bal.po* followed his father on the campaign in which the latter met his death. The *Tun-huang Annals* (Bacot, et al., 1940, 18-19,40) record that the king was resident in another location in the *Pong* territory called *Khri.mu.stengs* during the summer of the tiger year 702. *Lha Bal.po* was still in the same area at the time of the turmoil in 705. The possibility cannot be excluded that the Tibetan court split into two factions in those years: the '*Jang* court headed by king *Dus.srong*, and the Central Tibetan court headed by his mother *Khri.ma.lod*. The land of *Pong.lag.rang* remains unidentified, though Petech (1967, 251) has attempted to narrow the possibilities down to a more definite area. Beckwith (1983, 4, n.9) disagrees with Petech's findings, but does not propose an alternative.

32. It may be that Petech's interpretation of these facts (1988, 1085) is in concurrence with my own, though the relevant passage is unclear to me.

33. Bacot, et al., 1940, 20,43.
34. Bacot, et al., 1940, 19,40. On the abolishment and reintroduction of the post, see Richardson, 1977, 16.
35. On the notion that the 'Bro clan should be considered 'foreign' and the dBa's clan 'Tibetan', see Richardson's article in 77, 1977, 14,15. The same author also deals with these two clans in Richardson, 1971.
36. Bushell, 1880, 456.
37. Ibid.
38. Romanization of Chinese has been maintained as given in the individual sources.
39. Beckwith, 1987.
40. Bushell, 1880, 456.
41. Bacot, et al., 1940, 20,42. For reference to the 'A.zha Annals, see Thomas, 1935-1963, 9,14; they are also discussed in Petech, 1956; Yamaguchi, 1977; and Uray, 1978.
42. Bushell, 1880, 456.
43. BZh, 2. MBNT, f.166, gives his name as Khri.zheng.dmig.rtse.
44. BZh, 2.
45. Bacot, et al., 1940, 20,42. Confirmation of her arrival in 710 is found on the east face inscription of the 821-822 edict setting out the text of the peace treaty between Tibet and China. The inscription states that Kong.co arrived in Lha.sa in the fourth year of Ching-lung, which corresponds to 710. See Li Fang Kuei, 1956, 68, n.27.
46. Beckwith, 1987, 78.
47. In spite of the tense relations between China and Tibet which the matrimonial alliance had not helped relax, as well as the inflexible attitude of the emperor Hsüan-tsung towards Tibet, the exchange of letters indicates a warm personal relationship between Kong.co and the emperor. It would appear that he had a special regard for her, more so than for any other Chinese princess married to a 'barbarian' monarch. See Li Fang Kuei, 1956, 58, n.4.
48. Bushell, 1880, 460.
49. Ibid., 465.
50. For a treatment of the Tibetans in the west, more particularly in the regions west of the Pamirs, see Beckwith, 1987, 95; & 1980, 33.
51. For further detail on this secret letter, see Chavannes, 205-206.
52. According to the Tun-huang Annals; see Bacot, et al., 1940, 24,48. The Tun-huang Chronicles (Bacot, et al., 1940, 102,132) add the interesting note that the minister dBa's sTag.sgra khong.lod was denounced and substituted with the 'Bro minister Cung.bzang. The dramatic turn of events lead one to envisage a drastic change in the political orientation of state affairs. dBa's sTag.sgra khong.lod (called Si-nolo in Bushell, 1880, 462-463) was accused of treason for the Chinese and condemned shortly after his brief conquest of the Chinese border town of Kwa.chu in the hare year 727.
53. Bushell, 1880, 464-465.
54. Ibid., 466. On the peace treaty of 730, see also Beckwith, 1987, 106.
55. Bushell, 1880, 467-468. The books were possibly Confucianist; see Demiéville, 1952, 187-188, n.1.
56. For the 'A.zha Annals references, see Thomas, 1935-1963, 9,11. See also Uray, 1978, 567.
57. Bacot, et al., 1940, 48,24. For an amendment to Bacot's translation in Bacot, et al., 1940, see Uray, 1960, 45, n.26. The amendment pertains to the Cog.ro minister not being dismissed by Kong.co herself, he was replaced by Lang Gro.khong.rtsan.
58. On the Tibetan conquest of the north-west, see Beckwith, 1987, 114; 1980, 34; Prakash, 1969, 44.
59. On Kog.la.bong's mission to the court of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan in the bird year 733, see Bacot, et al., 1940, 25,49. The Tibet-Nan-chao alliance is discussed in Backus, 1981.
60. Bacot, et al., 1940, 25,50-51. No information about him is extant from the most ancient sources. In later literature he is mentioned as lJang.tsha lha.dbon, his name implying that he was born to the wife called lJang.mo Khri.btsun (BZh, 2; KPGT II, 294). Her death is recorded by the Tun-huang Annals in the bird year 745 (Bacot, et al., 1940, 26,52). The circumstances of the king's marriage to a noblewoman of the lJang people are not described, though it is possible that it was an expediency to calm the rivalries at court at the time of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's accession.
61. Bacot, et al., 1940, 26,51.
62. On Tibetan defeats after 739, see Bacot, et al., 1940, 55,64-65 for the north-west; Bushell, 1880, 471-473, is especially useful; also Beckwith, 1987, 121,127-134,136,140-141; and 1980, 34.
63. Bacot, et al., 1940, 55,62.

64. His death is indirectly mentioned in *ibid.*, 56,63; Bushell, 1880, 473, is more specific.

65. The confused story presented in almost all the later sources is quite pertinent in historical terms. Briefly, it runs as follows:

Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan Mes Ag.tshom had a son by his wife lJang.mo Khri.btsun called lJang.tsha Lha.dbon. While Mes Ag.tshom was ugly in appearance, his son was very handsome, and no match could be found for him among the princesses of Tibet. A marriage was arranged with the Chinese, and Kong.co was the chosen bride. On the way to Tibet, Kong.co looked in her magical mirror and saw that lJang.tsha Lha.dbon had died after falling from his horse. She continued her journey and, as her karma was connected with Tibet, married Mes Ag.tshom instead, who is described as a wise old man.

The whole story is an anachronism, as both the Tun-huang and the T'ang Annals state that Kong.co married Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan when they were both very young, moreover, the T'ang Annals add that the marriage had been arranged. The formula used to describe his son's death is the same as that used by the sBa.bzhed to describe Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's assassination (BZh,3). Another tradition, reported in KPGT II, 295, and 5DL DzGT, 57, holds that lJang.tsha Lha.dbon was murdered by gNyags Khri.bzang yan.ton because he was to marry Kong.co instead of his own daughter. (According to the sBa.bzhed, gNyags Khri.bzang was the minister sent to China to accompany Kong.co on her bridal journey to Tibet.)

This story seems to join together three sets of events. The first refers to around 703 in saying that Kong.co was intended for someone other than Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan. It has been noted that a mission was, indeed, sent to China in that year, and a princess granted for a matrimonial alliance, but neither Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan nor Kong.co could have been the intended parties, as neither had been born. In any case, it is known that nothing came of the arrangements, which leads to the second set of events: the marriage never took place because the Tibetan prince was assassinated. Though later tradition identifies the prince in question as lJang.tsha Lha.dbon, the fact remains that the only Tibetan prince in a position to marry at that time (703-705) was Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's elder step-brother, Lha Bal.po. lJang.tsha Lha.dbon had certainly not been born at this time. From this evidence it seems likely that it was Lha Bal.po who was murdered. He and lJang.tsha Lha.dbon cannot be confused, as the Tun-huang Annals clearly identify the latter as the son of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan (Bacot, et al., 1940, 25-26,51; contra Beckwith, 1983, 9-10). The mention of lJang.tsha Lha.dbon having died under suspicious circumstances brings us to the third set of events. The Tun-huang Annals reliably date his death to the hare year 739, to which further credence is given by the presence of his tomb at the royal necropolis at 'Phyong.rgyas. GBYTS, 201 states that only members of the Yar.lung dynasty who had reached adulthood were entitled to a bang.so (tomb). Therefore there seems little doubt that he did die in 739; he was possibly also the victim of murder, and deliberately removed from the succession. A few years later Khri.srong.lde.btsan was born and became the new heir.

66. BZh, 1, and other subsequent texts report Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's rediscovery of the testament [bka'.chems.kyi.yi.ge] of his ancestor Srong.btsan sgam.po, in which it is prophesied that five generations after him, a king called 'lDe' would restore Buddhism in Tibet. Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan identified himself as that king, and henceforth became a supporter of the Buddhist dharma.

67. Respectively, BZh, 1; DGBCh, 300; NyRCh, 271; MBNT, 165; GPKT&LPKT, 116; YLJCh, 58; GRSM, 197; KPGT II, 394; 5DL DzGT, 56.

68. BZh, 1.

69. BZh and KPGT II say that the books were brought to Central Tibet by the ministers, and offered to the king; the Fifth Dalai Lama (5DL DzGT, 56) says that they memorized the texts and wrote them down on their return.

70. BZh, 1.

71. That they are synonyms is proven by 'Gos lo.tsa.ba in Deb.tsher sngon.po. He says that kLu.mes took over Kwa.chu (Roerich, 1979, 75, 77), and in referring to Atisha's visit to the temple calls it Ke.ru (Roerich, 1979, 257). The two events are separated by less than half a century.

72. No mention of Kong.co bringing artists to Tibet with her can be found in the T'ang Annals. Later sources are also silent on this matter.

73. DGBCh, 300; NyRCh, 271; GRSM, 197.

74. Beckwith, 1979. The first stage of the introduction of medical treatises to Tibet took place in the seventh century, during the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po, his Chinese wife Wen-ch'eng kung-chu being instrumental in the invitation of three physicians from different countries: Bharadvaja from India, Hsüan-yüan Huang-ti from China, and Galenos from sTag.gzig. Bi.ji bTsan.pa shi.ha.la ('bi.ji' stands for 'doctor' in Sogdian) is not only noted as coming from 'Khrom', but also China; this may suggest that he reached Tibet via China. He became the court physician and continued his practice successfully during the reign of Khri.srong.lde.btsan. By this time the western medical tradition was well attested to in Tibet.

75. In Tibet, his medical treatises were translated and kept at pho.brang 'Phang.thang — a sign of the reverence accorded to them. See KPGT II, 293.

76. BZh, 4-8. All subsequent sources of this sub-narrative appear to be modelled on the sBa.bzhed.

77. Ibid., 6-8. The description of the Chinese emperor as more than a pious monarch, but rather an active master of Buddhism, may be a fabrication to create symmetry between the 'Chinese' Sang.shi, who did much to introduce Buddhism to Tibet, and China itself, which is depicted as a land of Buddhism in contrast to barbarous Tibet.

78. Ibid., 1,4-8. The text mentions that initially five temples were built in Tibet, and that only after these events did Sang.shi's mission to China take place.

79. See Uray, 1979, 288, for a list of works from, or connected with Khotan that either refer to Tibet, or exist in a Tibetan edition. These texts were translated or edited by Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, and by Emmerick, 1967.

80. Published in Tibetan transliteration in Emmerick, 1967, 78-91.

81. Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, 53-69.

82. Stein, 1983, 217.

83. Uray, 1979, 289.

84. For instance, in Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, 79, n.6. In spite of the evident lack of accuracy in describing circumstances as well as in genealogical calculation - endemic characteristics of the prophetic genre - no sound alternative identification exists.

85. Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, 80, n.7. Stein dismisses this hypothesis (in BEFEO, vol.LXXV, 1986, 170-171) on the basis of an exact calculation of royal genealogy, but disregarding the evidence which emerges from the details of the king's marriage to Kong.co. Important confirmation that the migration of the Khotanese monks took place during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan is to be found in another of Stein's books, *La Civiltà Tibetana*, (1986, 42; an expanded and revised Italian edition of his well-known work *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, 1962), in which he states that Taoism was made the state religion of China during the reign of Hsüan-tsung (712-756). This fact is also remembered in the prophecy, and thus confirms that the migration took place during the time of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan and Kong.co.

86. An.se can also stand for Bukhara, which in this instance would be too remote to be part of the seemingly precise territorial contiguity that the text mentions.

87. I have no ready explanation for this otherwise obscure prophecy that they would slay one another. The *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* describes it in more detail (see Emmerick, 1967, 86,v.69-71), but the basic narrative is identical, and no further light is shed on the mystery.

88. Kong.co's decision to place the Shakyamuni image in the main Tibetan temple could be indicative of Buddhism in Tibet at that time which, headed by Kong.co herself, favoured the Mahayana approach of Central Asia embodied in the image of Shakyamuni, to the Vajrayana ideas embodied in the statue of Akshobhyavajra, which were brought from Nepal about a hundred years earlier, when that country was already exposed to the esoteric developments of 7th century India.

89. It is evident from the *Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus* (in Emmerick, 1967, 85,v.59-61) that the cause of the subsequent persecution of the Khotanese monks was not the plague itself, but the discord created by two antagonistic political factions in Tibet.

90. For instance, the prophecy was made in the seventh generation of kings of Li.yul after the foundation of the kingdom (Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, 77); seven is the number of portions of an obscure golden food that miraculously materializes to nourish the needy monks (ibid., 81).

91. Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.1, 83. In the past, other brilliant scholars such as Tucci, Richardson and Li Fang Kuei have not improved on this understanding of the term 'Lho.bal'. With the advancement of Tibetan studies, the rendering 'Nepal' became increasingly illogical and untenable. In a personal communication (November 1989), Samten G. Karmay expressed his belief that the term 'Lho.bal' initially meant countries in the south, but later came to apply to other countries in the sense of 'foreign'. The first clue to understanding cryptic words like Lho.bal and Bal.po as territories unconnected with Nepal was offered by Tucci, when he considered the recurring mention of Bal.po in the *Tun-huang Annals* as the area of royal residence adjoining Yar.brog mtsho (Tucci, 1958, vol.II, 34-36,287). This view has been adopted and reinforced by H. Uebach (1988, 510-511).

92. Emmerick, 1967, 85,v.60.

93. On Lho.bal, see Stein, 1981, 251, n.51; and Stein, 1983, 205-207.

94. Richardson, 1985, 110-111.

95. See Lalou, 1955, *passim*, which is then reconsidered by Stein, 1983, 206. This well-known document is a discussion of the bureaucratic roles, and puts forward a series of requests with regard to

misdemeanours and mishandling within the system. Stein proposes to interpret the many instances of 'lho.baI' as references to an unspecified territory in the vicinity of Tun-huang.

96. See the bka'.mchid of Khri.srong.lde.btsan in KPGT II, 373; & KPGT I, f.110a; see also Richardson, 1980, 66.

97. Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus, in Emmerick, 1967, 85, verse 59,63-64: the monks' stay in Tibet is twelve years, and the duration of the war fought by the king of Kausambi against a coalition of invaders is also recorded as twelve.

98. Stein, 1983, 205-206.

99. See Grenard, 1900, 64. A recent study among the many referring to this date is Zhang & Rong, 1984 (see esp. 23-47).

100. Li.yul.chos.kyi.lo.rgyus, in Emmerick, 1967, 84, v.49-50.

101. 5DL DzGT, 56.

102. In fact, during the mGar ascendancy no reference to Buddhism is offered by any of the sources. More specifically, the accounts of the diffusion in Tibet found in the bka'.mchid of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and the bka'gtsigs of Sad.na.legs identify a gap of some fifty years between the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po and the latter part of that of Dus.srong during which no dharma activities took place.

103. A similar expression is used to describe the well-known revolution [keng.log] that occurred during the disputed reigns of 'Od.srung and Yum.brtañ; see KPGT II, 431. It would seem that the expression is a common one to describe social turmoil and/or political struggle.

104. BZh, 8-9.

105. The bka'.mchid where Khri.srong.lde.btsan declares, after the death of his father, that Buddhism is banned is quoted in KPGT II, 373-6; and KPGT I, ff.110a-110b. It was not restored until Khri.srong.lde.btsan reached the age of twenty. See also Richardson, 1980, 67.

106. Uebach, 1988, 505. Brag.dmar was used as a winter residence in the years 684, 697, 704, 707-9, 711, 712, 724, 728-9, 731-3, 744, 746, 756.

107. DGBCh, 372, notes 'Ol.kha (not far from the 'On valley) as the eastern border of dBu.ru, to which Kwa.chu belonged at this time.

108. MBNT, ff.293-294.

109. On the ru.bzhi [the Four Horns of Tibet], among them dBu.ru and g.Yo.ru, see KPGT I, f.19a, ff.; KPGT II, 186-189; bLon.po bka'thang, in GPKT&LPKT, 437-440; Tucci, 1956, 75-84; Uray, 1960.

110. Tucci visited Kwa.chu lha.khang, which he calls 'Ke.ru' (Tucci, 1983, 126), but failed to recognize the antiquity of the main chapel. See also Ferrari, 1958, 119, n.188, in which Mr. Richardson resumes Tucci's assessment. For a detailed description of the Kwa.chu location, see Chan forthcoming (1991).

111. Roerich, 1979, 257. Atisha stayed at Kwa.chu for one month before proceeding to bSam.yas.

112. Painted on three walls of the chapel. The centre wall depicts Atisha himself, and the side walls his two disciples 'Brom.ston.pa and rNgog Legs.pa'i shes.rab. The paintings are in very poor condition, and of a late style that cannot much predate the 18th century. A stupa once stood in the middle of the room, though it is now entirely missing.

113. Lotus pedestal sections stand on either side of the main image, empty at present and with no real clues to suggest which deities stood on them. However, the fact of their presence does identify the main image as Shakyamuni. While this Buddha image occupies most of the east wall, stacks of books can be found on the extremities of both sides.

114. On the former, see Richardson, 1963, pl.5; & 1964, frontispiece. On the latter, see Liu Lizhong, ed., 1988; Mortari Vergara and Begin, 1987, 248, figs.94a-b. I inspected the two rdo.rings during October, 1985.

115. NyRCh, 241, states that the Jo.khang was built in the architectural style of Nepal, and the evidence surviving from the period of its foundation does not gainsay this claim. In the case of the Ra.mo.che, while there is a lack of surviving artistic evidence, Tibetan tradition is unanimous in attributing the temple to Chinese manufacture. MBNT, f.163, quotes the temple as an example of Chinese architecture, and it is often referred to by the sources as 'rGya.btab Ra.mo.che', 'Ra.mo.che built by the Chinese'.

116. Literary sources also consider Khra.'brug as foreign. Its plan is reminiscent of Indian and Nepalese viharas.

117. Of considerable significance are the comments about Tibet in 727 made by the Chinese pilgrim to India Hsuei-ch'ao, who says that the Tibetan king did not practice the dharma, and that there were no Buddhist temples in his country. See Fuchs, 1938; Petech, 1977, 10; Vohra, 1988, 540. It is not, therefore, credible that a school of Buddhist art could be present in Tibet at that time, though shortly afterwards

Buddhist activities were initiated by Kong.co, the Li.yul monks were invited, and a temple or temples were built.

118. Bushell, 1880, 466, mentions that following the peace treaty of 730, Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan sent the Chinese emperor, among other gifts, a typical golden zoomorphic wine vase, while amongst Kong.co's presents was a golden duck.

119. In the rGyal.po bka'.thang, O.rygan gling.pa describes a set of zoomorphic beer pots in gilded silver which were hidden as gter.ma by Srong.btsan.sgam.po in the Jo.khang (GPKT&LPKT, 157). The Old T'ang Annals recall that in 736 the Tibetans sent gifts to the Chinese court, including several hundred gold and silver vessels and precious ornaments, all of wonderful and strange make and form (Bushell, 1880, 469). The New T'ang Annals give a description of Ral.pa.can's tent (i.e. summer residence), saying it was decorated with gold figures of dragons, lizards, tigers and leopards (ibid., 521). 'Gos lo.tsa.ba mentions that a nun gave Atisha a figure of a golden horse, with a child rider in turquoise (see Roerich, 1979, 256).

120. Refer to Chapter 2 for examples of how cold gilding can affect the appearance of ancient statues in the case of g.Ye.dmar.

121. Williams, 1973, 111, dates the extant works of art at Farhad-Beg-Yaikali to the late 7th century, which is consistent with the foundation of Kwa.chu, apart from a short gap, which accounts for the slight differences in style.

122. Published, respectively, in Stein, 1921, pl.XIII; Williams, 1973, fig.23; and Stein, 1928, pl.XIII.

123. There is further evidence supporting Khotan as the artistic source for the Kwa.chu Buddha. The lotus socle is composed of a double rim of small petals, having a very limited elevation, which gives a feeling of compression. This kind of lotus is structurally related to those of the Domoko oasis, in particular Khadalik (see Stein, 1921, pl.XI, for a fragment of a Khadalik mural, accn. no. Kha. i. C.0097), while the pictorial examples that are closest in style to those of the Kwa.chu Buddha have no lotus petals and cannot be compared. Nothing can be deduced from the lotus petal decoration, which was subsequently added.

124. Treasures of Dunhuang, 1980, introduction: pls. of ceilings in caves 249 & 329.

125. British Museum, accn. no. D.VII.6, verso. See Stein, 1907, vol.II, pl.LXI; Williams, 1973, 148-150, fig.59.

126. In order to convey the meaning of the plural when it is not imparted by the context, '-s' has been added to Tibetan words in transliteration to avoid misspellings.

127. Stelae with tortoise representations at their base similar to those popular in Tibet were used by the Turkic people of Central Asia. This kind of monument can be seen in wide areas of the region. For example, see Klyashtorni, 1982, 338—a pillar that is ascribed to El-Etmish Bilga qaqan (747-759). The inscription was made by his son Qutluq-tarqan-sanyun. See *ibid.*, 350, fig.2, & 366, fig.18 for further views of the tortoise, which had been buried prior to its rediscovery.

128. I reiterate that my own opinion is that the events of 739 were determined more by political unrest than a negative attitude to Buddhism. Had the Khotanese monks been the only victims of the events of that perilous year, then a move against Buddhism could have provided the explanation.

129. Regarding defeats in the north-west after 739, see Bacot, et. al., 1940, 55,64-65; but esp. Bushell, 1880, 471-473. Also, Beckwith, 1987, 121,127-134,136,140-141; and Beckwith, 1980, 34.

130. Bacot, et. al., 25,50-51.

131. *Ibid.*, 26,51.

132. BZh, 4-5; KPGT II, 295-296. Bacot, et. al., 25,51, records Kong.co's death in the year 739; *ibid.*, 26,51 records the birth of Khri.srong.lde.btsan in 742.

133. *Ibid.*, 55,62. The Tun-huang Annals mysteriously record a 'disaffection' for this year in Central Tibet. It is feasible that a long, gradual pro-Bon phase culminated in the anti-Buddhist revolt of 755 which cost Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan his life.

134. BZh, 4ff.

135. For this inscription, see Richardson, 1985, 6-7. It should be noted that the Zhol rdo.ring was probably erected in honour of sTag.sgra klu.khong soon after he played a leading role in the Tibetan conquest of the Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an in 762. It is a celebration of his achievements and a record of the grants received by him from the king as reward for his success. This being the case, the inscription must go back to a time when Buddhism was still banned. sTag.sgra klu.khong was a pro-Bon minister, and his pride in punishing those ministers whom he considered the murderers of Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan matches the anti-Buddhist posture of the new regime, which was still in power when the pillar was erected, though not for much longer. See also, Li Fang Kuei, 1983, 177.

136. Bacot, et. al., 56,63.

137. See Khri.srong.lde.btsan's *bka'.mchid* (KPGT I, f.110a; and Richardson, 1980, 66) for an early record of the revolt.
138. lDe'u is the author who states that they were innocently accused (DGBCh, 300), while dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba stresses that they were Buddhist (KPGT II, 303).
139. BZh, 7,9.
140. Ibid.; KPGT II, 302.
141. NyRCh, 271.
142. MBNT, f.175.
143. However, KPGT II, 334-335, relates an episode regarding the plain of Kwa.chu during the reign of Khri.lde.srong.btsan, though not directly relevant to the temple. It seems some inauspicious omens occurred during the execution of civic works on the plain, and the king decided to build a temple dedicated to Buddhism. He was opposed by the powerful pro-Bon minister sTag.sgra klu.khong, author of the *Zhol rdo.ring*, who ultimately was punished and exiled to the north. The king decided to build the temple on the sandy plain next to Has.po.ri, which Guru Rin.po.che had selected as the most suitable location. The temple in question was bSam.yas.
144. MTP, 112-119, gives a list of Buddhist temples founded at different periods by ministers of the kings of the Yar.lung dynasty.
145. MTP, 116-117; NgTMT, ff.113-114.
146. GRYTs, f.84.
147. On sTod.mkhar.bzhi as used in the Tibetan sources, see Beckwith, 1987, Appendix B, 203-205. See also Thomas, 1935-1963, vol. II, 318-319; and MTP, 116, n.639.
148. See Beckwith, 1987, 155; & 1980, 35. Lévi and Chavannes, 1895, 365-366, say that the Chinese pilgrim Wu-k'ung returned to China in 790 via the Four Garrisons without yet finding them occupied by the Tibetans, though he was obliged to make detours.
149. DGBCh, 264-265.
150. Often addressed simply as Khri.gsum.rje: not a proper name, but a 'mkhan' [appellative], commonly used during the royal period. For details, see Richardson, 1967, 11-12,16.
151. They are traditionally known as the Rigs.gsum.mgon.po, or 'Three Protectors of Buddhism'. However, Srong.btsan sgam.po is not always considered entirely Buddhist by Western scholars who, on the basis of the actual historical phases of diffusion in the country, rate Khri.srong.lde.btsan as the first truly Buddhist king.
152. According to the most informed late Tibetan historians: see, DGBCh, 359; BGR, 296, f.1; PBGR, 286, f.3; KPGT II, 414; GRSML, 227.
153. Later Tibetan literature proposes marginally different accession dates. The most reliable place it in the fire-bird year 817; these include DGBCh, 359; BGR, 296, f.1; PBGR, 286, f.3; KPGT II, 414; and GRSML, 227. Yet this view is implicitly refuted by the peace treaty inscription itself—a probing source in that it is contemporary to Ral.pa.can—in which it states that the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty was signed in the year 822, corresponding to the 'eighth year of the era of happiness'. This refers to the reign of Ral.pa.can, and therefore fixes his enthronement in the year 815, a date further confirmed in BTSDR, f.19: a late work based on early documents.
154. GBYTs, 201.
155. Ibid.
156. Reaching in the east to China and the So.lon.shan range; in the west, to the pass of sPa.stag.sha dung.gi.sgo.mo on the border with sTag.gzig; in the north, into an area of Hor.yul called Bye.ma.sgang.ring nya.mang; and in the south to a little beyond the land of the Bram.ze.
157. On the geographical extent of Hor.yul at roughly this time, see Moriyasu, 1980, which refers to Bacot, 1956.
158. Sog.yul in Ral.pa.can's time seems no longer to refer to Sogdia (Hoffman, 1971), as the land was already in Muslim hands, but to the Muslims themselves, who were expanding into west Central Asia during the early 9th century and clashing with the Tibetans after a long-lasting mutual non-aggression policy. (Kabul fell to Al-Ma'mun between 812 and 814.) See Beckwith, 1987, 166-167.
159. The territory roughly corresponding to present-day Sze-chüan.
160. On the 821-822 peace treaty inscription, see Richardson, 1985, 106-143; Richardson, 1978; and Li Fang Kuei, 1956.
161. Damiéville, 1952, 361; NyRCh, 425; MBNT, ff.271-272; KPGT II, 415-416.
162. Richardson, 1985, 128-129; & 1978, 155-156; Li Fang Kuei, 1956, 34,51,71.

163. Bacot, et. al., 1940, 102,132. Chapter II of the Tun-huang Chronicles, which lists the succession of chief ministers to almost the end of the dynasty, gives 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje sTag.snang as the second last minister.

164. KPGT II, 409-413. On the bka'.gtsigs from the sKar.chung inscription, signed by the Tibetan leadership of Sad.na.leg's time, see also Richardson, 1985, 72; & 1973, 18-19; Tucci, 1950, 51-55.

165. See NyRCh, 425; MBNT, f.271; and 5DL DzGT, 85; in the first two it is said that the treaty was first drafted by Tibetan panditas and Chinese ha.shangs, in the latter by Tibetan lo.pan and Chinese ha.shangs. See Szerb, 1983, 379.

166. KPGT II, 413. Tucci, 1950, 55, gives the spelling Zhang 'Bro sTag.stang.

167. Unlike Richardson (1978, 157), who states that 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje is addressed in the letter as 'chief minister', I believe it is simply 'state minister'. Mr. Richardson himself adheres to the hypothesis that he was one of the minor signatories of the sKar.chung edict (in TJ, 1977, 24), therefore it is improbable that he could climb to the peak of the Tibetan administrative apparatus in the short period of time between 804 (when he was still a dmag.dpon - this is the year that Sad.na.legs ascended the throne, therefore the sKar.chung rdo.ring could not have been erected before this date since he appears in it as the enthroned king) and some time before 810, when Mr. Richardson believes he became chief minister. The presence of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje is a significant clue in fixing the date of the sKar.chung inscription to before 810, when he was a simple dmag.dpon, as testified by the bka'.gtsig. (See chapter text following.)

168. Bushell, 1880, 519; Beckwith, 1987, 165.

169. Bushell, 1880, 514. He is addressed as first minister in the Old T'ang Annals in the reference to his attack on the town of Yen-chou in 819. See also Li Fang Kuei, 1956, 73, n.10.

170. Beckwith, 1987, 166.

171. NyRCh, 424.

172. Beckwith, 1987, 167.

173. On this treaty, see ChJG, 345, f.1; Szerb, 1983, notes that this author (bSod.nams rtse.mo) is possibly the only late writer to record this treaty.

174. See Thomas, 1928, 79ff.; Demiéville, 1952, 229, n.1; Stein, 1983, 216.

175. Beckwith, 1987, 167.

176. DGBCh, 363.

177. Ibid.; MBNT, f.272. N.b. esp. NyRCh, 426-427; GBYTs, 206; and KPGT II, 420, where mention is made of physical punishment prescribed by the king for criticising the clergy.

178. DGBCh, 362; NyRCh, 426; MBNT, ff.270-271; GBYTs, 204.

179. MBNT, f.270.

180. Stein, 1983, 149-152.

181. Ibid., 152.

182. The statement seems to imply that the Mahavyutpatti lexicon was introduced as the basic tool for the translations. See MBNT, 269.

183. NyRCh, 420.

184. DGBCh, 363; NyRCh, 421; GBYTs, 202; KPGT II, 417.

185. On the four Indian panditas, see NyRCh, 421; on the three editions, see KPGT II, 417.

186. NyRCh, 426.

187. NyRCh, 420. GBYTs, 202-203, gives an interesting variation of the list of temples built under Ral.pa.can, which includes a lha.khang at Ri.bo.rtse.lnga (Wu t'ai-shan in China).

188. KPGT II, 418-419.

189. NyRCh, 418-419. GBYTs, 202, gives the improbable iron-pig year 831 as the date for the construction of the temple. It does seem slightly late if the construction of Buddhist buildings was begun by Ral.pa.can in 818. See also KPGT II, 415.

190. NyRCh, 419; H. Karmay, 1975, 5.

191. NyRCh, 418-419; MBNT, 267.

192. KPGT II, 418.

193. All characteristics considered, these standing Bodhisattvas have no known counterparts in Tibet. This possibly led Tucci to consider them as dating to the end of the 16th century (Tucci, 1980, 144), though Central Tibetan art of that period shows no similarities. Recently, after recognizing the antiquity and importance of the Kwa.chu remains, Chinese archaeologists have published a report on the temple (see *WW*, Sept., 1985), and have categorized it as a monument of utmost cultural relevance. The only other temple in Tibet to receive similar attention is the Po.ta.la.

194. The earliest examples of figures of the guardians in Tibet, such as those at g.Ye.dmar, the Jo.khang and sNye.thang, are definitely later than the Kwa.chu statues. While they do retain some Central Asian elements, they have lost the realistic anatomical details present in the Kwa.chu guardians.

195. However, in view of the intensive Buddhist activity which occurred during the reigns of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs, it is likely that the seeds of a local style were abundantly sown.

196. Stylistic consistency with the art of late Licchavi-early Takhuri Nepal provides overwhelming evidence in retracing the stylistic source of the Kwa.chu Bodhisattvas. The stone pieces from the Kathmandu valley, as well as an array of bronze statuettes testify to an established Nepalese style which acted as a standard for quite a long time. It is very likely that this style was the inspirational basis for the embryonic Tibetan artistic school that worked on the Kwa.chu Bodhisattvas. (For examples in stone from the valley, see Goetz, 1969, pl. XLVIII; Pal, 1974, pls.187,188,204. For examples in bronze, see von Schroeder, 1981, pls.78B,78D,80C,80F,81E,81F,82C,83G). An interesting connection between a banner in the Tibetan group at Tun-huang and a bronze image from Nepal (illustrated in von Schroeder, 1981, pl.81E) is related in an article by LaPlante, 1964, and replied to by S. Kramisch in the same journal. The following words by H. Goetz on Nepalese works which may have influenced the style of the Kwa.chu Bodhisattvas are worthy of reproduction here:

"The general impression of these sculptures is decadent, though not degenerated: a manneristic style, elegant and superficial; overslim figures with too small heads, soft, untrained bodies, soft and rather tired faces, a growing otherworldliness expressed in the lotus socles and flaming oval mandorlas..." (Goetz, 1969, 188).

197. Bushell, 1880, 514; Demiéville, 1952, 174-177; Beckwith, 1987, 152. Prior to Demiéville's work, the Tibetan conquest of Tun-huang was generally dated at 781; his date of 787 has been accepted by all subsequent literature.

198. See the following banners:

-in the National Museum, New Delhi, accn. nos. Ch.LVI.005, Ch.LVI.006, Ch.LVI.007, Ch.LVI.009.

-in the British Museum, accn. nos. Ch.lvi.002, Ch.lvi.003, Ch.lvi.004, Ch.lvi.009, (in Stein, 1921, vol.IV, pl. LXXXVII).

199. Stein, 1921, vol.IV, pl.LXXXVII; accn. nos. Ch.lvi.002 & Ch.lvi.004 at the British Museum, Ch.LVI.007 at the National Museum, New Delhi.

200. National Museum, New Delhi, accn. no. Ch.LVI.007 and British Museum accn. no. Ch.lvi.002. I am grateful to Dr. Chhaya Bhattacharya, Keeper of Central Asian Antiquities at the Museum, for drawing my attention to the former painting.

201. Stein, 1921, vol.IV, pl.LXXXVIII (accn. no. Ch.lv.0037), pl.LXXXIX (accn. nos. Ch.iii.0011, Ch.0052, Ch.xxi.005, Ch.i.0016).

202. Ibid., pl.LXXXVI (accn. no. Ch.xxi.002).

203. Published by Demiéville, 1952, 287.

204. The reference here is of course to the north-east border town, and not to the temple of Kwa.chu itself. See Lalou, 1955, 178,183,199; Uray, 1980, 311.

205. Zhang bTsan.ba was one of the Tibetan generals who conquered Ch'ang-an in 762 (Bacot, et. al., 1940, 59-60, 65-66; Demiéville, 1952, 290-291, n.3) and was appointed chief of the east of Tibet in 768 (ibid., 264, n.2). He could be the general who offered his services to the Tang in 784 to crush Chu-tzu's rebellion and was not rewarded as agreed, a fact that he avenged with his tenacious actions against China (ibid., 290-291, n.3). He possibly died in 796 (Bushell, 1880, 506).

206. Is another indication of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje's pious activities and early residence in Tun-huang found in the story of Khri.gsum.rje mar.bu and Nam.mkha'i snying.po (see Demiéville, 1952, 283, n.4; and Lalou, 1939, 511)? It is possible that the 'mar.bu' in the name is an appellative indicating a young man and may refer to Khri.gsum.rje in his youth: as the son of the powerful general Zhang bTsan.ba who was posted in the north-east, and being present in the area himself, possibly in Tun-huang, the name Khri.gsum.rje mar.bu would seem entirely appropriate.

207. Demiéville, 1952, 288, 288 n.1.

208. Thomas, 1935-1963, vol.II, 9.11; Uray, 1978, 57.

209. Told to me by local rNying.ma.pa monks living in the Kwa.chu precincts during my visit in October 1988.

210. A most unconvincing notion. If it is given credence, it would mean that 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje placed statues of the king and queen exalting their role as pious propagators of dharma some seventy years after their death.

211. Richardson, in *Essays sur l'Art du Tibet*, 1977, pls.4.8. See also Liu Lizhong, ed., 1988; The Jokhang, 1985.
212. Chayet and Meyer, 1983, pls.3.5; Rhie, 1988, pls.I-III.
213. Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.75-76. Also Tibet, 1981, 265, pl.215.
214. H. Karmay, 1975, figs.6-8. On the first wall painting, see also H. Karmay, 1975, pl.5. On the second wall painting, see the accompanying plate in Dejin Zangmo, 1975.
215. A.H. Francke, Appendix G, 1465, in Stein, 1921. He writes of the presence of some religious formulae among the inscribed wooden tablets found in the ruins of the Tibetan forts of Central Asia.
216. KPGT II, 417.
217. NyRCh, 421.
218. Fortunately, an inscription on one of the Tun-huang banners (Stein, 1921, vol.IV, pl.LXXXVII, accn. no. Ch.LVI.002) and a formula on a Kwa.chu Bodhisattva's srog.shing permit a direct comparison of Sanskrit restitution. In both cases the figure depicted is Phyag.na rdo.rje, identified by his Sanskrit name Vajrapani. The inscription on the banner reads 'Ba.ca.ra.bang.ne', while that on the srog.shing has 'Om Lo.khe.shri bham.le Hum Phat Baj.ra.ni Phat'. It is evident that the Kwa.chu restitution is the more correct.
219. Despite his military and religious achievements, Ral.pa.can is considered an unlucky king by Tibetan tradition. GBYTs, 206-207, says that because he had no offspring, a fact that may have contributed to the enthronement of gLang.dar.ma, a rdo.ring without inscription was erected in front of his tomb, no respect was given to his lha.khang, and no precious gems were placed in his tomb. I wonder if the blank rdo.ring at 'On.chang.do (see Tucci, 1973, pl.67) is connected with Ral.pa.can, as the location would seem to indicate.
220. NyRCh, 427; MBNT, 272; KPGT II, 420-421.
221. Bushell, 1880, 522.
222. In spite of the situation in Tibet, which became increasingly tense against the king and Buddhism, the building of Buddhist temples continued at Tun-huang. Cave temple 231 is dated to 839, still within the period of Tibetan dominance (see Soyinié, 1984, 77), though it is possible that it is a product of the Chinese milieu.
223. NyRCh, 428; MBNT, f.275; GBYTs, 206; KPGT II, 421.
224. DGBCh, 360-362; NyRCh, 427-428; KPGT II, 421-422.
225. DGBCh, 365; MBNT, f.275; GBYTs, 206.
226. It is worth noting that the Cog.ro clan joined forces against Ral.pa.can with the dBa's, who at this time were pursuing an anti-Buddhist policy: dBa's rGyal.to.re became gLang.dar.ma's chief minister. Was the unjust assassination of the Cog.ro queen dPal.gyi ngang.tshul ordered by Ral.pa.can in person, thereby creating a fatal resentment towards him among the Cog.ro clan?
227. According to the Chinese sources, he must have died in 838 (see Bushell, 1880, 439; Demiéville, 232, 232 n.1). Tshé.dhang nor.bu proposes an improbable 836 on the basis of the Chinese sources available to him (BTsDR, f.19). DTMP(G), f.11a, likewise gives 836 for Ral.pa.can's death, but DTMP, 39, is in accord with the majority of later Tibetan literature in giving the iron-bird year 841.
228. BGR, 296, f.1; PBGR, 286, f.3; GRSML, 234; KPGT II, 422; BTsDR, f.19.
229. DGBCh, 365. In another part of the text, *ibid.*, 359, the orthography 'Bring is given for sTag.snang's clan, while GBYTs(T), vol.1, 281, offers 'Bri instead of the more usual 'Bro.
230. See Richardson, 1957, 58-59, where he reassesses the information contained in Deb.ther sngon.po (Roerich, 1979, 63) that 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje died in an iron-pig year, which Roerich takes to be 891, and brings it back a full sixty-year cycle to 831. In the passage cited, 'Gos lo.tsa.ba reports the famous legend that the great mGon.po rab.gsal was a reincarnation of 'Bro Khri.gsum.rje.

Yemar to Drathang: A Phase of Artistic Synthesis in the 11th Century

In the earth-bird year 1009, following his return from mDo.Khams¹ with Sum.pa and the other 'men of dBus.gTsang',² kLu.mes founded the temple of Mora.'gyel.³ This was the first Buddhist temple to be established in dBus since the catastrophe for Buddhism which occurred during the reign of gLang.dar.ma⁴ Tibetan sources credit the year 1009 as the beginning of *bstan.pa phyi.dar* [later diffusion of Buddhism] in dBus.gTsang, though according to 'Brom.ston.pa's calculation, religious activities had already begun in the two territories in the earth-tiger year 978. While the traditional date 1009 holds true for dBus, the earliest monastic foundation in gTsang is rGyan.gong, built by Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug in the fire-bird year 997: before Mora.'gyel.⁵ bsTan.pa phyi.dar, therefore, began in gTsang. According to one source, the reason why the period from 978 to 1009 passed without any monastic foundation, at least in the case of dBus, is that the men of dBus.gTsang had been ordained for too short a time to undertake the task.⁶

The period that followed during the 11th century in dBus.gTsang is one of the most fertile of all in Tibetan history. Despite the attention it has received by Tibetan authors,⁷ Buddhist diffusion in Central Tibet was sometimes overshadowed in the accounts by that taking place concurrently in West Tibet.

Texts such as *bsTan.rtsis gsal.ba'i nyin.byed* aptly divide *bstan.pa phyi.dar* into two main phases, though further divisions are known.⁸ The first is called *bstan.pa srol.btod.pa* [the beginning of the foundation],⁹ which refers to the early activities of kLu.mes, Sum.pa and their companions, disciples and disciples' disciples. The second phase, which originated and developed fully in mNga'.ris stod in West Tibet, is known as *bstan.pa phyi.dar shin.du dar.pa* [the great progress of the later diffusion].¹⁰ This latter phase brought a wind of orthodoxy and a faithful reinterpretation of Buddhist practice in dBus.gTsang also.¹¹ The key figure, who has received foremost attention and long-lasting appreciation for bringing Tibetans back to the letter and spirit of the doctrine was, of course, Jo.bo rje Atisha. His arrival in dBus.gTsang from mNga'.ris skor.gsum in the wood-bird year 1045 is commonly considered to mark the beginning of *bstan.pa phyi.dar shin.du dar.pa* in the territories of Central Tibet. This would indicate that it took place in dBus.gTsang more than a quarter of a century later than in mNga'.ris stod, where the renowned Lha.bla.ma Ye.shes 'od had helped the diffusion. The veracity of this assumption will be considered later.

During both phases of *bstan.pa phyi.dar* in Central Tibet, the building of temples proceeded with equal fervour. During the first, Buddhism was reintroduced almost from scratch; during the second, aberrations were removed from the practices, which were then firmly established. As a general pattern in dBus.gTsang, the '*dul.ba* [vinaya] teachings, which were rooted in the ordination of kLu.mes and the other 'men of dBus.gTsang' having been received by them in mDo.Khams, and the *sngags.pa* [tantra/mantra] teachings¹² were superseded and gradually confined to a minor role by the birth of the predominant Tibetan sects, beginning with the bKa'.gdams.pa of Atisha.

In addition to Mora.'gyel,¹³ the other main temples established in dBus during the introductory phase [*bstan.pa phyi.dar srol.btod.pa*], with their founders, were: rGyal lha.khang, founded by sNa.nam rDo.rje dbang.phyug in the water-rat year 1012; gZhu kun.dga' ra.ba, founded by rNgog Byang.chub 'byung.gnas; and Sol.nag Thang.po.che, founded by Gru.mer Tshul.khrims 'byung.gnas in the fire-snake year 1017.¹⁴ The founders of these temples were three of the *ka.ba bzhi* [four pillars], an appellation for the four most worthy disciples of kLu.mes.¹⁵ Minor institutes were also founded,¹⁶ and old temples dating from the time of the early diffusion of Buddhism were reconsecrated.¹⁷ Temples were also established in great numbers in gTsang during the years preceding Atisha's arrival

in Central Tibet. Besides rGyan.gong, which was founded in the fire-bird year 997¹⁸ by Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug, one of the original men of dBus.gTsang who went to mDo.Khams, was ordained and returned with the vinaya teachings to Central Tibet, the most important were: Thang lha.khang at La.stod dmar, founded by Sha.kya gzhon.nu; sTag.lo lha.khang, founded by sTag.lo gZhon.nu brtson; and Zhwa.lu, whose foundations were laid by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas in the fire-hare year 1027.¹⁹ The coming of Atisha in 1045 and the subsequent progress in the diffusion of Buddhism led to the foundation of well-known temples in the dBus.gTsang region.²⁰

The temples and their bstan.pa phyi.dar protagonists

The later diffusion radically reshaped Tibetan Buddhism into a form which would last for several centuries, with new doctrinal elaborations and a vast body of work carried out by Tibetan translators [lo.tsa.ba] under the guidance of Indian, Kashmiri and Nepalese *panditas*. Some obscure, yet very important masters exercised a fundamental role, and their institutes were active centres of learning and practice. A few of their temples, founded during both the phases of bstan.pa phyi.dar, have survived with their original characteristics to the recent past or the present time, though the majority have either developed into sectarian establishments, losing such characteristics in the process, or they have not survived the onslaughts of time and the ravages of worldly events. Those which have succeeded in preserving their original identity prove invaluable to an understanding of the historical and artistic implications of the cultural milieu which produced them. Moreover, literary sources assist in acknowledging their importance, and help link the eminent masters to their respective temples.

The 'men of dBus.gTsang' are customarily divided by Tibetan literature according to their region of provenance. Two of their number were from gTsang: Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug and Tshong.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge.²¹ After their return from mDo.Khams as repositories of the languishing Buddhist doctrines, each settled in his own native area to preach the reborn teachings. While kLu.mes, with Sum.pa as his assistant,²² remained in dBus,²³ Lo.ston and Tshong.btsun embarked upon the establishment of monastic centres in their own native territories. Broadly speaking, Lo.ston took responsibility for the area of Myang.smad, and Tshong.btsun for Myang.stod,²⁴ but their areas of activity widely overlapped.

Lo.ston carried out the simultaneous ordination of twenty-four disciples, who were responsible for the establishment of the temples in gTsang mentioned above, including Thang lha.khang, sTag.lo lha.khang and Zhwa.lu, among others.²⁵ Tshong.btsun established monastic and civil centres in gTsang at an early stage. Those in Myang.stod were at Khu.le, mGo.yul, Grang.chung, rGyang.ro and rKyang.bu,²⁶ the latter two being of particular significance to the present study. In fact, Tshong.btsun presided over a complicated network of religious centres conceived as divisional areas which his disciples had succeeded in founding and had subsequently offered to their master.²⁷ These divisions were called *tsho*, the foremost being Kyi.tsho, Thur.tsho and Tshong.tsho (where the name Tshong.btsun has its origin). All were further subdivided into minor *tsho*, to which the above-mentioned monastic communities belonged. lDe'u²⁸ refers to this group of *tsho* as *Shabs.kyi sgo.lnga*, clearly fixing the number of different divisions at five. The *tsho* were based on the newly-built temples, around which monastic communities were organized. In the upper Tshong.tsho territory [Tshong.tsho stod.pa], a disciple of Tshon.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge established the centres of sKal.skor and rGyan.skor;²⁹ in the middle territory [Tshong.tsho bar.pa] he founded gNas.gsar, a temple of great significance to this study, and gNas.rnying;³⁰ and in the lower territory [Tshong.tsho smad.pa] he established the five *Kbral.tsho* [tax-paying divisions] known as rBa.tsho, Nyan.tsho skor, Bya chos.skor, sMan.gro skor and Dho.tsho skor.³¹ The area of rTsis where rTsis gNas.gsar (also called rTsis lha.khang) was located became one of the focal points of Tshong.btsun's activities; he presided over the hermitage of rTsis Yang.dben and rTsis gNas.gsar itself, as well as other temples.³²

Soon after Tshong.btsun had established religious centres, the monks began to search for teachings. Myang.stod rKyang.bu sPe.dmar rKyang.bu Chos.blon and Myang.stod lCe.gzhar, who were both originally from the territory of Myang.stod, went to mNga'ris stod to study with two great masters of

the *stod* tradition, Rin.chen bzang.po and Legs.pa'i shes.rab. *bsTan.rtsis gsal.ba'i nyin. byed*³³ credits them as having been amongst Legs.pa'i shes.rab's four best disciples. *Myang chos. 'byung*,³⁴ on the other hand, states that rKyang.bu Chos.blon largely studied with Rin.chen bzang.po, but also with Legs.pa'i shes.rabs; for some reason lCe.gzhar goes unmentioned.³⁵ Later, rKyang.bu Chos.blon, also known in the *Myang chos. 'byung* as rKyang.bu Chos.(kyi) blo.(gros), returned to Myang.stod and founded the rKyang.bu temple³⁶ in the above-mentioned centre of the same name.

Gru.mer Tshul.khrims 'byung.gnas, one of the ka.ba bzhi of kLu.mes, is sometimes connected by tradition³⁷ with Grwa.pa mNgon.shes, an unconventional protagonist in both phases of bstan.pa phyi.dar in dBus.gTsang. Grwa.pa mNgon.shes was born in the water-rat year 1012 at Grwa.thang [sometimes simply 'Grwa'] in g.Yo.ru, hence the appellative 'Grwa.pa' in his name, though Rag.ma.pa has also been given as his birth place.³⁸ His birth name was dBang.phyug 'bar, with the alternative Shes.rab rgyal.ba also quoted,³⁹ and was considered an incarnation of Shad.lon dpal.seng and Vai.ro.tsa.na.⁴⁰ His clan was 'Chims and he was descended from 'Chims rDo.rje spre.chung,⁴¹ a minister of Khri.srong.lde.btsan. In his youth he received mainly *Kalachakra* teachings from his uncle, the great Zhang Chos.'bar, who was born in the water-snake year 993,⁴² and who was probably involved in Gyi.jo lo.tsa.ba's translation of the *Kalachakra-tantra* into Tibetan, made in the fire-hare year 1027. Grwa.pa mNgon.shes was probably initiated later at bSam.yas by a disciple of kLu.mes.⁴³ He became an *abhidharma* [mngon.pal] master, which dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba and 'Gos lo.tsa.ba both give as the reason that he was known as mNgon.shes, while the *Rin.chen gter.mdzod* introduces the possibility that his religious name came from his astrological skill in forecasting the future [mngon.shes canl].⁴⁴

Grwa.pa mNgon.shes was an eclectic genius who is credited with having received teachings belonging to the mNga'.ris *stod* tradition,⁴⁵ and to have mastered both the 'dul.ba⁴⁶ and *sngags.pa* teachings.⁴⁷ Of the latter he was an undisputed master, to the extent that both schools rank him in their lineage of eminent gurus. He perfected the *Zhi.byed* system, which he had received from Pha.dam.pa Sangs.rgyas.⁴⁸ Being an astrologer, he is remembered as the author of a *rtsis* [chronological calculation] on the beginning of the later diffusion of Buddhism in dBus.gTsang⁴⁹ and another on the correct assessment of the translation of the *Kalachakra-tantra*.⁵⁰ It is well known that the rNying.ma school numbers him amongst their most prestigious *gter.ston* [discoverers of hidden texts], attributing to him the rediscovery of the *rGyud.sde bzhi*, the fundamental text of Tibetan medicine later transmitted to the preeminent Tibetan physician g.Yu.thog yon.tan mgon.po. It is said that Grwa.pa mNgon.shes recovered the *rGyud.sde bzhi* from the Jo.mo gling.gsum lha.khang in bSam.yas in the earth-tiger year 1038.⁵¹ He is credited with having built over one hundred temples,⁵² made possible by his meditation on 'Dzam.bha.la, which enabled him to "attain the power of obtaining the treasure of gold to drive out misery".⁵³ His first temple was erected at g.Ye, and many more followed in g.Yo.ru. In his old age, at the peak of his religious activity, Grwa.pa mNgon.shes laid the foundations of dPal Grwa.thang [Drathang] chos.sgra in the Grwa.thang valley during the iron-bird year 1081.⁵⁴ In the following iron-horse year, it is said that a disciple overtreated his heart with a golden needle and Grwa.pa mNgon.shes died.⁵⁵ He left the work unfinished, and it was completed by his two nephews 'Byung.shes and 'Byung.tshul in water-bird 1093.⁵⁶

The holy edifices of rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar and Grwa.thang, survived up to the recent past, retaining the essence of their original identity, but rKyang.bu and rTsis gNas.gsar were subsequently completely destroyed. Fortunately, the documentation made by profs. Tucci⁵⁷ and Maraini remains, permitting an archaeological assessment. Grwa.thang,⁵⁸ though badly damaged, retains important features dating to the time of its foundation. To this group of temples the crucial, ancient small temple of g.Ye.dmar [Yemar] lha.khang must be added. It has been documented by profs. Tucci⁵⁹ and Maraini, and while it is also in a dilapidated condition, it still retains some original works of art and displays an architectural plan which go back to its inception. g.Ye.dmar is in the rGyang.ro area, where Tshong.btsun first established a monastic school, and is attributed to Lha.rje Chos.byang, a mysterious figure about whom more will be said below.

The focus of this chapter is upon the temples of g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar and Grwa.thang,⁶⁰ with particular emphasis on the two surviving monuments of g.Ye.dmar and

Grwa.thang, which I was able to personally inspect. rTsis gNas.gsar and rKyang.bu offer additional information which is fundamental to the introduction of cultural interconnections and artistic trends.

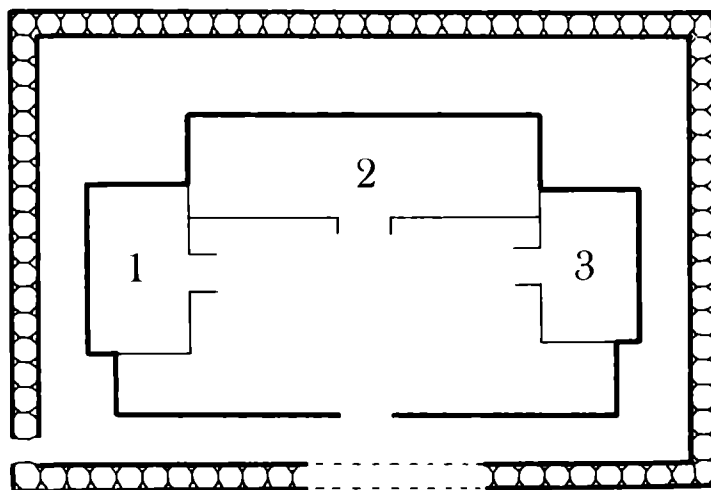
Description of the temples

g.Ye.dmar is an unassuming single-storeyed temple located in a side valley of the main caravan route which links Gro.mo to rGyal.rtse. It was already in a poor state of preservation at the time of Prof. Tucci's visits during the 1930's and 1940's. In the recent past the temple has lost its flat Tibetan roof, with easily-imaginable consequences, in particular for its ancient wall paintings, which are now completely lost. Despite its dilapidated condition, g.Ye.dmar is the only temple of those examined here whose original structure is still preserved [pl.16]. It consists of three chapels, the whole complex being surrounded on all four sides by a *skor.lam* [processional path]. The external wall, which is also the boundary wall of the edifice, is topped by a stepped architectural motif. The entrance in this external wall opens on the south side.

The main chapel, occupying the whole length of the north side of the complex, is dedicated to mThong.ba don.yod [Amoghadarshin]. His statue [pl.18] is flanked by a row of Byams.pa [Maitreya] sculptures, seated in the western posture and arranged in groups of three per side [pl.19].⁶¹ They wear heavy, densely pleated robes. Sixteen standing Buddha statues were once placed in the same chapel,⁶² but all that remains of them are a few severed heads lying on the ground [pl.21]. The wall paintings⁶³ that filled the spaces left free by the statues have completely disappeared. The chapel to the left on entering has a statue of Tshe.dpag.med [Amitayus] as the main image, together with sixteen standing Bodhisattva sculptures⁶⁴ all dressed in heavy meclallioned robes and arranged along the temple's four walls [pls.22.23]. Two door guardians still stand on both sides of the open space which was once the entrance [pls.24.27]. No trace of wall paintings remains,⁶⁵ but the complete cycle of sculpted images still exists. The chapel to the right on entering houses an empty shrine which used to contain a three-dimensional scene of Mara's assault [pl.28].⁶⁶ The gods and demons in the grotesque interlacing are now completely lost. Of the chapel's wall paintings, only the faces of two donors have survived among the works of art which their munificence had made possible [pl.17].

All the g.Ye.dmar statues are larger than life-size, and while they are far from being in a good state of preservation, their actual features are more apparent today than hitherto, when they were coated with a thick layer of cold gold.

The Temple of Yemar



1. Tshe.dpag.med chapel. 2. mThong.ba don.yod chapel.
3. Chapel of Buddha's subjugation of Mara's demons.



Plate 16 The temple of g.Ye.dmar founded during the early 11th century in a side valley along the caravan route from Gro.mo to rGyal.rtse.



Plate 17 Donor figures from the right-hand chapel dedicated to the Buddha's subjugation of Mara's demons, the sole-surviving wall painting at g.Ye.dmar.



Plate 18 Main image from the central chapel or mThong.ba don.yod lha.khang. The temple was built by Lha.rje Chos.byang.



Plate 19 Main image and flanking Maitreyas from the central chapel. Due to exposure, the statues have lost their cold-gilding and now reveal their original features.



Plate 20 Detail of a Maitreya statue.



Plate 21 Right hand side of the central chapel. Note the severed heads on the ground from the standing Buddhas previously found in the chapel.



Plates 22 & 23 Left-hand chapel or Tshe.dpag.med (Amitayus) lha.khang with the main statue of Tshe.dpag.med and standing Bodhisattvas.



Plate 24 Standing Bodhisattvas in heavy, medallioned robes and a guardian from the left-hand chapel.



Plate 25 Detail of Bodhisattvas.



Plate 26 Left-hand chapel: view of the north wall.



Plate 27 Left-hand chapel: view of the south wall.



Plate 28 Right-hand chapel: remains of the shrine previously housing the scene of the Buddha's subjugation of Mara's demons.



Plate 29 Main surviving mural depicting the worship of Buddha, from the inner chapel of Grwa.thang temple (1081-1093), south of the Tsangpo river.



Plate 30 Detail of Plate 29. The temple of Grwa.thang was built by Grwa.pa mNgon.shes who expired during its construction. It was completed by his nephews 'Byung.shes and 'Byung.tshul.



Plate 31 Lower portion of the mural.



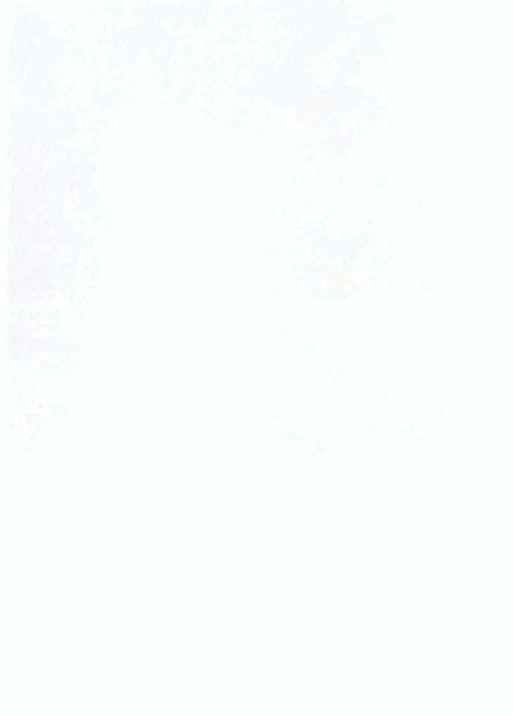
Plate 33 Detail of foreign devotees, possibly of Central Asian origin, surrounding the Buddha.



Plate 32 Detail of Bodhisattvas.



Plate 34 Shakyamuni worshipped by devotees. Top part of the mural to the left of the main statue that no longer survives.



figs.7a-b rTsis gNas.gsar. Statues from the rGya.phibs temple (mid-11th century). No longer extant. (Courtesy of IsMEO and Tucci 1949)



fig.8 Temple of g.Ye.dmar: statues photographed in 1937.
a) The image of mThong.ba don.yod from the main chapel.
b) Bodhisattvas in medallioned robes from the Tshe.dpag.med lha.khang. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini)





fig.9 Amoghasiddhi from the Kun.rig cycle in the rNam.par snang.mdzad chapel, rKyang.bu temple, early 11th century. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini)



fig.10 Standing Buddhas in pleated vests. No longer extant. a) g.Ye.dmar, main chapel.
b) rKyang,bu, Yum.chen.mo chapel.
(Courtesy of Fosco Maraini)





figs. 11a-b Scene of Buddha subduing Mara's demons, from rKyang.bu. No longer extant. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini)



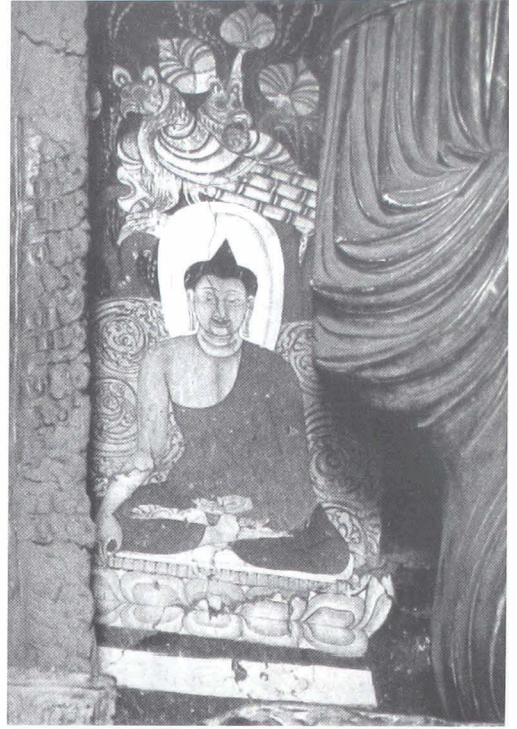


fig.13 g.Ye.dmar's seated Buddhas. No longer extant. a) mThong.ba don.yod lah.khang or main chapel.b) Tshe.dpag-med chapel. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini).





fig.14 Standing Buddha in dharmachakra mudra. No longer extant. g.Ye.dmar, main chapel. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini).

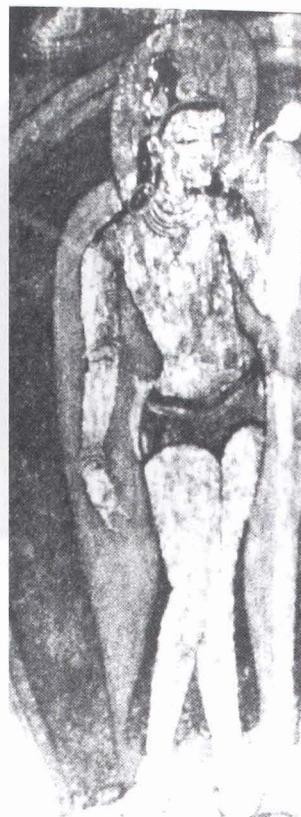
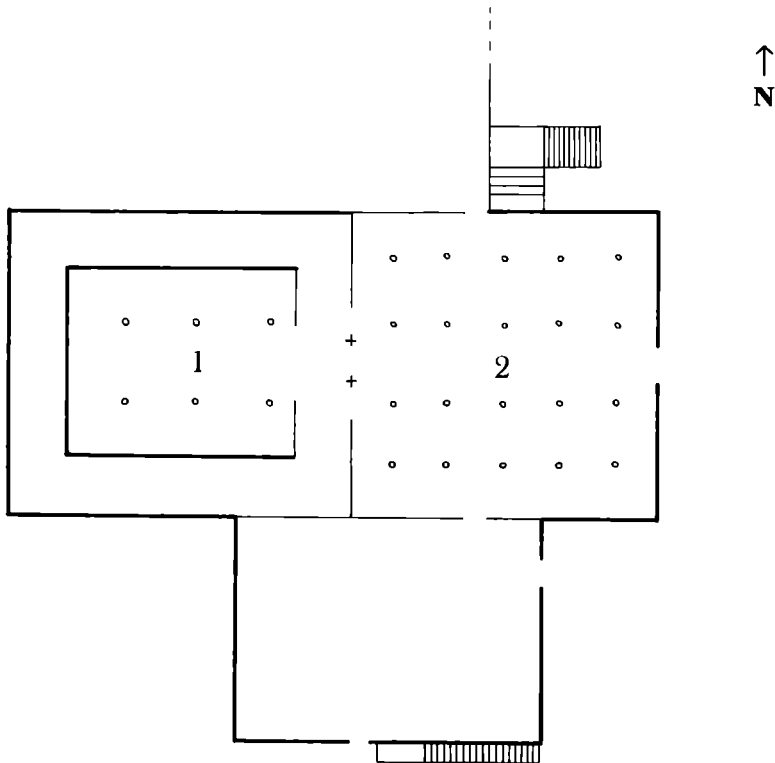


fig.15 Bodhisattvas. No longer extant.
 a) (top right) rTsis gNas.gsar, rGya.phibs temple. (Courtesy of IsMEO) b) g.Ye.dmar, Tshe.dpag-med chapel. (Courtesy of Fosco Maraini).

Grwa.thang is an imposing gtsug.lag.khang in a huge fertile valley (called either Grwa.nang or Grwa.mda') which is situated on the south bank of the gTsang.po river, not far from the ferry to bSam.yas. Today, the temple is part of the local commune compound, and is used as a storehouse. The temple complex opens to the east and was surrounded by a huge circular wall, similar to that at bSam.yas, and may therefore fit into the category of so-called *chos.skor*.⁶⁷ Today only minor ruined portions of the wall can be seen. That bSam.yas could have been a direct source of inspiration to Grwa.pa mNgon.shes is confirmed by his presence at the temple as abbot, as recorded in the *Rin.chen gter.mdzod*,⁶⁸ as well as by his rediscovery of the *rGyud.sde.bzhi* there. The huge circular walls may have been a trademark of his. The temple of sPyan.rgyas was conceived in the same way as Grwa.thang, and 'Gos lo.tsa.ba attributes it to Grwa.pa mNgon.shes.⁶⁹ sPyan.rgyas had a surrounding circular wall which enclosed a gtsug.lag.khang, an *dbu.rtse* [a temple of more than one storey], a *khyams* [gallery] and a courtyard—a description which may well be indicative of how Grwa.thang may once have been. The khyams and the courtyard at Grwa.thang are completely missing today, if ever they existed. Grwa.thang gtsug.lag.khang is two-storeyed, the ground floor including a 'du.khang [assembly hall] supported by twenty pillars, which contains very late Sa.skya.pa wall paintings and is otherwise completely empty. A huge door framed by two tall columns leads to the inner chapel called *Dri.gtsang.khang*, which contains the only extant works of art from the time of Grwa.pa mNgon.shes. At one time it housed statues that were considerably larger than life-size, indeed bigger than those at g.Ye.dmar: the ceiling is unusually high as a result. The main deity was Sha.kya thub.pa [Shakyamuni], who occupied the far wall alone, though all that remains of the statue is a huge clay halo decorated with the *rgyan.gra*, the *torana* customarily composed of mythical beings and animals. Statues of eight standing Bodhisattvas were once located along the two side walls, four to each wall. They are now all lost, with only their bas-relief clay halos remaining to testify to their presence. Finally, statues of two *dvarapalas* [gate guardians] once stood next to the door. Again, only their flaming halos remain.⁷⁰

The Temple of Drathang



1. Dri.gtsang.khang 2. 'du.khang (assembly hall)

While the sculptures have all been completely destroyed, the painted cycles have survived.⁷¹ They fill the spaces between the places where the statues once stood, and depict crowded scenes of Buddha worship, with Bodhisattvas, monks and laymen surrounding a central image of Shakyamuni in semi-cyclical arrangements [pl.29]. Those flanking the missing main image have been arranged in two scenes, one above the other, and are in a reasonable state of preservation. The lower scene is vertical in orientation, and covers a bigger area than the upper scene, which is square, and thus smaller in size [pl.34]. The side-wall murals have suffered the ravages of time and climate badly, though it can be seen that they once depicted similar scenes to those on the far wall behind the main deity, with Shakyamuni surrounded by secondary images. A *skor.lam* decorated with late wall paintings runs around the *Dri.gtsang.khang*. Chapels dedicated to *sGrol.ma* [Tara] and *Dus.kyi 'khor.lo* [Kalachakra] are situated on the south side of the *'du.khang*, together with a *mgon.khang* [chapel of wrathful deities]. On the north side there is a chapel dedicated to the eleven-faced *sPyan.ras.gzigs* [Avalokiteshvara]. All these chapels are empty today. Literary sources tell us that within the precincts there used to be a palace called *Thod.pa.smug.po.bsam.'grub.gzhis.ka*, though no remains can be found.⁷² The ruins of a *mchod.rten* of remarkable size can, however, still be detected inside the circular wall.

Since *rKyang.bu* and *rTsis gNas.gsar* have been completely destroyed, one has to rely on Prof. Tucci's reports⁷³ and on local literature for a description.⁷⁴ H. Richardson's brief note on *rTsis gNas.gsar* is also of some help.⁷⁵

Located in a side valley which leads on to the same caravan route linking *Gro.mo* to *rGyal.rtse*, though closer to *Phag.ri rdzong* than *g.Ye.dmar*, *rKyang.bu* is today a massive heap of debris surrounded by a broken boundary wall [*lcags.ri*]⁷⁶ from which nothing can be gleaned. In Prof. Tucci's description, the boundary wall led to an entrance where two small, uninteresting chapels dedicated to *mGon.po beng* [Dandamahakala] and *Lha.mo* were situated. The main temple opened on to a courtyard enclosed by a gallery on three sides. On the left of the gallery there was a chapel containing the Temptation of Mara scene, which was extremely close in execution to the same scene at *g.Ye.dmar*. Next to this chapel, there was another dedicated to *Mi.'khrugs.pa* [Akshobhya] containing an image of the deity surrounded by standing Bodhisattvas wearing *dbotis*.

The main temple consisted of four chapels on the ground floor. Moving clockwise, according to circumambulatory practice, the first chapel had already been plundered and the great images destroyed before Prof. Tucci's visit. A large *gdung.rten* [reliquary *mchod.rten*] was the chief artifact to survive to his time, though the shrine contained many portable statues. The second chapel, *Dus.gsum sangs.rgyas lha.khang*, as the name suggests contained images of the Buddhas of the Three Times, with eight standing Bodhisattvas dressed in light, flowing *dbotis* and scarves. Two gate guardians, considered by Tucci to be *Me.lha* and *Chu.lha* [the fire and water gods] showed a remarkable likeness to the gate guardians of the *Tshe.lpag.med* chapel at *g.Ye.dmar*. A few bronze bases also survived without their images. On one of these, Prof. Tucci found an inscription which mentioned the name of *rKyang.bu*'s founder, discussed below. The two remaining chapels on the ground floor were those of the eleven-faced Avalokiteshvara and of the eight forms of Tara, but it seems that they contained nothing of particular interest and were later additions.

The first floor was entirely occupied by two chapels dedicated to *rNam.par snang.mdzad* [Vairocana] and to *Yum.chen.mo*. A statue of the four-headed *rNam.par snang.mdzad* was displayed as the central deity of the supreme pentad, the minor accompanying deities of the cycle being seated on lotus pedestals and much smaller in scale. The Five Tathagatas were clad in unusual medallioned *dbotis* and chest bands. In the second chapel, *Yum.chen.mo* was similarly attired and accompanied by standing figures of the Buddhas of the Directions wearing bulky, richly pleated vestments which hid their bodies, and also found their stylistic counterparts at *g.Ye.dmar* in the standing Buddhas of the main [*mThong.ba don.yod*] chapel.

rTsis gNas.gsar, the second of the two establishments that were completely destroyed, was situated on a small piece of land near *'Brong.rtse* on the route between *rGyal.rtse* and *gZhis.ka.rtse*, and consisted of a complex of temples.⁷⁷ The northern *gtsug.lag.khang*, called *Ru.gnon gtsug.lag.khang* or

'dgon.khang', is attributed to Srong.btsan sgam.po by Tibetan tradition and considered one of the mTha'.dul temples.⁷⁸ It was made up of three chapels, dedicated to rNam.par snang.mdzad, mGon.po and sPyan.ras.gzigs. The eastern gtsug.lag.khang, known as *Hor.phig* [sic] [Hor style roof], is said by the same tradition to have been founded during the reign of Khri.srong.lde.btsan. The temple contained statues of Yum.chen.mo surrounded by the Buddhas of the Directions, as well as a large painting of mGon.po beng said to have been made with blood from the nose of Guru Rin.po.che [Padmasambhava]. The third gtsug.lag.khang was known as *rGya.phibs*, and is the most interesting to the present study. It is clear from its name that it used to be surmounted by a pagoda roof [rgya.phibs], though when such a roof was built is not known to me. It is traditionally said to have been founded during the reign of Ral.pa.can,⁷⁹ and dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba relates in the passage quoted above that it underwent complete renovation,⁸⁰ where he states that a disciple of Tshong.btsun founded a temple at rTsis gNas.gsar. The gtsug.lag.khang contained a statue of a quadruple rNam.par snang.mdzad flanked by eight Bodhisattvas, which show significant similarities to the statues in the temples mentioned above. Murals were painted in the same way as those encountered in the empty spaces on the walls between the statues at g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu and Grwa.thang.

The temples' sculptural style

An examination of the statues at g.Ye.dmar in their present dilapidated state of preservation is, paradoxically, of more benefit in determining their stylistic provenance than if they had been in pristine condition, since they have lost the thick layers of cold gold which would previously have hidden their characteristics. Conversely, however, only a study of them in the previous condition would facilitate a parallel analysis with the statues of rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar and Grwa.thang that were subsequently destroyed, since the latter are known to have had the same appearance as those at g.Ye.dmar prior to the disruption there.

Even a cursory examination will reveal that all the statues at g.Ye.dmar share the same stylistic features,⁸¹ at least as regards the heads and the hands [pls.20,25], which are the only anatomical details left visible by the imposing robes they wear. The treatment of the eyes, very elongated with heavy eyelids; the big, protruding foreheads, quite wide at the temples; the broad cheeks; the thin noses with well-outlined nostrils; the mouths with curved lips; and the flat skulls with tall, thick *usbnishas*—all this unmistakably indicates that the main stylistic source is Pala. However, all these Pala characteristics have definitely been executed with heavy Central Asian physiognomic traits, which have added a squareness and an impression of weight to the images absent from the original Pala style. The crown elements, which are not awkwardly triangular, but bigger and leaf-shaped; the straight eyebrows, no longer arched as in the Indian prototypes; the square chins; the highly stylized rendering of the hair; and the small, hollow, upward-pointing halos are all definitely Central Asian. The hands maintain their Pala character, having the same large palms and thin, slightly curved fingers [pl.14].

The most striking peculiarity of the g.Ye.dmar statues is undoubtedly the heavy, bulky garments that they all wear. In the case of mThong.ba don.yod and the six Byams.pa images, they flow and abound in a profusion of small, close pleats [pls.19,21], whereas in the case of Tshe.dpag.med and the sixteen standing Bodhisattvas they are treated in a drier and more simplified manner: they fall stiffly to the feet, and are decorated with spectacular medallions [pl.26]. Though the bodies are almost totally covered by the garments, they nevertheless create an imposing impression that is not present to such an extent in Pala art. This high degree of absorption of characteristics extraneous to the original Pala idiom is confirmed by the two *dvarapalas* in the *Tshe.dpag.med lha.khang* [pls.24,27], which show close similarity to their counterparts at rKyang.bu.⁸²

The same stylistic treatment given to the peaceful deities at g.Ye.dmar was also encountered at rTsis gNas.gsar in the images of the rGya.phibs gtsug.lag.khang [figs.7a-b],⁸³ which were executed in both the variations of costume style adopted at g.Ye.dmar [figs.8a-b]. Nothing noticeably Indian remains in the robes. Apart from the sameness in the stylistic physiognomy and ornamentation (jewels, crowns,

halos) of the statues, of particular note is the fact that the flowing robes are identical to the extent that the only divergence that can be ascertained consists of a slightly different pleat on the left thigh of the rTsis gNas.gsar images.

The medallioned robes are an Iranian contribution to the cultures of a huge tract of land linking Sogdia and north-east India to Chinese Turkestan, Tibet and further to the borders of China proper. This form of decoration became so popular that it was used not only to portray subjects and personages of Iranian origin, as in the famous royal 'drinking scene' at A.lci 'du.khang, but also quite commonly adapted to subjects represented with largely local elements. Examples of this can be found in the wall painting fragments discovered by Harding in the Khotan oasis,⁸⁴ where the garments of the Buddhas display medallions, or in a Kashmiri bronze of Shakyamuni that includes a cushion bearing the same kind of design.⁸⁵ In a T'ang painting by Yan-li-ben, blon.po mGar sTong.btsan, Srong.btsan sgam.po's envoy to the Chinese emperor T'ai-tsung, is depicted wearing a garment decorated with medallions.⁸⁶ This could well mean that in Tibet the medallioned robes were considered as attire to be worn by deities and persons of high rank.⁸⁷ Therefore, on the one hand the medallion clothing motif seems to have been adopted by Tibetan culture through its prolonged cosmopolitan links with Central Asia at the time of the Yarlung dynasty, on the other hand the motifs have subsequently been applied to the Pala style as a local contribution.

Proof that the presence of medallioned robes are a Tibetan acknowledgement of rank, and are not meant to represent an ethnic mode of dress, can be found at rKyang.bu. While the deities of the rNam.par snang.mdzad cycle⁸⁸ wear their *dbotis* in the most canonical Indian way, both they and the belts across their chests are decorated with the same medallion motifs which appear on the stiff garments of Central Asian origin [fig.9]. Again, these statues [fig.12] demonstrate a general stylistic affinity to those of g.Ye.dmar and rTsis gNas.gsar. The only ascertainable differences in the crowns and jewellery, still quite similar in conception, were probably induced by artistic licence.

The stiff, medallioned robes dressing the g.Ye.dmar and rTsis gNas.gsar Bodhisattvas were completely absent at rKyang.bu, though the standing Buddhas here, and those which were once placed in the main chapel at g.Ye.dmar, were dressed in identical bulky, flowing, pleated robes [figs.10a-b]⁸⁹ of the same Central Asia/Pala style. The halos of the g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu standing Buddhas are worthy of note. While at g.Ye.dmar they followed the same pattern used for the other sculptures in the temple, that is small, hollow, pointed in shape, and exclusive to the head; at rKyang.bu the Pala halo was double: one for the head and another for the body. The structure of the body halo evolved from the Pala elliptical shape into a Central Asian type characterized by an angularity, whereas the head halo retained its Pala characteristics.

A rendition closer to the east Indian Pala style could have been found in the chapels containing representations of the Temptation of Mara at g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu [figs.11a-b].⁹⁰ Here, the statues retained a generally more fluid treatment and in particular a gentler facial roundness which is contrasted to the marked angularity of the noses, the more arched eyebrows, the restrained and less angular chins, and the crowns composed of rows of awkwardly pointed triangles. The bodies were less imposing and voluminous, and conveyed a feeling of suppleness. Though these sculptures do represent a point of departure from the other three-dimensional works of art in the temples under consideration, their unique features do not suggest that they should be thought of as stylistically separate. The standing Bodhisattvas in the Dus.gsum sangs.rgyas chapel at rKyang.bu shared the same stylistic features encountered in the statues in the Temptation of Mara scene at g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu, but they showed a highly individual dress variant: plain, flowing *dbotis*, scarves and large sized crown elements. In my view, this dress represents once again a Central Asian interpretation of the Indian rendition in a synthesis which is distinctive from all other garment styles on the statues under examination. In particular, it differs from the synthesis present at rKyang.bu, also of Central Asian origin, where medallion motifs appear on Indian garments of a similar type.

In the light of all these considerations, it seems to me feasible to conclude that the statues at g.Ye.dmar, rTsis gNas.gsar and rKyang.bu constituted a single group in style and conception.

displaying a Tibetan interpretation of a Pala idiom that had already undergone different degrees of Central Asian adaptation.

In contrast, the Grwa.thang statues⁹¹ represented a slight artistic digression from the g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu and rTsis gNas.gsar group. Here, the sculptures seem to have constituted a Tibetan evolution of the sub-style found in the Dus.gsum sangs.rgyas chapel at rKyang.bu, as well as in the g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu chapels housing the Temptation of Mara scene. In detail, the faces of the Grwa.thang statues tended to be chubbier, with emphasis placed on rounded, rather than angular volume; the noses lack the pointed angularity; the multiple leaf motif in the crown was discarded in favour of bigger elements; the robes lost the rigid formality created by the rows of medallions, and their decoration became freer and more ornate; perhaps most obvious of all was that the size of the images increased dramatically. They represented proof of a more radical Tibetan treatment of the Central Asian/Pala style.

The temples' pictorial style

Among the group of temples under discussion, Grwa.thang alone has not suffered a complete loss of all its wall paintings. To gain an impression of the pictorial style at g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu and rTsis gNas.gsar, one has to rely on profs. Tucci and Maraini's valuable documentation (as is so often the case with Tibetan monasteries today) made before the temples suffered destruction or severe damage.

The wall paintings at g.Ye.dmar showed a deeply rooted Pala style, which had taken inspiration from east Indian Pala prototypes. The paintings in all the chapels closely adhered to an early style found in Bengal and in Bihar illuminated manuscripts.⁹² Certain features characterize early Pala art, such as the use of shading to give a strong three-dimensional impression, a generally evident sense of volume, bodily disproportion (large hands and torsos, disarticulated legs), as well as a curvacious quality. In contrast, later Pala art is characterized by flat areas of colour with little chiaroscuro, outlining and two-dimensionality in place of volume, slenderness in the images, and anatomical balance (small hands, slim torsos, well-proportioned bodies).

It is well known that Prof. Tucci discovered two inscriptions at g.Ye.dmar, that were unfortunately destroyed with the paintings. One in the mThong.ba don.yod chapel affirmed that the murals had been executed according to the Indian tradition. In Prof. Tucci's opinion, the inscription in the Tshe.dpag.med chapel stated that the tradition adopted was that of Khotan. He later opted for a less restrictive reading of the term 'Khotan', and considered it to refer to Central Asia in general.⁹³ This interpretation contains two inherent shortcomings. The first pertains to the fact that he failed to identify the Indian tradition that had given shape to the murals, because he did not actually relate the Indian style of the inscription to the actual paintings, otherwise it would have been manifest that they could not have been rooted anywhere other than in the Pala idiom. The second pertains to his reading of the words *Li lugs* in the Tshe.dpag.med chapel inscription. While, obviously, *lugs* means 'tradition' and in this context more aptly 'style', the word 'Li' raises a question. From a number of different sources,⁹⁴ varying from Chinese to Muslim and Tibetan, we know that the origin of the term dates to the time of the T'ang dynasty, when the emperors followed the practice of giving their own clan name [Li] to the dynastic lineages of some of their vassals, including the kings of Khotan and also the Khyang T'o.pa, who were destined to found the future kingdom of Hsi-hsia. In the case of the T'o.pa, the Li rank was awarded to their prince, Zi-kong, in 881.⁹⁵ In the course of time, this identification of family or clan became a toponym, which was used indiscriminately for different territories.⁹⁶ 'Li' did not, therefore, refer exclusively to Khotan, just as it did not refer exclusively to Hsi-hsia.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Tibetans identified Hsi-hsia not only with the Chinese name Li, but also with their own term *Mi.nyag*. *The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama* and the *Hor chos. 'byung*,⁹⁸ when citing the bestowal of the power over Tibet to 'Phags.pa by Se.chen rgyal.po [Khubilai khan], say that the great 'Mi.nyur' of China was also given to him. The identification of Li with Hsi-hsia and Mi.nyag is finally proven when another text, the *rGyud.sde.kun.btus*, introduces the same story, this time with 'Mi.nyag' in place of 'Mi.nyur'.⁹⁹ On such grounds, therefore, the words 'Li lugs' in the Tshe.dpag.med chapel

inscription can most accurately be interpreted not as the 'tradition of Khotan', but as the 'tradition of Hsi-hsia'.

This interpretation is supported not only by etymology,¹⁰⁰ but also by cultural considerations.¹⁰¹ In fact, from the archaeological and artistic perspectives also, Hsi-hsia better fits the context than Khotan. There is no evidence of the existence of works of art in Khotan that could be related, even approximately, to those found in the group of temples under consideration in these pages. As far as we can tell, Khotanese Buddhist art confines itself to Central Asian styles of an earlier period. Hsi-hsia, on the other hand, bears evidence that connects it, via the Pala style, with g.Ye.dmar and the other related temples. Karakhoto is the pole of Hsi-hsia cultural activity discovered to date yielding examples of Pala art interpreted according to local tradition. Neighbouring Tun-huang is another site where relics can be ascribed to the Pala idiom, but it is far from certain that the rising political power of the kingdom of the Tanguts was instrumental in spreading artistic influence beyond its own borders during the early 11th century. Hsi-hsia had short-lived sovereignty over Tun-huang around 1036, while it exercised a lasting control from the second half of the 11th century.¹⁰² Yet, the possibility cannot be ruled out that monks from Buddhist Hsi-hsia were responsible for the diffusion of religious ideas prior to 1036, which were translated into Buddhist monuments at Tun-huang. Wall paintings there (Lamaist cave no.182), and block prints and *thangkas* at Karakhoto, though possibly of a later period, offer copious testimony to the firm establishment of Pala influence in Li/Hsi-hsia and the adjoining areas.¹⁰³ While Hsi-hsia flourished under elements of Pala influence, Khotan was undergoing an age of disruption brought on by the advancing iconoclastic Muslim menace to Central Asian Buddhism. Khotan was conquered by Yusuf Kadar Khan in the year 1006: Buddhism languished for a while and eventually disappeared in 1026.¹⁰⁴

The political and cultural significance of Hsi-hsia has been often underestimated.¹⁰⁵ During the period when the central provinces of Tibet witnessed the downfall of the Yarlung empire and a persecution of Buddhism, Hsi-hsia, ethnically and culturally akin to the Tibetan motherland, established itself as the leading power in the north-east territories. The pre-eminent role played by the Tanguts in the region considerably predates the official constitution of the kingdom by Chin-chen in 982, and is at least concomitant to the ruinous reign of the 9th century Tibetan king gLang.dar.ma, the supposed persecutor of Buddhism. It is no coincidence that people from dBus, fleeing the persecution, made for the north-east border areas where Hsi-hsia was the main Buddhist stronghold at the time, in order to practise and receive the Buddhist dharma. The accounts¹⁰⁶ describe how Buddhist doctrines survived in the north-east, where a lineage of teachings decisive to their perpetuation was established by the great mGon.po rab.gsal.¹⁰⁷ The line of disciples originating from the Three Learned Men of Tibet [Bod.kyi mKhas.pa mi.gsum] and Grum mGon.po rab.gsal—the Six Men of Sog.mo [Sog.mo mi.drug], Grum Ye.shes.rgyal.mtshan, and finally the Men of dBus.gTsang—remained exclusively in the north-east for over a century to practise Buddhism. When kLu.mes and the other men of dBus.gTsang finally returned to Central Tibet in the earth-tiger year 978 to reintroduce Buddhism there, it is quite feasible that they brought with them the religious ideas that were popular in the north-east and Hsi-hsia. It is likely that artistic influences also travelled the same route. On the basis of the evidence offered by g.Ye.dmar and the other temples under examination, these influences were Hsi-hsia/Pala.

Returning to the g.Ye.dmar wall paintings after this long digression, both the Indian and Hsi-hsia styles mentioned above are deeply rooted in the Pala form, and have such an affinity of treatment to appear in most cases almost identical: an example could have been given in the case of the seated Buddhas in both chapels [figs.13a-b].¹⁰⁸ This may well mean that Tibetan artists who were aware of the subtleties of different local Pala variations, actually painted the murals—a possibility that finds confirmation in the inscriptions themselves. The mThong.ba don.yod chapel epigraph contains the name of the painter, the young rGyal.mtshan grags¹⁰⁹ who was undoubtedly Tibetan. In the Tshe.dpag.dmad chapel, the artist Jam.dpal identifies himself as the painter of the murals.¹¹⁰

The inevitable conclusion is that g.Ye.dmar's murals were painted by Tibetan artists who followed both Indian and Hsi-hsia/Pala traditions, and not by Indian and Central Asian artists, as Prof. Tucci holds. Prof. Tucci expanded his theory to include the statues, concluding that two groups of artists

competed in adorning the chapels at g.Ye.dmar, one from India and the other from Central Asia.¹¹¹ This theory is hardly tenable. The present dilapidated condition of the g.Ye.dmar statues permits us to ascertain that all of them were made using the same construction technique and materials, to the point that the straw, ropes and wood used in their inner cores are absolutely identical.¹¹² If two groups of artists from such different geographical areas had worked together at g.Ye.dmar, a minimal difference in technique or materials is the very least we would have been expected to be apparent. Moreover, it is hardly feasible that in all the temples under analysis, where similar statues and murals have always been paired, a group of Indian artists would have challenged their Central Asian colleagues in skill and inspiration, as Prof. Tucci's notion would suggest.

Though to a lesser degree than the statues, the murals were also influenced by the Central Asian (Hsi-hsia) variation of the Pala style. Evidence is provided by a standing Buddha in the mThong.ba don.yod chapel [fig.14].¹¹³ the chapel that was supposedly painted in the Indian tradition. The sensitive face, with fully modelled features obtained from a masterful use of shading, betrayed early Pala influences from Bihar and Bengal. However, much more interesting in that it evinces important Central Asian adaptations, is the bulky garment that completely covers the body in the same way as the garments of the statues at g.Ye.dmar and its related temples. The shape of the robe as it slopes down to the feet gives the Buddha's body a form typically found in Chinese and Central Asian art anterior to the Pala phase. As a consequence, though purportedly Indian according to its inscription, the painting is profoundly influenced by Central Asia.

In the same chapel, certain details had precise affinities with classical Pala style. The *bodhi* trees, with Buddhas beneath [fig.10a], had become an abstract, capricious decoration, since it was so common in east Indian illuminated manuscripts. Similar vegetal motifs, painted on the wall behind the statues of some minor deities in such a way as to make them appear to spring from their clay halos [fig.12]¹¹⁴ in perfect Pala style, seemed to be all that remained of Pala painting of any tradition at rKyang.bu. Some important paintings made in the east Indian style were preserved in the rGya.phibs chapel at rTsis gNas.gsar before its destruction. An example is the standing Bodhisattva¹¹⁵ wearing a *dboti*, painted in a manner which links the murals of the rGya.phibs lha.khang to those in the chapels at g.Ye.dmar [figs.15a-b].

It is also possible that some interesting stylistic features were present in other rTsis gNas.gsar pictorial works that connected them with the Grwa.thang paintings. rTsis gNas.gsar wall paintings as a whole represented the meeting point of two different methods of elaborating on the Pala idiom: those of g.Ye.dmar and Grwa.thang, both formulated during the same artistic phase of bstan.pa phyi.dar in dBus.gTsang. From Prof. Tucci's documentation,¹¹⁶ we have evidence that the same crowded scenes that are a feature of the Grwa.thang murals, were present at rTsis gNas.gsar [fig.7b: note the wall painting at the side of the statue]. This is all the more relevant in the light of the fact that at g.Ye.dmar the painted images were strictly individually conceived within their own space or halo. Emphasis at g.Ye.dmar was therefore on individual images, whereas at Grwa.thang it was on multitudinous scenes. rTsis gNas.gsar shared both criteria.

The treatment of the secondary images surrounding the main Buddha representations at Grwa.thang maintains the ancient Indian arrangement, which was not exclusive to Pala art [pl.29]. The disposition of the images is very free, with figures depicted in unconventional postures within the limitations of the overall composition [pl.34]. The intention at Grwa.thang is to convey an atmosphere of devotion around the Buddha—it is not a mere exercise in iconography. Tibetan scenes of every period and style are conventional and schematic, delineating precise positions for every image. Though the same Central Asian (Hsi-hsia/Pala) style defined for the other temples in our group is evidently the source, Grwa.thang nevertheless represents a departure. The chiaroscuro shading still gives dimension to the surfaces, a characteristic almost absent in post-Grwa.thang Tibetan Pala art,¹¹⁷ but a marked squarishness in the lines of composition of the heads is already a local interpretation of the Central Asian Pala idiom which seeks to exaggerate the features of the latter style. When compared with those at g.Ye.dmar, the Grwa.thang faces become less elongated, with definite square jaws, the *ushnishas* are less triangular, and the halos less voluminous [pl.30]. From such details as these at Grwa.thang, it becomes apparent that certain g.Ye.dmar painted images, like the above-mentioned seated Buddhas in the mThong.ba don.yod and Tshe.dpag.med chapels, were already a

preliminary adaptation to Tibetan taste of Pala art from Central Asia. The noses of the Grwa.thang images are particularly interesting. The bridge is solidly marked, large at the root and aquiline. The figures in profile have particularly wide foreheads, with a hairline that leaves the temple bare: to a greater extent than in any other related image in our group. The crowns are made of a single row of the awkward Pala triangles to allow space for a turban placed inside [pls.31,32]. The turbans are not unlike the type worn by Srong.btsan sgam.po (though the little statue of 'Od.dpag.med [Amitabha] is of course missing), or the other kings of the Yarlung dynasty. This is relevant not only because it represents the introduction of a native Tibetan element into the style—the period when the paintings were executed should be borne in mind—but also because this is among the first firmly datable evidence in Tibet of the portrayal of turbans. Nothing Pala remains in the garments. They do not wear *dbotis* (not even the Bodhisattvas, as they do in g.Ye.dmar and rTsis gNas.gsar). Instead, the same gowns encountered with the statues in our group of temples appear with a freedom and fantasy in ornamentation unknown elsewhere. Some robes display medallions, loosely and creatively arranged; on others rich, brocaded designs explode in a profusion of combinations [pls.31,34]. The halos, organized in successive multi-coloured bands, follow the contours of the bodies and fit closely without the Pala monochrome, volume and simplicity of stroke. The lotuses are simple, with blue and green petals—quite distant from the contrasting colours of the Pala petals. Lions adorn the bases and are randomly depicted among the figures, often in improbable places. They are painted with the same white bodies and green manes which later became popular in Tibetan art. Their muzzles are cuboid at the root and pointed at the jaws. A further interesting feature of the Grwa.thang murals are the foreigners who are included among the congregations of adoring figures [pl.33]. They have noticeable physiognomic traits, such as small eyes, large noses and thin, dark beards, which identify them as Central Asian. The spaces between the scenes are filled with meticulous and complicated geometric floral decorations, in contrast to g.Ye.dmar, where the spaces were left blank.¹¹⁸ Even from a chromatic perspective, the colour range in the paintings at Grwa.thang is not Pala in character. Deep, intense blue, red and green are the most pervasive hues, while the skin of the Buddhas is a full orange.

The wall paintings at Grwa.thang seem to me to be Tibetan in the choice of tonalities in the robes and turbans, in the shape of the lotuses, in the lions, and in the decoration of the spaces between scenes. They show very strong Central Asian (Hsi-hsia) characteristics in the overall execution of the murals, and in details such as the presence of ethnic figures. The conception of the style remains obviously Pala, which was the root for both the Central Asian variation and the subsequent Tibetan elaboration. In fact, Grwa.thang represents a mature Tibetan interpretation of the Hsi-hsia/Pala style, which was introduced at g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu lha.khang. The following section will demonstrate how historical facts corroborate the artistic evidence to build a clear picture of the stylistic trend.

History and the stylistic trend

Historically, rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang seems to be the key edifice. Its foundation is attested by dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba¹¹⁹ to a disciple of Tshong.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge, one of the men of dBus.gTsang, at the time when the tsho system of territorial division was initiated. The exact foundation date of the rGya.phibs lha.khang is unknown, but very relevant information is given in *lDe'u chos 'byung*.¹²⁰ In a passage dealing with the efforts of Lha.bla.ma Byang.chub.'od of Gu.ge to collect gold in order to invite Atisha to Tibet, the author says that he made use of a taxation system [khral.tsho] in dBus.gTsang which had not been there at the time of the return of the men of dBus.gTsang from mDo.Khams, since at that time there were no existing territorial divisions. Therefore, we find indirect evidence in this passage that the tsho system was introduced by the dBus.gTsang men and, further, that Lha.bla.ma Byang.chub.'od utilized it with the purpose of raising funds to bring Atisha to Tibet. All the sources agree on the fire-ox year 1037 as the time when Nag.tsho lo.tsa.ba's delegation was sent to India to invite Atisha to Tibet.¹²¹ Since dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba has already proven that rTsis gNas.gsar was founded at the time of the introduction of the

tsho divisions, it follows that rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang must have been established no later than 1037.

The *Myang chos. 'byung* adds consistency to this information. It mentions that Tshong.btsun passed the abbotship of rTsis gNas.gsar to his disciple rBa.btsun [sBa.btsun] bLo.gros yon.tan at a time when Yol Chos.dbang took over gNas.rnying.¹²² We are aware from a number of texts that Yol Chos.dbang, having become a follower of Atisha, requested him to reconsecrate gNas.rnying when he came to dBus.gTsang in the wood-bird year 1045.¹²³ So by that year, the renovated rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang must already have been functional. Moreover, after laying the foundation of Zhwa.lu, lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas went to India, and at that time his master Ye.shes g.yung.drung¹²⁴ temporarily became abbot of Zhwa.lu, as well as taking over rTsis gNas.gsar.¹²⁵ It is therefore evident that after 1027—the date Zhwa.lu was founded—rTsis gNas.gsar was already a functioning establishment. These facts help us to fix a reliable date for the Hsi-hsia/Pala-style wall paintings and sculptures in the rGya.phibs. Literary sources deny that these works of art could be considered a later addition to the temple, which in any case would hardly be a feasible hypothesis since they used to constitute a complete religious and iconographic cycle whose conception, it will be demonstrated below, belonged to the period of the later spread of Buddhism in dBus.gTsang. The *Myang chos. 'byung* reports that the *ger.ston* [‘text discoverer’] Guru Ye.shes khyung.grags performed a miracle at the rGya.phibs, extracting the flesh of the seven brahmins from the heart of the main statue.¹²⁶ We do not know the precise dates for Ye.shes khyung.grags, but we find in mKhyen.brtsed dbang.po’s *mTshban.tho* chronological tables that he lived in the first *rab.byung* of the Tibetan calendar (the sixty years between 1027 and 1086) and was considered a contemporary of rNgog bLo.ltan shes.rab (1059-1109) and Mi.la ras.pa (1040-1123).¹²⁷

Turning to rKyang.bu lha.khang. The *Myang chos. 'byung* attributes the temple to rKyang.bu Chos.(kyi) blo.(gros) of rKyang.bu sPre'u.dmar, who was a direct disciple of lo.chen Rin.chen bzang.po (958-1055).¹²⁸ In mNga'.ris stod he received initiation in the *rDo.rje 'byung.ba*, a commentary to the *De.nyid. 'dus.pa*, and the *dPal.mchog*, from Rin.chen bzang.po when the latter returned from Kashmir for the first time. He received the remaining teachings on the *dPal.mchog* when Rin.chen bzang.po came back from Kashmir for the second time. He also studied with lo.chung Legs.pa'i shes.rab in mNga'.ris stod, and is numbered among his four main disciples by the *bsTan.rtsis gsal.ba 'i.nyin.byed*.¹²⁹ He later founded rKyang.bu in order to spread the teachings he had received in mNga'.ris skor.gsum. His monastery specialized in the *Yoga-tantra* in general, and in the *Guhyasamaja-tantra*. An early date should be ascribed to rKyang.bu Chos.kyi blo.gros, since he met Rin.chen bzang.po for the first time in around 990.¹³⁰ As the latter was still young at that time, Chos.(kyi) blo.(gros) must have been born at roughly the same time. It seems unlikely that he survived Rin.chen bzang.po, who had an exceptionally long life. From this we can deduce that rKyang.bu lha.khang may well have been founded in the early stages of bstan.pa phyi.dar. It has already been noted that Ne'u pan.di.ta relates the fact that Tshong.btsun, one of the men of dBus.gTsang, established monastic centres in various parts of Myang on returning from mDo.khams, including rGyang.ro, where rKyang.bu is located, as well as rKyang.bu itself.¹³¹

Correlating the information gleaned from Ne'u pan.di.ta, dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba and the *Myang chos. 'byung*, it becomes evident that the foundation of rKyang.bu by Chos.kyi blo.gros was part of the early phase of dissemination introduced by Tshong.btsun to re-establish Buddhism in the area.

Soon afterwards, rKyang.bu was connected with the activities of Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba 'Phags.pa shes.rab and Thugs.rje chen.po. According to the *Myang chos. 'byung*¹³², they wrote a commentary together on the second part of *De.nyid. 'dus.pa*, the commentary on the first part having been written by Rin.chen bzang.po. It is well known that Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba went to Gu.ge to receive teachings from Rin.chen bzang.po, but when he arrived he found that he was no longer living.¹³³ Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba must have gone very soon after wood-sheep 1055, when the master died, as he was clearly unaware of his passing when he set out for Gu.ge. After finishing his studies with Legs.pa'i shes.rab, he became involved with Thugs.rje chen.po, working at rKyang.bu. As Thugs.rje chen.po did not attend the council of Tho.ling in the fire-dragon year 1076, while the inseparable companion and mentor of his Tibetan sojourn Rwa lo.tsa.ba (b.1016) was one of the protagonists there,¹³⁴ we can

assume that he had already left Tibet before that time to return to Nepal. In fact, it was in rKyang.bu that Thugs.rje chen.po received an offer of one thousand gold coins from Rwa lo.tsa.ba before the former left for India.¹³⁵ Thugs.rje chen.po's departure must have been considerably before 1076, because prior to his attendance at the council, Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba again stayed in mNga'ris skor.gsum, and then went to Kashmir to receive teachings. It is reasonable to assume that all these activities could not be carried out in a short period of time. Since 1076 is a firm date associated with Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's participation in the council of Tho.ling following his return from Kashmir, it seems to me that he wrote the Commentary on *De.nyid 'dus.pa* with Thugs.rje chen.po at rKyang.bu in the seventh decade of the 11th century.¹³⁶ At that time rKyang.bu lha.khang was a functioning institute.

Historical information relating to g.Ye.dmar lha.khang is far more fragmentary than that for rKyang.bu. Its founder, Lha.rje chos.byang, is remembered in the *Myang chos.byung*.¹³⁷ Little is known about him, and his name appears to be less a proper name than a title of respect.¹³⁸ He is considered to be a previous incarnation of Kha.che pan.chen Shakyashribhadra. When the latter came to Tibet in wood-mouse 1204, he travelled along the Gro.mo road, and stayed at g.Ye.dmar. He said the following few words about the temple: "I have here a small monastery, as small as a mandala",¹³⁹ thereby recognizing his karmic relationship with Lha.rje Chos.byang. In my view, such links are to be attributed more to his doctrinal position than to true karmic connections. It is not by chance that temples like g.Ye.dmar and rKyang.bu were offered to Shakyashribhadra upon his arrival in Tibet.¹⁴⁰ The temples were strongholds of the old 'dul.ba and sngags.pa teachings, of which he was a late exponent. His dates, in particular his date of birth, are a matter of dispute amongst Tibetan scholars;¹⁴¹ but however his birth date is fixed, it constitutes too late a *terminus ante quem* for Lha.rje Chos.byang's life-span, since g.Ye.dmar offers several archaeological clues that greatly predate any birth-date for Shakyashribhadra. All that is known about Lha.rje Chos.byang is that, besides being a physician and a Buddhist master, (and a previous incarnation of Kha.che pan.chen Shakyashribhadra), he was a great builder of temples and that he commissioned many books. He must have had private means at his disposal, because these pious activities were self-financed.

Grwa.thang is the only temple in the group under consideration for which firm dates are available. The foundations were laid by the great Grwa.pa mNgon.shes in the iron-bird year 1081, and the work completed in water-bird 1093 by his two nephews 'Byung.shes and 'Byung.tshul. Grwa.thang represented the peak of Grwa.pa mNgon.shes's Buddhist activities, not only because he did not survive its completion, but also because it was considered by local literature to be one of the four main temples connected with the kLu.mes tradition, though it was built much later than the other three, after kLu.mes had passed away. It was the chief school for sngags.pa teachings, while Sol.nag Thang.po.che, built in fire-snake 1017, was the chief school for 'dul.ba teachings.¹⁴² That Grwa.pa mNgon.shes encompassed an eclectic approach to religion made him a protagonist of bstan.pa phyi.dar, not only in terms of the traditions he perpetuated, but also in terms of the temples he founded. His life seems to be punctuated with the establishment of various institutes.¹⁴³ The first credited to him is a rather enigmatic temple called in short 'g.Ye'.¹⁴⁴ Its construction must have fallen during quite an early period of his lifetime, since it is credited to him shortly after he completed his studies with his uncle Zhang Chos.'bar. It is tempting, though very far from proven, to see in 'g.Ye' the temple of g.Ye.dmar.¹⁴⁵

Interestingly, certain points of similarity can be found between Grwa.pa mNgon.shes and Lha.rje chos.byang. Both were masters of medicine; both were very active founders of temples; and both seem to have largely supported their building activities with their own resources. (As mentioned above, Grwa.pa mNgon.shes is said to have mastered the power of 'Dzam.bha.la to obtain unlimited gold.) Furthermore, it has been noted that Lha.rje chos.byang is an honorific appellation rather than a proper name, and it appears to be one which would be well suited to Grwa.pa mNgon.shes as a gter.ston—'discoverer' of the medical treatise *rGyud.sde.bzhi*—and as an indisputable Buddhist master. Over and above any identification of the two as the same person, which cannot be proven, g.Ye.dmar lha.khang contains archaeological evidence that dates it to the same period that g.Ye was constructed by Grwa.pa mNgon.shes.

Taking the foundation date of rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang as being around year 1037, the wall paintings at g.Ye.dmar seem to be of earlier execution when compared to those of rTsis gNas.gsar because the crowded scenes occurring in the rGya.phibs lha.khang and later fully developed at Grwa.thang in the years 1081-1093, are completely absent. At the same time, the statues with the medallioned robes at g.Ye.dmar and the rGya.phibs are identical, notwithstanding the difference of a single pleat. On stylistic evidence, g.Ye.dmar must antedate the rGya.phibs lha.khang by a short time.

Turning to rKyang.bu lha.khang, although its statues show an artistic variation in garment fashion, they are extremely close in style to those of g.Ye.dmar. This consideration becomes evident in the case of the standing Buddha sculptures, which are aesthetically the same in both temples, even with regard to their heavy, pleated robes. Therefore, the sculptural works at rKyang.bu and g.Ye.dmar make the two temples practically contemporary to each other, and a little earlier than rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang. This dating is confirmed by literary sources, which mention the building of rKyang.bu by Chos.kyi blo.gros just after he received teachings from Rin.chen bzang.po during the early part of the latter's life.

On historical grounds, Grwa.thang is the last temple of this artistic phase. On sound archaeological evidence, Grwa.thang's destroyed sculptures and magnificent surviving murals were surely mutually contemporary, since they constituted an harmonious, unitary ensemble that testify to a Tibetan evolution of the Hsi-hsia/Pala style. Even the increased scale of Grwa.thang sculpture makes one think of a progressive abandonment of the foreign idiom: monumentality was a particularly favoured development in Tibetan art.

The group of temples under discussion in this chapter can thus be arranged according to art historical trends. The earliest temples are rKyang.bu and g.Ye.dmar, which belong to a period shortly before 1037. The style of the art was Hsi-hsia/Pala, but this foreign style was worked out by Tibetan artists. rTsis gNas.gsar lha.khang is chronologically and stylistically the intermediate temple. Its art dates from around 1037 and demonstrates that a Tibetan interpretation of the foreign Hsi-hsia/Pala style was beginning to emerge. The latest temple in the group is Grwa.thang, where a Tibetan interpretation blossomed during the years 1081-1093, albeit on the basis of the Hsi-hsia/Pala style which shaped it.

More specifically, at g.Ye.dmar the Central Asian Pala tradition appears to be more explicit in the sculptures than in the paintings. The Central Asian characteristics seem to have been fully absorbed into the Pala form before it was adopted in Tibet. The rKyang.bu sculptures also drew inspiration from this stylistic situation. The lost g.Ye.dmar murals, on the other hand, seem to have been closer to Indian Pala models, though the standing Buddha paintings of the mThong.ba don.yod chapel had an Indian Pala head transplanted on a Central Asian-style body. At rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang, the lost statues retained the Central Asia/Pala characteristics which is discernable at g.Ye.dmar, while the wall paintings, which have also all been destroyed, recalled both those at g.Ye.dmar and Grwa.thang, being the link between them. At Grwa.thang, the lost statues were already less noticeably Central Asia/Pala in style. The murals show a post-Central Asia/Pala interpretation that is markedly Tibetan in nature.

From the time of rKyang.bu and g.Ye.dmar, through rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs, to Grwa.thang, we witness Tibetan artists working in accordance with an Indian style [rGya.gar lugs] and a Central Asian style [Li lugs] simultaneously in the first instance, and then developing their own Tibetan idiom. Thanks to this artistic phase in dBus.gTsang, the Tibetan sub-style of the east Indian Pala idiom was created in the 11th century during a time when the original Pala style was still alive and vigorous in Bengal and Bihar. The Tibetan sub-style was another variation of the many that Pala art engendered in areas such as Central Asia, Nepal and Burma.¹⁴⁶

Concluding remarks

The artistic phase in 11th century dBus.gTsang discussed above did not remain sterile in time: it seldom happens that a style, when adopted in Tibet, does not become part of tradition, though very

few examples of its perpetuation are, to my knowledge, still extant. However, two cases of a mutually different nature are at hand. Prof. Tucci¹⁴⁷ mentions that Bya.sa lha.khang,¹⁴⁸ a temple located at the entrance of the Yarlung valley by the gTsang.po, housed sculptures which he recognised as being similar to those at g.Ye.dmar. Unfortunately, they are no longer extant as the temple has been completely destroyed.¹⁴⁹ Giving due credit to Prof. Tucci's assessment, it is interesting to consider when artistic activity at Bya.sa took place. Its foundation is attributed by a number of sources¹⁵⁰ to a local lord called g.Yu.can, who claimed descent from the ancient Yarlung dynasty. He was succeeded by his son Jo.dga' and his grandson Bya.sa Lha.chen. In a modern text it is mentioned that g.Yu.can built the *dbu.rtse* [main edifice], Jo.dga' the gallery and Bya.sa Lha.chen the great gilded statue in the temple.¹⁵¹ The consecration ceremony [rab.gnas] was performed by rGya.ma'i dbon.po.¹⁵² 'Gos lo.tsa.ba refers to Bya.sa when he states that Ten.ne, a master of Zhi.byed, went to Bya.sa in the year iron-bird 1141 to receive teachings from Bya.sa Lha.chen,¹⁵³ which indicates that Bya.sa Lha.chen was active at Bya.sa around 1141. 'Gos lo.tsa.ba adds that rGya.ma'i dbon.po was not able to defeat Pha.dam.pa Sangs.rgyas in a contest of magic when the latter was staying at Ding.ri.¹⁵⁴ Since Pha.dam.pa resided at Ding.ri from fire-ox 1097 to fire-bird 1117, the consecration of the main image at Bya.sa must have taken place during the first forty years of the 12th century.

The above provides literary evidence of the fact that the tradition continued after the artistic phase under consideration. Archaeological evidence also supports this. At sNye.thang, in the Tshe.dpag.med [Amitayus] chapel, all the statues bear distinctive traces of the style employed at our group of temples. The main image of Tshe.dpag.med, which is a direct parallel with g.Ye.dmar, where a lha.khang was also dedicated to the deity, and included Mar.me.mdzad [Dipankara] and 'Od.srung [Kashyapa], together with eight standing Bodhisattvas intercalated in two's, shows a more marked evolution of the Hsi-hsia 'Pala style towards an aesthetic solution which is much more Tibetan than that of Grwa.thang and which represents a prelude to the dBus.gTsang style of the centuries to come. A restrained use of medallions (a single row on the sleeves of some Bodhisattvas) remains, and the *dvarapalas* still recall those of g.Ye.dmar: otherwise the images constitute a definite turn into the direction taken by the local style. I am not in a position to be able to define historically when such statues were added to the temple,¹⁵⁵ but on stylistic grounds, this must have happened later than at g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar and Grwa.thang.

Having assessed the style of our group of temples in this chapter, and the historical circumstances under which that style was introduced and developed, let us finally add a religious perspective. Although it seems that g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs and Grwa.thang are all assimilable with regard to their mystic cycles, and were products of the ancient 'dul.ba and sngags.pa traditions in dBus.gTsang, the dogmatic influences that gave shape to at least some of these temples derives from the same tradition that co-authored, if not played the major role, in the revival of Buddhism. Once more the *Myang chos 'byung* elucidates the matter.¹⁵⁶ When dealing with the rGya.phibs lha.khang at rTsis gNas.gsar the text mentions that the cycle of divinities housed there had been conceived in accordance with the contents of the fourth chapter of the *De.nyid 'dus.pa*: the first portion of the commentary on which Rin.chen bzang.po, the leading exponent of the mNga'.ris.stod tradition, worked. It is a pity that the main image in the temple has never been recorded in any documentation, otherwise we would have found the same kind of quadruple rNam.par snang.mdzad image which is the central deity of rTa.bo gtsug.lag.khang in sPi.ti, a temple attributed to Rin.chen bzang.po and the kings of Gu.ge.¹⁵⁷

There is, therefore, no surprise at the mention by the *Myang chos 'byung* that the commentary on the second part of the same *De.nyid 'dus.pa* was written at rKyang.bu by Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba and Thugs.rje chen.po. Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba, with the help of Thugs.rje chen.po as pandita, brought to accomplishment a work started by Rin.chen bzang.po, who was the master and the initiator of the tradition to which Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba himself belonged. The cycle of deities at rTsis gNas.gsar, and Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's literary work at rKyang.bu testify to a point of intersection between two *vinaya* traditions born separately in mNga'.ris skor.gsum and dBus.gTsang, which are aptly known as *sTod 'dul* ['upper' = western vinaya] and *sMad 'dul* ['lower' = eastern vinaya], respectively.¹⁵⁸ Chos.kyi blo.gros, the founder of rKyang.bu, also embodies the coming together of these two traditions, having

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studied in mNga'.ris stod and having been active in gTsang.¹⁵⁹ bTsan Kha.bo.che, the great disciple of Grwa.pa mNgon.shes, went to Kashmir with rNgog bLo.ldan shes.rab after attending the council of Tho.ling in 1076.¹⁶⁰ The Kashmiri tradition was, of course, the main source of inspiration of sTod.'dul.ba.

From this evidence an important historical conclusion emerges. In chronological terms the so-called phase of the 'great progress of the later diffusion of Buddhism' [bstan.pa phyi.dar shin.du dar.pa], established in mNga'.ris skor.gsum, reached dBus.gTsang before the arrival of Atisha there (though the orthodoxy of these teachings was established only through the activities of the great Indian master), as the presence of the *De.nyid.'dus.pa* cycle at rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs lha.khang proves: it was built before Atisha's arrival in dBus.gTsang in 1045.

The developments which produced the temples of g.Ye.dmar, rKyang.bu, rTsis gNas.gsar and Grwa.thang have constituted a phase of highly composite synthesis. From the point of view of art, it brought together the Pala idiom with its Hsi-hsia variation, executed in accordance with a progressively independent Tibetan rendition. In religious terms, it represented the meeting point of the ancient bstan.pa phyi.dar schools of mNga'.ris skor.gsum and dBus.gTsang.

Notes

1. For a summary of different dates for his return from mDo.Khams, see Tucci, 1971, 173: according to Nel.pa pan.di.ta the teachings were restored in dBus.gTsang in the earth-bird year 949, according to Bu.ston rin.po.che in iron-sheep 991, according to dPal.lidan bla.ma in fire-monkey 936, according to Kam.Kam spyan.snga possibly in earth-tiger 978, and according to 'Brom.ston.pa in earth-tiger 978. The question of when Buddhist teachings were reintroduced to Central Tibet is one of the most vexed in Tibetan history. It is well-known that a full sixty-year cycle has disappeared from historical accounts. If mGon.po rab.gsal actually lived from the water-rat year 832 to the wood-pig year 915, as it would seem, it is impossible that kLu.mes, Sum.pa and the other men of dBus.gTsang could have been ordained by him, since Sum.pa is recorded as still alive after 1045 (Roerich, 1979, 61), having met Atisha in Central Tibet. A solution has been proposed by Mr. Richardson (1957, 57-63), who has pinpointed two generations of masters between mGon.po rab.gsal and kLu.mes, on the basis of Chinese calculations derived from the Blue Annals and the long version of the sBa.bzhed. The lineage is given as follows: mGon.po rab.gsal (832-915), then Grum Ye.shes rgyal.mtshan, then sGros Man.'ju.shri, then kLu.mes. From this perspective, the date proposed by 'Brom.ston.pa (Roerich, 1979, 61), who fixes the return of the men of dBus.gTsang in the earth-tiger year 978, seems acceptable. Another tradition (see DGBCh, 393; MTP, 126-127) does not quote sGros Man.'ju.shri and substitute him with the Sog.mo (DGBCh) or Zog.po (MTP) mi.drug, who are said to have preceded Grum Ye.shes rgyal.mtshan. The latter was the teacher of the men of dBus.gTsang.

2. The number of the men from dBus.gTsang is given either as ten [mi.bcu], six [mi.drug] or four [mi.bzhil]. The mi.bcu were, according to BTCh, Klu.mes, 'Bring Ye.shes Yon.tan, Rag.shi Tshul.khrims 'byung.gnas, rBa Tshul.khrims blo.gros, Sum.pa Ye.shes blo.gros (these five were from dBus), and Gur.mo Rab.kha.pa Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug, Shab.sgo.lnga.ba Tshong.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge, the two mNga'ris.pa 'O.brgyad brothers and Bo.dong.pa dBu.pa de.kar (from gTsang). The mi.drug were Klu.mes and Sum.pa from dBus, Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug and Tshong.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge from gTsang, and Ba.shi and rDzi.dkar.po from mNga'ris. The mi.bzhi were: Klu.mes Tshul.khrims shes.rab and Bri.rje yon.tan rdzi.dkar from dBus, and Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug and Tshong.btsun Shes.rab seng.ge from gTsang. As these lists show, their names are confused and telescoped in the various traditions. For a resumé of these different accounts, see TTsSN, 65.

3. See Roerich, 1979, 74; TTsSN, 69.

4. For most of Tibetan tradition, gLang.dar.ma ascended the throne in the iron-bird year 841. He is customarily considered by early medieval Sa.skya.pa authors to have been a good king for six months and a 'devil king' for six and a half months, thus reigning for one year and two weeks: see BGR, 296, f.2; PBGR, 286, f.3. According to Chinese sources, his rule began from 838, after Ral.pa.can's death; see Demiéville, 1952, 232, n.1. He was assassinated in the water-dog year 842 by Lha.lung dPal.kyi rdo.rje.

5. On the foundation of rGyan.gong, see ZLNT, 355; The Chronicles of Zha.lu in Tucci, 1949, 657; ZGLG, 5; MyCh, 155. Two dates are usually given for the foundation of rGyan.gong: water-bird 973, or fire-bird 997. The former date is hardly acceptable, in that it predates bstan.pa phyi.dar in dBus.gTsang; the latter is more acceptable in the light of the tradition of 'Brom.ston.pa, who fixes the return of the men of dBus.gTsang in earth-tiger 978.

6. See TTsSN, 67.

7. Ne'u pan.di.ta, Bu.ston rin.po.che, 'Gos.lo.tsa.ba, bSod.nams grags.pa and dPa'bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba are among those authors who give extensive coverage of the period. 'Gos lo.tsa.ba (Roerich, 1979, 1025) says that his account of bstan.pa phyi.dar in dBus.gTsang is based on the description of the events given by sPa.shi gNas.brta, a direct disciple of kLu.mes.

8. At least two other phases have been named: Phyi.dar.gyi.dbu.brnyes: the foundation of the beginning of bstan.pa phyi.dar (see TTsSN, 67); and 'Dul.ba'i.bstan.pa'i.rgyun: the establishment of 'dul.ba during the later spread of the doctrine, (ibid., 77). Bu.ston rin.po.che considers the classification of bstan.pa phyi.dar into an intermediate and late phase as fictitious, based on the false consideration that 'dul.ba was not taught in dBus.gTsang during the first of these two phases: see BTCh, 211-212.

9. TTsSN, 69.

10. Ibid., 70.
11. The fact that practice was impure and in need of correction in dBus.gTsang — with the masters of mNga'ris stod playing a major role in restoring orthodoxy — is mentioned in various texts; see NgD, 436, where a prophecy from the Mañjuśrīmūlatantra [Jam.dpal rtsa.rgyud] is quoted; also YlJCh, 89.
12. The co-existence of the 'dul.ba and sngags.pa teachings was not always peaceful. After founding rGyan.gong, Lo.ston was seriously disturbed by tantrists [sngags.pa]. See ZGLG, 5; DGBCh, 394.
13. Also spelled Mora.dger (MyCh, 154); Mara.dgo (NgTMT, 134); and Lha.mo.gyel (TTsSN, 69).
14. See Roerich, 1979, 74-75; KPGT II, 474-475; TTsSN, 69.
15. See Roerich, 1979, 74; NgTMT, 139-140; TTsSN, 69.
16. For a detailed analysis of the temples founded by the disciples of kLu.mes see, for example, NgTMT, 140ff.
17. Various temples in dBus.gTsang were re-opened during bstan.pa phyi.dar through the activities of kLu.mes and his followers, including Kwa.chu (Roerich, 1979, 75; KPGT II, 467) and Yer.pa (Roerich, 1979, 76).
18. See note 5 above. Another factor which seems to preclude water-bird 973 as a foundation date for rGyan.gong is the fact that Lo.ston's disciple lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas assisted him in its establishment. lCe.btsun, in turn, laid the foundations of Zhwa.lu in the year 1027, and then left for India. lCe.btsun would have been too old to do all this if he had been involved in the foundation of rGyan.gong as early as 973.
19. On Zhwa.lu's foundation, see ZLNT, 355; The Chronicles of Zha.lu in Tucci, 1947, 657; MyCh, 160; ZGLG, 8-11.
20. Among them are: sNye.thang, founded by 'Brom.ston.pa not long before Atisha's death in the year 1055; gSang.phu Ne'u.thog, founded by rNgog Legs.pa'i.Shes.rab in water-ox 1073; Ra.sgreng, founded by 'Brom.ston.pa in fire-monkey 1056; Sa.skya, founded by 'Khon dKon.mchog rgyal.po in water-ox 1073; Bo.dong E, founded by Mudra.chen.po in earth-ox 1049.
21. Lo.ston was from Gur.mo, Tshong.btsun from Shab.sgo lnga.ba, throughout which he helped to spread the dharma; see KPGT II, 473; TTsSN, 65.
22. The role of assistant to kLu.mes was assigned to Sum.pa by their guru; see NgTMT, 134.
23. See NgTMT, 135.
24. See NgTMT, 135-136; MyCh, 455.
25. Lo.ston had many disciples, including the following: Kyi A.tsa.rya, Ye.shes dBon.po, who was leader in rGyan.gong; lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas, who was leader in Zhwa.lu; gLang, who ruled Khri.phug and founded 'O.ma.phug.mo; Zhu.ston, who ruled Chu.mig ring.mo and built Phrang, Brag.dmar etc.; these temples, as well as others were known as 'Zhu.tsho'; rGya.ston, who was abbot of Gram.pa rGyang; Lo.stod, who ruled Seng.rtse; and sKyo.ston, who ruled Do.la.ri.mo. See NgTMT, 136ff.
26. See NgTMT, 135; MyCh, 155; GRYTs, f.85. See also Tucci, 1932-1941, vol IV, 1, 58 (for Khu.le), 59 (for Nying.ro and Grang.lung), 62-63 (for rGyang.ro and rKyang.bu [spelled rGyang.po]).
27. See KPGT II, 477-480, for a detailed description of the activities which led to the creation of these divisions. Ibid., 473-477, is devoted to the religious events which occurred in dBus.
28. DGBCh, 393: "Tshong.btsun expanded the number of disciples through the establishment of the Shab.kyi.sgo.lnga".
29. KPGT II, 479. Despite the fact that during this period monastic communities were centred on newly established holy edifices as focal points for religious activities, the passage in question seems to convey the meaning that sKal and rGyan, defined as skor [section, division] were basically religious communities. The name rGyan.skor suggests that the area (where rGyan.gong was located) was an important centre of Buddhism, which was not vested solely in the rGyan.gong gtsug.lag.khang. The passage seems to certify that both Lo.ston and Tshong.btsun, with their disciples, had settled concurrently and were active in rGyan.skor.
30. KPGT II, 479. The passage does not define gNas.gsar and gNas.rnying as skor, and therefore seems to refer directly to building activity at these sites. In the case of gNas.gsar, this is attested to by the presence of a temple, unfortunately no longer extant, which showed evidence of the early period of bstan.pa phyi.dar.
31. KPGT II, 479.
32. Ibid., 479; MyCh, 103.
33. TTsSN, 76.
34. MyCh, 66: Lo.chen [great translator] Rin.chen bzang.po initiated rKyang.bu Chos.blon in rDo.rje 'byung.ba, and also gave him the commentary on De.nyid.'dus.pa in connection with the Ko.sa.la rgyan, and

some teachings on dPal.mchog. He later imparted the remaining dPal.mchog teachings to him. rKyang.bu Chos.blo also received instruction from lo.chung ['lesser translator'] Legs.pa'i shes.rab on bShad.pa. See also Tucci, 1932-41, IV, 1, 103, n.1.

35. Only The Blue Annals (Roerich, 1979, 353-354) mentions that Myang.stod lCe.gzhar (spelled there lCe.zhar) studied, amongst other texts, dPal.mchog.rgyud with Legs.pa'i shes.rab.

36. Alternative spellings are rKyang.po (TTsSN, 76), rGyang.po (NgTMT, 135), rKyang.bu (MyCh, 66). I have adopted the Myang chos.byung spelling, as this text deals most extensively with the temple.

37. Some disputes occurred between disciples of Gru.mer and Grwa.pa mNgon.shes; see Roerich, 1979, 76. Thanks to their prestigious establishments, these two masters were, respectively, leading exponents of the 'dul.ba and sngags.pa schools; see *ibid.*; KPGT II, 476. Moreover, certain texts such as the Deb.ther dmar.po (DTMP, 57) consider Grwa.pa mNgon.shes to have been a disciple of Gru.mer.

38. Roerich, 1979, 95; RCTDz, f.46a; KPGT II, 475.

39. See note 38 above.

40. RCTDz, f.46a.

41. Roerich, 1979, 94; RCTDz, f.46a; KPGT II, 475.

42. TTsKT, 151, gives the water-snake year for his birth. Ferrari, 1958, 155, n.559, does not mention a specific date.

43. According to RCTDz, f.46a, he was called Yam.shud rGyal.ba 'od; in the Blue Annals (Roerich, 1979, 95) he was called Yam.shud. NgTMT, 133-134, states that he was initiated by Be.sa.ker.ba, a disciple of rTog, as upadhyaya, and by Yam.shud as acharya.

44. RCTDz, f.46a.

45. Nyang Nyi.ma 'od.zer (NyrCh, 478) mentions that he received stod.lugs teachings connected with the lineage of Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba. The text refers to him as Grwa.pa mNgon.shes.can.

46. Roerich, 1979, 76-77,95.

47. *Ibid.*, 95-96; KPGT II, 475.

48. Roerich, 1979, 96; KPGT II, 475.

49. See GPKT&LPKT, 487.

50. Roerich, 1979, 755.

51. RCTDz, ff.46a-46b.

52. KPGT II, 476.

53. RCTDz, f.46b; Roerich, 1979, 96.

54. See Roerich, 1979, 96-97; KPGT II, 475-476; RCTDz, ff.46a-b; TTsSN, 69.

55. Roerich, 1979, 97; KPGT II, 476.

56. *Ibid.*

57. For a description of rKyang.bu lha.khang, referred to as 'Samada' by Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 93-122; & IV, 3, figs.1-32; also Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, 39-43. For a description of rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs, see Tucci, 1949, 201, & figs.75-78.

58. Tucci also visited Grwa.thang, which he calls Grwa.nang. He offers a brief description of the monastery in Tucci, 1983, 147-148; see also the plates facing 147 and 162.

59. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 133-140; & IV, 3, figs.39-54. He refers to the temple as 'Iwang'. See also Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, pls.44-50.

60. For a description of these temples and their location, see Chan, (forthcoming), 1991.

61. They were still in their previous condition when included in Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.41-42. See also Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, pl.44, which refers to the statue of mThong.pa don.yod.

62. Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.43-44; Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, 47.

63. Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.45-47.

64. These statues are published in their previous condition in Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, pl.46; & Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, fig.50.

65. Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.51-53.

66. This scene is shown in its previous condition in Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, pl.49; & Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, fig.54.

67. The painting of the donors can be seen in its previous condition in Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, fig.48.

68. RCTDz, f.46a.

69. Roerich, 1979, 98.

70. A detail of a dvarapala can be seen in Tucci, 1983, pl. facing 162.

71. For a detail of one of these murals, see Tucci, 1983, pl. facing 147.

72. UTNK, 172.

73. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 93-122; & IV, 3, figs.1-32 for rKyang.bu; and Tucci, 1949, 201 for gNas.gsar.
74. See UTNK, 404-405; also MyCh, 99-104 for gNas.gsar.
75. See Ferrari, 1958, 142, n.420.
76. Noted when I passed by rKyang.bu lha.khang in September 1985 and June 1986.
77. See MyCh, 100.
78. For a discussion of the mTha'dul temples, see Aris, 1979, 20-33.
79. DGBCh, 363; NyRCh, 420; & GBYTs, 202, all confirm that a temple at rTsis gNas.gsar was founded during this reign.
80. KPGT II, 479.
81. Tucci 1932-1941, IV, 1, 138 found more formalistic characteristics in the statues placed in the Tshe.dpag.med lha.khang than in those of mThong.ba don.yod lha.khang. This is only partially true. This formal schematism is imposed on the bodies of the former by their stiff mode of dress, but this does not pertain to their heads, as Tucci thought. If a comparison of the heads of the sculptures in the two chapels is made, it is soon apparent that their treatment is identical.
82. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, fig.21.
83. See Tucci, 1949, 203, pls.76-77.
84. Fragments of murals discovered by Harding in the oasis of Khotan are kept at the Central Asian Antiquities Museum, New Delhi. See accn. nos. N 4 HAR F, N 5 HAR I, and N 7 HAR J for examples of the use of medallions on garments.
85. This bronze is in the Norton Simon Foundation. See Pal, *The Bronzes of Kashmir*, 1975, pls.22a-b; or von Schroeder, 1981, fig.16a. It can also be found in other publications.
86. See H. Karmay, 1975, pls.16-17. See also Tibet, 1981, pl.11; and H. Karmay, 1977, pl.1.
87. See H. Karmay, 1975, 21, for a quotation from dGe.'dun chos.'phel Deb.ther dkar.po, where the Tibetan author says that the ancient Tibetan kings used to wear royal attire in the fashion of sTag.gzig. See a similar quotation in Dejin Zangmo, 1975, 18.
88. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.25-30.
89. To compare the two, see Tucci, *ibid.*, figs.43-44 (g.Ye.dmar), & fig.32 (rKyang.bu).
90. See Tucci, *ibid.*, figs.1-7, for rKyang.bu; & Li Gotami, 1979, vol.I, 49, for g.Ye.dmar. For a detail of Mara's demons at the latter site, see Tucci, *op. cit.*, fig.54.
91. See Tucci, 1983, pl. facing 147.
92. Examples are given in Zwalf, 1985, nos.48,49,50,62, dated 1145 (from Vikramashila); nos.81,155, dated 1000; no.156, dated 1097 (from Nalanda); no.157, dated 1118; & nos.158,159. For dated Pala manuscripts, see also Saraswati, 1971, 243-262.
93. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, 137, for his discovery of the inscriptions. The relevant passage in the first inscription, found in the mThong.ba don.yod lha.khang, reads *Ri.mo.snam.'tshar.rGya.gar.lugs.kbo.bo 'bri.phug.rGyal.mtshan.grags* (Tucci, *op. cit.*, IV, 2, 135-136) which, in my view, can be translated "The shining features of the paintings are according to the tradition of India; myself, I am the young painter rGyal.mtshan.grags". The second inscription, which he found in the Tshe.dpag.med lha.khang, reads *bDe.bar.gsbegs.'bri.ba.Li.lugs.mi.mthum.gtsang.khang.nang.gi.ri.mo.phas(?)'Jam.dpal* (*ibid.*, IV, 2, 136) which, in my interpretation, means "The Tathagatas painted according to the tradition of Li, which is different; inside the gtsang.khang, the paintings have been executed by 'Jam.dpal". Tucci translated the second part of the inscription as "inside the chapel the paintings represent the noble 'Jam.dpal", interpreting the syllable *phas*, difficult to read because it was defaced, as *'phags*, noble. However, the problem then arises that the inscription would cite not one, but two subjects within the same mural. If the Tathagatas are the subject, 'Jam.dpal cannot also be the subject of the same painting. Moreover, if there were a dual subject—a case that would be rare indeed—they would have been referred to together at the same point in the inscription.
94. On these sources, see Stein, 1949-1950. See also GNCh, f.19a.
95. For the chapter on Hsi-hsia from the Sung Annals translated into Tibetan, see GYTs, 525-545. See *ibid.*, 533, for the Tang emperor's assignation of the title 'Li' to the Tangut prince Zi-kong.
96. See Stein, 1949-1950, *passim*, for a discussion of the problem under examination.
97. PZJZ, f.290b: "*Si.ya.ste.Bod.kyis.rgyal.po.Li.rgyal.lam.zer.ba.yin*".
98. See HCh, f.93a. See also Tucci, 1949, 626, for a translation of the same passage contained in *The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama*.
99. GDKT, f.34a.

100. g.Ye.dmar is referred to as Iwang lha.khang by Tucci: the name used by the locals at the time of his visit, which is still used by them. 'Iwang', in my view, may constitute a corruption of 'Li.wang', where the 'la' has been dropped. While this is merely a suggestion, if it were to prove to be the case, then this alternative name for g.Ye.dmar.- Li.wang lha.khang - would imply that it was a temple connected with the royal patronage of the king of 'Li', thereby reinforcing the notion of Tibetan contacts with Hsi-hsia.

101. The above-mentioned chapter from the Sung Chronicles (note 95) contains a brief, but detailed history of the Hsi-hsia [Tib. Mi.nyag] state. It would be useful here to point to a few facts. In 638, under Tibetan pressure, the T'o.pa clan first settled in the area where they would later engender the Tangut kingdom. In 881, as noted above in my text, Zi-kong was awarded the title 'Li' by the T'ang emperor. With him, the embryo of the nation was formed. In the year 982, Cin-chen founded the Hsi-hsia kingdom, and a state of almost continuous warfare was inaugurated against the T'ang. In 1002, Cin-chen's son Tes-ming was ruler. He defeated the Uighurs in 1028 and died in 1032. His son Yon-hun then succeeded to the throne and brought Hsi-hsia's aggressive policy against China to a particular head: in 1038, Hsi-hsia declared itself independent from China. In 1048, Yon-hun was murdered by his son Nying-lin-Ka'o who, in turn, was assassinated. Yon-hun's younger son, Le'ang-tso, next ascended the throne. He was succeeded by Phing-khrang (1068-1086) and Chan-ha-phen (1086-1139). During the latter's reign, the fortunes of Hsi-hsia started to decline, and the country suffered crushing defeats at the hands of the 'Cing', spelled as in GYT's. His successor was his son Rin-sha'o (1139-1194), whose powerful minister Rin.bde.chen attempted to overthrow him. In 1206, Rin-sha'o's younger brother rNam.rgyal (1206-1211) killed him and usurped the throne. The following year saw Cingis khan's first invasion of Hsi-hsia, repeated in 1209. The kingdom had virtually passed under Mongol control. In 1211, rNam.rgyal died and his son Tsung-zhi (1211-1222) succeeded. In 1218 and 1222, Cingis khan made his third and fourth assaults on the country. Tsung-zhi renounced his throne in favour of his son bDe.dbang (1222-1225), who soon after died of his worries. Zhang (1225-1227) was the last king of Hsi-hsia, killed by Cingis khan in 1226-1227. See also Stein, 1949-1950, *passim*.

102. For the period of Tangut tenure at Tun-huang, see Uray, 1988, 516, n.4.

103. See H. Karmay, 1975, 20, & pls.7-8, for Karakhoto thangka 20 & pl.9 for Tun-huang; and *ibid.*, 35-42 & pls.16-22, for Karakhoto blockprints. Also on Karakhoto thangka, see Beguin, 1977, 77-81 & pls.22-30. For cave 182 at Tun-huang, see Pelliot, 1924, pls. CCCXLVII-CCCLI.

104. On the Muslim conquest of Khotan, see the old, but still valid Grenard, 1900, 64ff.

105. Among those authors who have stressed the significant role played by the Tangut kingdom in the cultural and political panorama of the time, see in particular Beckwith, in *Silver on Lapis*, 1987.

106. Almost all the later writers deal with the so-called *hstan.pa'i me.ro.blangs*, the phase when the doctrine was neglected, but did not disappear. Among the earliest literature on the subject: DGBCh, 390-394; NyRCh, 449-455; MTP, 122-131. For secondary sources, see, *inter alia*, Richardson, 1957.

107. On the active role exercised by Hsi-hsia in the education of bLa.chen mGon.po rab.gsal, see The Blue Annals (Roerich, 1979, 64), where it is mentioned that mGon.po rab.gsal studied the vinaya in Hsi-hsia under a master from Go.rong called Seng.ge grags.

108. See Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 3, figs.45,53.

109. The sense of 'youth' is carried by the word 'phug'. See note 93, above.

110. See note 93, above. The interpretation that 'Jam.dpal is the painter is based on the use of the agential particle in the phrase.

111. Tucci, 1939-1941, IV, 1, 139. On the evidence of the inscriptions, Tucci maintains that mThong.ba don.yod lha.khang was painted by Indian artists, while the Tshe.dpag.med lha.khang's murals were made by Central Asian (Khotanese) artists.

112. The only difference in construction technique among the g.Ye.dmar statues is the use of superimposed layers of foliated stones in the lower part of the seated images (mThong.ba don.yod and the Maitreyas) in the main chapel. This is a rare device in Tibet, and is used to distribute weight more evenly and to better anchor the statues; it could not be used for the other extant sculptures at g.Ye.dmar for the obvious reason that they are standing images. It cannot, therefore, be said to represent an alternative construction method to that employed in the temple.

113. See Tucci, 1939-1941, IV, 3, fig.46.

114. See *ibid.*, figs.27,30, (rKyang.bu rNam.par snang.mdzad lha.khang).

115. See Tucci, 1949, 203, pl.78, for an example of a standing Bodhisattva close in style to the Indian Pala tradition.

116. See *ibid.*, pl.77, for a wall painting on both sides of a rTsis gNas.gsar rGya.phibs statue.

117. See, for example, a group of well-known Tibetan thang.ka: Tucci, 1949, pls.E.F; Pal, 1983, pl.1; Pal, *Tibetan Paintings*, 1984, fig.10, pls.6,8,9,11,12,15,16,17,18, & Appendix; Pal, *Light of Asia*, 1984, plate cat. no.11; and two thang.ka in *kosu* technique: *Bod.kyi.thang.ga* (sic), 1984, pls.62,102.

118. See Huntington, 1969, 18, for an Indian Pala manuscript dated 1028 without decoration in the spaces between the images, and another dated 1052 with such decoration.

119. KPGT II, 479.

120. DGBCh, 392 for the reference to Lha.bla.ma Byang.chub 'od's use of this taxation system, and particularly for a historical collocation of such activities. It is worth noting that in this passage the names of the men from dBus.gTsang have been incorporated, possibly on the basis of territorial origin, into the definitions identifying the various divisional areas.

121. LRLNT, 361; KDNT, 197; TTs, under fire-ox 1037; TTsKT, 157.

122. See MyCh, 103. The passage helps ascertain that a limited, but definite, period of time passed from the start of Tshong.btsun's tenure at rTsis gNas.gsar up to when Yol chos.dbang became head of gNas.rnying. It makes clear that this happened only when Tshong.btsun was no longer abbot of rTsis gNas.gsar.

123. On Atisha's acceptance of Yol.Chos.dbang's proposal to reconsecrate gNas.snying, in accordance with his own prophecy, see MyCh, 79. In the text, Atisha foresaw a place for dharma along the Myang.chu, where the land looked like an eight-petalled lotus and an eight-spoked chakra, the sky shone with the eight auspicious symbols and the surrounding mountains were in the shape of a sleeping elephant. He sent the three Yol brothers to locate it. When they reached sKyegs gNas.rnying, they thought they had found the place. They asked the local lord, Jo.sras phur.pa, for permission to bring their community there, though not before Atisha reconsecrated gNas.rnying (from a distance). The bKa'.gdams.pa tradition was established at gNas.rnying at that time. See also TTsSN, 104.

124. KPGT II, 478, mentions that Ye.shes g.yung.drung was a master to lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas, and not a disciple as quoted in *The Chronicles of Zha.lu* (see Tucci, 1949, 657). In support of dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba's point of view, we find Ye.shes g.yung.drug cited amongst the Sog.mo mi.drug, who went to mDo.Khams to be ordained in the lineage of bLa.chen mGon.po rab.gsal during a period anterior to the sojourn of the men of dBus.gTsang. These facts greatly antedate Zhwa.lu's foundation (1027). On the Sogmo mi.drug, see e.g. DGBCh, 393; MTP, 126-127.

125. MyCh, 104. Also the *Chronicles of Zhwa.lu* in Tucci, 1949, 657.

126. See MyCh, 102-103. Guru Ye.shes khyung.grags is credited in a late source with having extracted 'pills' of the brahmins from the statue of Yum.chen.mo at rTsis gNas.gsar (BDS, 76-77). This statement seems to have little basis when compared to that of the Myang chos.'byung, i.e. that Ye.shes khyung.grags's rediscovery was made from the rNam.par snang.mdzad statue in the rGya.phibs, since the author of the latter text (see MyCh, 103) mentions as proof that his account was based on a direct source: the Guru Ye.shes khyung.grags rnam.thar itself.

127. See TsT, 217; Blondeau, 1984, 112-114.

128. On his status as a disciple of Rin.chen bzang.po, see MyCh, 66. Confirmation is offered by the *Blue Annals*, see Roerich, 1979, 352-353.

129. TTsSN, 76. The text refers to him as rKyang.po chos.blon, while the Myang chos.'byung calls him rKyang.bu Chos.blo.

130. It is highly probable that rKyang.bu Chos.(kyi) blo.(gros) received teachings from Rin.chen bzang.po for the first time around 990, and subsequently in the first years of the millennium. This information can be deduced from the Rin.chen bzang.po rnam.thar of dPal Ye.shes, supposedly a disciple of his; see Snellgrove and Skorupski, 1980, 87 ff.

131. See NgTMT: 135, MyCh, 155; see also Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 58 (for Khu.le), 59 (for Nying.ro and Grang.lung), 62-63 (for rGyang.ro and rKyang.bu [spelled rGyang.po]).

132. On Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba and Thugs.rje chen.po working together at rKyang.bu, see MyCh, 67.

133. See Roerich, 1979, 354, for a reference on Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba going to Gu.ge immediately after Rin.chen bzang.po's death.

134. Among the authors who deal with Tho.ling chos.skor are Nyang.ral Nyi.ma 'od.zer, 'Gos lo.tsa.ba, dPal.'byor bzang.po, and Pad.ma dkar.po. See also RLNT, f.91a, passim.

135. MyCh, 68.

136. In evidence of Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's stay at rKyang.bu lha.khang, his relics were kept there in a white sandalwood casket. See MyCh, 67.

137. See MyCh, 68; also Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 134.

138. The name Lha.rje Chos.byang would indicate a physician who has achieved understanding of dharma.

139. MyCh, 68-69.

140. At rKyang.bu he composed a short commentary on rGyal.sras.lam.rim [The Line of Experiences on the Bodhisattva Path]; see MyCh, 67-68.

141. In the Blue Annals [Deb.ther sngon.po], 'Gos lo.tsa.ba goes through a critical process of pinpointing the date of birth of Kha.che pan.chen Shakyashribhadra, concluding that it was the fire-pig year 1127 (Roerich, 1979, 1063-1072). As the date of his arrival in Tibet is universally accepted as wood-rat 1204, according to 'Gos lo.tsa.ba he would have been seventy-eight years old at that time. 'Gos lo.tsa.ba rejects the opinion of sPyi.bo.las, quoted by him, that the pandita was sixty-five years old when he came to Tibet, implying that he was born in iron-monkey 1140. Tucci (1949, 353-356) cites the statement in the Ngor chos.'byung that Kha.che pan.chen was born in wood-ox 1145. In my view, the most reliable birth date has to be that which he himself fixed, when in the fire-rabbit year 1207 he calculated Shakyamuni Buddha's parinirvana at the Sol.nag Thang.po.che monastery. This took place, he states, 1,692 years before his own birth, and 1,750 years before that current year, fire-rabbit 1207. Thus, according to his own evidence, he was born in fire-rabbit 1147. For further information, see TTsSN, 158; for secondary sources, inter alia, Vostrikov, 1970, 110-113.

142. See Roerich, 1979, 76; and KPGT II, 476.

143. See Roerich, 1979, 95; and KPGT II, 476, which states that Grwa.pa mNgon.shes built over one hundred gtsug.lag.khang.

144. See Roerich, 1979, 95; and KPGT II, 475.

145. The local people of rGyang.ro informed me that the area between g.Ye.dmar and the Bhutanese border is known as g.Ye.

146. On Pala art in Central Asia (Tun-huang), see Pelliot, 1924, pls. CCCXLVII-CCCLI; H. Karmay, 1975, pl.6; and Treasures of Dunhuang, 1983, 113. On Pala art in Burma, see Luce, 1969-1970, pls.15a-b,151c,166,203-206,217a-b,218,220,222-225,237f,238a-b,240b-c,345,347-348,355-356. Of what supposedly remains of the highly individual Nepalese interpretation of the style, the bulk is made up of quite a large number of illuminated manuscripts.

147. Tucci, 1983, 144.

148. See UTKN, 244. Bya.sa ['bird place'] is so-called because it is the place where the king of birds is supposed to come during the third month of spring. This early 20th century source says that the Lha.sa government used to hold a special ceremony on the occasion, known as the Festival of Birds. On religious activities involving Bya.sa, see Roerich, 1979, 277,936,945.

149. I have twice passed through the area of Bya.sa lha.khang. In 1985 no traces of the temple could be seen; in 1988 I found that a small temple had been newly built on the site.

150. See, inter alia, Tucci, 1971, 167; GRSMI., 247; KPGT II, 437.

151. See DTKS, 145, and YLJCh, 74, editor's note, for this succession of building activities at Bya.sa.

152. DTKS, 145, is interesting on the Bya.sa rab.gnas [consecration] held by rGya.ma'i dbon.po.

153. Roerich, 1979, 929-930. It has to be noted that both Grwa.thang and Bya.sa shared connections with the Zhi.byed teachings.

154. In *ibid.*, 912; it is also noted that Pha.dam.pa resided at Ding,ri for 21 years. *Ibid.*, 73 states that his sojourn began in the fire-ox year 1097.

155. But see Roerich, 1979, 341, where a later addition by rGya 'Ching.ru.ba in the wood-ox year 1205 is mentioned; also Ferrari, 1958, 165, n.668.

156. MyCh, 102.

157. See Tucci, 1932-1941, III, 2, for a treatment of rTa.bo monastery in sPi.ti.

158. A number of Tibetan sources deal with 'dul.stod.lugs and 'dul.smad.lugs. For an abridged discussion of their origin and understanding, see TTsSN, 76-77.

159. A passage from the Rin.chen bzang.po rnam.thar states that lo.chen Rin.chen bzang.po worked from sPu.rangs 'upwards' (i.e. westwards), and lo.chung Legs.pa'i shes.rab worked from there 'downwards' (i.e. eastwards) as far as Sa.skya (see Snellgrove and Skorupski, 1980, 91). Since it is well known that the two great translators did not actually move from West Tibet after their prolonged stay in India and Kashmir, I think that the passage should be understood as meaning that Rin.chen bzang.po dealt basically with disciples coming from mNga'.ris skor.gsum, while Legs.pa'i shes.rab took care of disciples coming from Central Tibet. This was by no means fixed: it probably represented a general tendency.

160. TTsSN, 113.

Lhasa Jokhang and its Secret Chapel

Since the time of its foundation, the history of the Jo.khang [Jokhang] has been related with the legendary overtones that are so typical of Tibetan culture. Though full of fantastic narrative, its history well demonstrates the peculiar role that the temple has played in Tibetan tradition. If the Jo.khang is the holiest of the holy from a devotional point of view,¹ it is the epitome of Tibetan religious life from the historical perspective.

Srong.btsan sgam.po, rightly or wrongly considered by local tradition as the first propagator of Buddhism in Tibet,² not only laid the temple's physical foundations, but also its interpretative basis. In his will, Srong.btsan sgam.po told the generations to come to contribute to the expansion and the maintenance of the gtsug.lag.khang before any new edifice dedicated to dharma be started, and to do this by donating the first building materials to be employed in the new construction to the Jo.khang.³ He was the first to follow the spirit of his own will by hiding a number of different treasures in strategic locations within the temple, with the intention that they be used by future generations to renovate, or even rebuild the complex in the case of destruction.⁴

Throughout the centuries, the greatest and most charismatic figures of Tibetan history have ensured that they took an active part in maintaining the Jo.khang. Their contributions initiated a second aspect to the temple which added further value: donating to the Jo.khang also meant the possibility of installing a record of oneself, and one's masters and lineages in the temple, which consequently developed into a veritable 'Who's Who' of the various Tibetan traditions. The Jo.khang became the symbol of Tibetan culture in its role as a gallery of Tibetan Buddhism that transcended sectarian divisions. It had, therefore, taken on the character of an anomalous royal temple; when the long royal period came to an end, the care imparted by the kings was continued by the leading religious masters and the spiritual lineages which succeeded one another in controlling the country. In this respect, the Jo.khang constitutes a peculiar dynastic temple, where the dynastic role from the time of *bstan.pa.phyi.dar* [the later diffusion of Buddhism] onwards was exercised not by a succession of ruling kings, but by lineages of religious masters, who celebrated their spiritual and temporal impact by taking charge of the Jo.khang. Though considered a plague by Western art historians, the successive renovations are the essence of the temple. The history of the Jo.khang is imbued in them, and as such so is the history of Tibetan culture itself.

The Zhal.ras lha.khang

The later renovations to the Jo.khang have been particularly extensive, to the point that most elements of the early building have been concealed, yet clues still exist to help determine some details of the ancient structure in certain parts of the temple. The investigation of a secluded area in the middle storey, access to which is nowadays normally restricted to pilgrims and visitors alike, has proved to be especially significant in detecting important structural and artistic traces. The illogical location and the lack of obvious function of this secluded area captures the attention, and it has the appearance of a small chapel which stands neglected and unused. Moreover, the little chapel could not be reached if it were not for the small external balcony that runs along the corridor of the middle storey, which is a recent addition to the temple [diag.4]. Since this small balcony is a product of recent renovation, there was clearly no possibility of access in the past. As the area adjoins the *gtsang.khang dbus.ma* (the main Jo.khang chapel, where the famous Jo.bo Shakyamuni statue is placed), these considerations

have induced me to examine the question of the original conception of this 'chapel' and, moreover, of the overall temple structure as it was formulated at the time of its foundation.

The odd chapel is doubly relevant, not only for the structural secrets it seems to preserve, but also because it houses interesting artistic remains. It contains some of the earliest murals still extant in the Jo.khang, as well as a few other fragments in their vicinity, particularly in the light of the removal of the most ancient paintings from the walls of the Jo.khang by Chinese archaeologists in the very recent past.⁵ In spite of the fact that the Jo.khang is such a well known edifice now, the murals have escaped the attention of specialists, possibly because of their location, and have never been published.

This mysterious secluded area was part of the *Zhal.ras lha.khang* where, on rare and special occasions, people were permitted a close glimpse of the Jo.bo Shakyamuni's sacred face. Any study of the Zhal.ras lha.khang is closely connected with an analysis of the Jo.khang structure, and the history of the temple from the time of its foundation to the earlier phases of its renovation.

The period of foundation: an historical perspective

The Ra.sa gtsug.lag.khang, as the Jo.khang was originally known, is ascribed by commonly accepted Tibetan tradition to the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po. This is supported not only by later Tibetan literary sources:⁶ even the most ancient records assign the temple to his time.⁷ As extensively discussed in the first chapter, the 'authoritative exposition' [bka'.mchid] of Khri.srong.lde.btsan, deposited separately when the bSam.yas rdo.ring was erected, and the 'sworn account' [bka'.gtsigs] of Sad.na.legs, deposited at the time of the erection of the sKar.chung rdo.ring, give the earliest description of Buddhist activities in Tibet, and attribute the Jo.khang to Srong.btsan sgam.po. The exact years of his life have been a matter of dispute among Tibetan authors of all times, and remain so for present-day Tibetologists. All that is known for certain is that he was born in an ox year. Some among the most ancient and reliable Tibetan writers fix that year as fire-ox 617,⁸ which is indirectly confirmed by almost all the sources, as they mention that Srong.btsan sgam.po became king upon the death of his father, in the ox year 629.⁹ The *Tang Annals* offer a useful cross-reference, since they state that Srong.btsan sgam.po had become king by the time he came of age.¹⁰ The enthronement of the Yarlung dynasty kings customarily occurred when they were thirteen years old: the age at which the young princes were able to ride a horse was the age they were also able to rule the country. If Srong.btsan sgam.po ascended his father's throne in the ox year 629, then he must have been born in the ox year 617.

The two major sources of cultural, political and religious inspiration and influence that characterized Srong.btsan sgam.po's reign were Nepal and China. They both played a role in the shaping of the civilization of Tibet which was promoted by the king. Though the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po ran uninterrupted from the ox year 629 to his death in the bird year 649, the Nepalese and Chinese insemination of his Tibet took place during separate successive phases. The first falls between the ox years 629 and 641, when the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng kung-chu reached Lhasa. Some modern scholars believe that this coincided with Srong.btsan sgam.po's retirement from the throne in favour of his son Gung.srong gung.btsan,¹¹ but neither the ancient Tibetan documents nor the Chinese Annals offer any evidence in support of such a view. Later Tibetan sources do, however, hold the same view of an interregnum, though they ascribe to Srong.btsan sgam.po quite untenable regnal years.¹² At least the possibility that he co-ruled with his young son when the latter came of age cannot be dismissed.

The regnal period connected with Newar influence remains quite obscure, since it is not covered by the most authoritative ancient source, the *Tun-huang Annals*, which do not examine events before 641.¹³ Unfortunately, this is the phase that is particularly relevant to the foundation of the Jo.khang, though a limited number of clues are available to help shed some light on these otherwise shrouded years. The second phase of Srong.btsan sgam.po's reign starts with the arrival of the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng kung-chu in the ox year 641, and lasts until his death in the bird year 649 or possibly in the early part of the dog year 650. This period is better documented: it is covered by both the *Tun-*

buang Annals retroactively, and the *T'ang Annals*, as relations between Tibet and China became constructively closer during those years.

In Buddhist terms, this first phase of Srong.btsan sgam.po's rule is certainly characterized by strong Nepalese influence, epitomized by his marriage to the princess Lha.gcig Khri.btsun (Bhrikuti to the Nepalese).¹⁴ It is possible that the surviving story of the marriage and resultant developments, particularly significant for Buddhism, is basically an apologetical fabrication contained in later orthodox sources; still, that contact existed between Tibet and Nepal is beyond doubt. Even without considering purportedly legendary accounts the influence of Buddhist Nepal on Srong.btsan sgam.po's Tibet is confirmed by weighty evidence indeed: the very existence of the Jo.khang, which still today displays more than meagre elements of Newar workmanship; by the proven facts contained within Nepalese and Chinese documents; and no less important, by the precious clues contained in Tibetan sources and the religious perspective.

Khri.btsun is usually described by Tibetan authors as the daughter of the Newar king Anshuvarman, known in Tibetan as 'Od.zer Go.cha.¹⁵ He was the minister of king Shivadeva, whom he had placed on the throne of Nepal, but later became ruler of the country.¹⁶ The era, which he adopted about half way through his rule, is still a matter of controversy, and I will deal only with chronological data pertinent to contact with Tibet.¹⁷ In spite of still uncertain information from Nepalese epigraphy on the subject, a clear statement regarding the inception of the era can be found in an early medieval Tibetan author, the great Sa.skya.pa Sod.nams rtse.mo (1142-1182), who attributes the introduction of the era to Anshuvarman himself¹⁸ and whose calculation was later utilized by other Tibetan writers.¹⁹ bSod.nams rtse.mo fixes the era's inception at 576, but more relevant to this study than the beginning is the end of Anshuvarman's reign, which his last known inscription indicates came in the year 621, since it bears the date year 45 of the era begun in 576.²⁰

Anshuvarman was probably not a usurper, as sometimes held, since he ascended the throne when Shivadeva retired to religious life, and nominated the latter's son, Udayadeva, as his heir apparent.²¹ Udayadeva was overthrown by Jisnugupta and probably assassinated by him.²² This event must have taken place some time around 624, since Udayadeva's inscription declaring him king is dated in the year 45 of the same era (621), corroborating Anshuvarman's last epigraph. The inscription proves that he succeeded the latter. Three years later, in the year 48 of the era (624), Jisnugupta's first inscription appears, and his usurption of the throne is proven.²³ Descriptions of the events following the coup become hazy, and it is from the Chinese sources that we learn that Udayadeva's son, Narendradeva, elected to go into exile to Tibet when his father was removed by the latter's younger brother,²⁴ Dhruvadeva, who was most probably a puppet king in the hands of Jisnugupta.²⁵ All these political machinations occurred during the reign of gNam.ri srong.btsan, father of Srong.btsan sgam.po.²⁶

The period of Narendradeva's exile in Tibet ended in 641, when the last usurper of the Nepalese throne was assassinated and he returned as king. The *Tun-buang Annals* supply this valuable information, referring to Narendradeva as 'Na.ri.ba.ba' and to the murdered usurper king, Vishnugupta, as 'Yu.sna kug.ti'.²⁷ The inaccuracy of the Tibetan transliteration does leave some residual doubt as to the veracity of the identification, but the sequence of events in 641 succinctly recorded in the *Tun-buang Annals* fits neatly and serves to confirm it. This information gives no indication as to whether the Tibetans were instrumental in eliminating the usurper (entirely possible, since Narendradeva left Tibet to take the throne), or whether he was killed during an internal revolt. The first hypothesis looks the more reliable in the light of the Chinese envoy Wang Hsüan-ts'e's account in the *Old T'ang Annals*. He visited Narendradeva's court in 647, and says that the king was a vassal of the Tibetans, who had helped him to regain his throne after giving him sanctuary in Tibet.²⁸ If Tibet had sovereignty over Nepal during this period of usurption of the Nepalese throne, then there would have been no reason for Narendradeva to flee to Tibet in the first place. His ascent of the throne in 641 does, however, provide a welcome retroactive verification of the accuracy of the dates in the Nepalese inscriptions.²⁹

Narendradeva's exile must, therefore, be placed after 624 and before 641. It is within this span of time that Nepalese influence on Tibet took place, exercised through the presence of the Newar (Licchavi) court *in loco*. In this context, it is hardly surprising that there are repeated mentions of

Newar artists active in creating Buddhist images and decorations for the Jo.khang and the royal residences during the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po.³⁰

Assessing the precise dates of the court's presence in Lhasa on the basis of presently available information is no easy matter. One has to wonder if the exile of the ruling Licchavi family took place immediately after 624, or later. The first possibility is feasible, since Narendradeva may have fled to Tibet to avoid complications following the overthrow of his father. In this case we have to envisage already existing bonds of alliance between Anshuvarman and the Tibetan king, who could only have been gNam.ri srong.btsan. While there is no evidence of such political contacts, there is also insufficient reason to reject their possibility.

dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba dates Khri.btsun's arrival in Lhasa as taking place either in the dragon year 632, or the horse year 634.³¹ This was the time of her marriage to Srong.btsan sgam.po according to the Tibetan authors on the subject. The sources go on to affirm that either in the horse year 634 or sheep 635, Khri.btsun built the palace on the dMar.po.ri, using Newar artists.³² This order of dating obviously places the arrival of the Newar court in Tibet in the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po.

Both these hypotheses are supported by less than solid evidence, and neither has precedence. Nevertheless, the story of the Tibetan mission to Nepal led by the plenipotentiary minister mGar sTong.btsan seems to be a later fabrication in order to build a parallel between the circumstances of the matrimonial mission sent to China, a fact which is attested to by both the ancient Tibetan and Chinese sources, and Srong.btsan sgam.po's marriage to the Nepalese princess. A Tibetan mission to Nepal was unnecessary, since the Licchavi court had moved to Tibetan soil. As seen above, the late sources say Khri.btsun came to Tibet to marry him either in 632 or 634. In fact she may well have already been there before these dates, and the wedding celebrated when Srong.btsan sgam.po reached marriagable age (sixteen years being likely for the Yarlung kings).

Nyang.ral Nyi.ma 'od.zer offers an interesting and unconventional piece of information. He states that Khri.btsun's father was not Anshuvarman, but 'Bi.ham.lo.bhi.pa.de.va', who was the son of 'Gu.na.kha.ma.ha.de.va'.³³ Gu.na.kha is addressed as *khri.pa* [enthroned king], while Bi.ham.lo.bhi.pa de.va is not. Gu.na.kha.ma.ha.de.va is Gunakamadeva,³⁴ one of the Licchavi princes enthroned by Anshuvarman as puppet kings while he himself wielded true power.³⁵ In the genealogies of the *Vamsbavalis*, Gunakamadeva is placed after Manadeva, who probably reigned from 576—when the new era was introduced—and after Shivadeva, who co-ruled with Anshuvarman, the latter being his *mahasamanta*, before giving way to the solitary reign of Anshuvarman from 606. The connection between Gunakamadeva and Anshuvarman is attested to by the same *Nyang.ral chos.'byung* passage, where the author erroneously makes 'Od.zer Go.cha (written 'Ho.sha'), alias Anshuvarman, and Gunakamadeva one and the same person.³⁶ From this information it is at least clear that Gunakamadeva was a contemporary of Anshuvarman, and grandfather of Khri.btsun, who was thus two generations after Anshuvarman and the same generation as Narendradeva. Her father may have been a close relative of Udayadeva. Nyang.ral eliminates the anachronism of Khri.btsun being the daughter of Anshuvarman: an important fact, otherwise she would have lived a generation before Narendradeva and Srong.btsan sgam.po, who were definitely contemporaries. It is also worth noting that according to Nyang.ral, Khri.btsun was a true princess of Licchavi royal blood.

All the evidence furnished by Tibetan sources does not prove conclusively whether Khri.btsun really existed or not. However, this is not a decisive factor in the present context. What matters to an assessment of the Jo.khang is that the presence of the Newars was crucial to its construction. Khri.btsun and even Narendradeva, as part of the Newar court in exile, were possibly involved in the building of the temple and, indeed, in bringing tantric Buddhism to Tibet.

The date of foundation of the Jo.khang is given in the most reliable Tibetan sources as the pig year 639,³⁷ while others place it after ox 641,³⁸ which is too late, since the Newar court had already left Lhasa for Nepal. The Jo.khang was built in one year,³⁹ after the lake 'O.thang.mtsho had been filled in during the previous dog year (638), in accordance with the legend. If the Jo.khang was indeed built by Khri.btsun and the Newar artists, as would seem to be the case, then its construction must predate the arrival of the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng kung-chu in Tibet. The fact that Khri.btsun is not mentioned by the *Tun-huang Annals*, which start their account at the time of Wen-ch'eng kung-chu's arrival, has induced scholars to doubt her historicity. In later sources Khri.btsun is addressed as senior

to the Chinese princess.⁴⁰ If she did ever exist, she must have met a premature death before the period to which the *Tun-huang Annals* turn their attention (641), otherwise there would have been reference to it.

Both the *Tun-huang* and the *Old Tang Annals* agree that Wen-ch'eng kung-chu came to Tibet in 641.⁴¹ That same year a further occurrence induced a change of influence in the country: the *Tun-huang Annals* tell us that Narendradeva left Tibet.⁴² The Newar insemination of Tibetan culture and religion thus ended abruptly, to be substituted by a Chinese influence. With the presence of the princess in Tibet, relations with China were strengthened and the two countries enjoyed a rare period of cordial relations.⁴³ This political novelty was mainly due to the progressive consolidation of power by the minister mGar sTong.btsan,⁴⁴ founder of the mGar supremacy which controlled Tibet from Srong.btsan sgam.po's death to almost the end of the century.⁴⁵ Even to the extent of the mGar clan's origins, the Chinese and their culture were the chief, often painful, interlocutors. It is possible that Buddhism suffered its first minor setback when mGar sTong.btsan managed to consolidate his power at the expense of other influential ministers,⁴⁶ still during the rule of Srong.btsan sgam.po. In the absence of a precise date, Wen-ch'eng kung-chu's foundation of the Ra.mo.che, as recorded in the later sources, may be ascribed to the more liberal atmosphere towards Buddhism soon after the end of the period of Newar cultural influence, and before the mGar clan became the ruling power in Tibet, which in itself demonstrated a general disinterest in Buddhism. Although Wen-ch'eng kung-chu lived in Tibet for many years (the *Tun-huang Annals* recording that she was brought to her burial place in the sheep year 683, implying that she died in the snake year 681, while the *T'ang Annals* date her death to the year 680),⁴⁷ she is not credited with any other major Buddhist foundation. During all the years of the mGar supremacy, no mention of the establishment of Buddhist foundations is found in the sources, which proves the negative attitude of the mGar clan towards the religion. It is no coincidence that the first Buddhist foundation reappears soon after their fall from power. The temple in question was gLing Khri.rtse, built by king Dus.srong mang.po.rje, as certified in Sad.na.legs' bka'.gtsigs.⁴⁸

It is quite possible that during the last years of Srong.btsan sgam.po's rule there was little Buddhist activity, Khri.btsun having possibly been dead for several years, and Narendradeva having returned to Nepal. Even during the prolonged period of the Newar court's presence in Tibet, Buddhism did not find widespread acceptance in the country.⁴⁹ The legend of Khri.btsun's frustrated efforts at establishing temples before finally succeeding with the Jo.khang does offer an insight into the situation within Tibetan society at that time.⁵⁰ She must have met with consistent hostility in the conservative quarters of Tibetan society, who were far from keen to open themselves to new religious ideas. The later sources record several years between the construction of the dMar.po.ri palace, which was basically a lay structure conceived as a Newar monument,⁵¹ and the painstaking establishment of the Jo.khang, which could well indicate that times were not completely ripe in Tibet for the acceptance of Buddhism.

Nevertheless, Buddhism did find some royal favour. In this context, one is led to wonder whether it indeed had its propagator in the person of Srong.btsan sgam.po, or whether this would be better credited to Khri.btsun (if she existed) and Narendradeva. It is quite feasible that Srong.btsan sgam.po, in an effort to transform tribal Tibet into an organized state, sought a civilizing influence from a more cultured neighbour like Nepal. Narendradeva was a religious man who played a part in introducing the crucial Matsyendranath cult into his country after his return to the throne.⁵² In the later part of his life, he abdicated and retired to a *vihara*.⁵³ The later Tibetan sources describe Srong.btsan sgam.po also as a religious king, yet his identification as an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara—a Bodhisattva who enjoyed great popularity in Nepal at roughly the same time—can also have secular connotations. Beckwith makes a brilliant contribution in stressing that Srong.btsan sgam.po received the title of *Pao-wang* [Precious King, or King of the Jewels] from the Chinese emperor Kao-tsung.⁵⁴ In Chinese culture, this title was the prerogative of the 'king of the west', and as such could be used to refer to Amitabha. Hence, this imperial title may have been transformed into a Buddhist one by later literature to reinforce Srong.btsan sgam.po's identity as an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the emanation of Amitabha.

A further significant corollary of the parallel between Narendradeva and Srong.btsan sgam.po is the story quoted in a Nepalese chronicle about the former having passed away by dissolving into the foot of his tutelary deity, Matsyendranath.⁵⁵ According to later Tibetan sources, Srong.btsan sgam.po also died in the same manner, passing into the image of his *yi.dam*, Thugs.rje chen.po [Mahakaruna, a form of Avalokiteshvara].⁵⁶ It is again likely that historical facts, in this case the close contacts between Narendradeva and Srong.btsan sgam.po, induced the transfer of a myth from one king to the other.

Jo.khang—the original concept

Though the later sources' description of the circumstances under which the Jo.khang was built appears highly apologetical, and may give more credit to Srong.btsan sgam.po and Khri.btsun than they actually deserve, the information they supply elucidates well the various phases of the construction. For this reason, I have decided to follow the narrative as presented in these sources, and to refrain from eliminating the more mythological details.

Srong.btsan sgam.po and Khri.btsun conceived the plan of the temple as a square, and this basic structure has remained unchanged through the ages, each successive building having been added to the ancient core. dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba states that the Jo.khang was made as a replica of the Indian 'Han.khang' *vibara*,⁵⁷ while Nyang.ral Nyi.ma 'od.zer names the Jo.khang prototype 'Ha.ra', and also describes it as a *vibara*,⁵⁸ interestingly adding that the Jo.khang followed the architectural style of *Bal.po* [the land of the Newars].⁵⁹

The ground floor was organized around five inner chapels,⁶⁰ though obviously the plan was more complex, with subsidiary rooms adjoining the basic pentadic nucleus. As both the original plan and the literary accounts (ranging from the early, authoritative documents of Khri.srong.lde.btsan and Sad.na.legs to the works of dPa'.bo and Nyang.ral) stress the concept of the Jo.khang as a *vibara*, cells probably once stood next to the chapels.⁶¹ However, with the development of the Jo.khang into a symbol of the Tibetan Buddhist sects, the cells lost their original function and became additional chapels to house the increasing number of shrines dedicated to different deities and lamas. Yet the structure itself remained unchanged. Since it is quite likely that the *sangha* was extremely limited in size at this time, it is equally likely that, while the Jo.khang was structurally a *vibara*, it seldom served that function. A literary source does provide a note confirming limited use as a *vibara* inasmuch as Srong.btsan sgam.po had his *gzim.khang* [residence] in the eastern wing of the upper storey,⁶² but no mention is made of resident monks.

The temple was internally subdivided into thirty-seven sections through the use of columns to represent the 37 divisions of the *'dul.ba* [vinaya], which were placed around the central area of the temple, called the *dkyil.khor.thil*.⁶³ Particular emphasis was given to the interior woodwork, notably the chapel doors and the columns. The king himself is credited with their execution, through his miraculous transformation into five thousand craftsmen.⁶⁴ A legend is told about the decorative style adopted for woodwork, which is definitely foreign (Newar), and deviates conspicuously from the Tibetan standard, if such a standard ever existed at that time. It is said that Srong.btsan sgam.po made a number of mistakes in carving the lions, columns and beam-panels because he was distracted by a maid when he was working on them.⁶⁵

Legendary narratives aside, artistic evidence does help prove the point. The original columns can still be seen on the ground floor east wing, in front of the main entrance to the Jo.bo chapel and in the same area on the upper floor. Srong.btsan sgam.po's columns on the ground floor are easily distinguished from later replicas, since the originals are covered with a thick layer of plaster which partially hides the details of the carving [pl.35], and it is hardly likely that such plaster would be part of the initial design. The later columns, which are faithful copies of the originals, have been painted in polychrome, while the latter have been left unpainted, their wood already being protected by the layer of plaster.

Archaeological and literary evidence coincide in identifying the original interior plan of the Jo.khang. Legend attributes the construction of the ground floor to Srong.btsan sgam.po, while queen Khri.btsun is considered responsible for the upper storey.⁶⁶ Though she had originally wished to build

another storey, it was never built.⁶⁷ Legendary accounts of the king and his Nepalese and Chinese queens aside, this could well be a sign of Khri.btsun's premature death, which must have taken place before a reliable source like the *Tun-huang Annals* began recording the events of the Yarlung dynasty, otherwise it would have been mentioned. The third storey was, in fact, built much later in a number of different phases of construction. The main entrance faced the west for the well known reason related in the later sources that the temple had to be oriented towards Nepal out of respect for the marriage agreements made by Srong.btsan sgam.po with Khri.btsun's father, the Newar king.⁶⁸ Nyang.ral states that Srong.btsan sgam.po himself says he is the maker of the wooden doors, while other authors attribute them to both him and Bal.po.bza' Khri.btsun.⁶⁹

The five *gtsang.khang* (inner chapels) were built on the ground floor: a central chapel [gtsang.khang dbus.ma; C] on the east side, flanked by two other gtsang.khang [B,D], and others on the north [A] and south [E] sides [diag.1]. The evidence of literary sources that the ground floor was based on five main chapels is confirmed by the well known legend about Khri.lde.gtsug.rtsan's Chinese wife, Kong.co, who is said to have discovered the statue of Jo.bo Shakyamuni that was previously in the Ra.mo.che, hidden in the Jo.khang.⁷⁰ She was able to rediscover it inside the *gtsang.khang lho.ma* [E], whose door had been walled up to keep the statue out of Chinese hands⁷¹ (a mural of 'Jam.dpal dbyangs [Mañjughoshal] had been painted on the surface of the blocking wall for added camouflage) because she herself assumed that the Jo.khang had five gtsang.khang, though she could only count four.⁷² Her assumption was confirmed when she consulted her divining mirror: she discovered the statue inside the south chapel after breaking down the wall blocking the doorway.

Artistic evidence helps confirm the pentadic nucleus of the Jo.khang. Very ancient wooden door frames are still in place at the entrances of the north chapel and the two gtsang.khang flanking the central inner chapel on the east wing [diag.1, pl.37]. The style of these frames contains features that attribute them to the glorious Newar art of the 7th century. Since Tibetan literature recognizes the wooden frames of the upper storeys as products of Newar artists, these ground floor examples must also belong to the same school, being aesthetically identical. The door frame of the central inner chapel is, however, different. It is certainly more restrained in size and less profusely ornate than the previous examples, but unfortunately an accurate assessment of its stylistic and chronological provenance is precluded by a very thick layer of paint which has accumulated through the centuries. It could well be very early. Turning to the gtsang.khang lho.ma, the south chapel, the absence of a door frame at the front cannot invalidate, in my opinion, the archaeological evidence confirming the pentadic nature of the Jo.khang nucleus. If we must feel obliged to dismiss the narrative of Kong.co's rediscovery of the Shakyamuni image because of its legendary characteristics, although it does furnish an obvious explanation for the lack of a door frame, then the geomantic and architectural concept of the temple anticipates the presence of a symmetrical chapel on the southern wing, facing the twin north enclosure.

Legend has it that Srong.btsan sgam.po had a vision of Buddhist deities discussing the dharma among themselves in the various inner chapels of the temple,⁷³ and decided to place statues of the gods in each particular gtsang.khang where he had seen them. The king reserved the north gtsang.khang for his personal tutelary deity [yi.dam], Thugs.rje chen.po [Mahakaruna], of whom he was considered an incarnation. In more practical terms, some of the statues had been brought to Tibet by Khri.btsun, and others had been produced locally by the Newar artists, and were subsequently placed in the inner chapels.⁷⁴ Srong.btsan sgam.po is said to have positioned them with the help of Khri.btsun, who later completed the task;⁷⁵ the statue of Mi.khrugs.pa [Akshobhya] was placed as the main image of the principal chapel [gtsang.khang dbus.ma; C]. In the chapel flanking the central chapel on the north [B] were images of 'Ocl.dpag.med [Amitabha] and his retinue, while the chapel on the other side [D] housed the statues of Byams.pa [Maitreya] and his cycle of deities. The images of Thugs.rje chen.po in the north chapel [A], and Mi.bskyod rdo.rje [Akshobhyavajra] in the gtsang.khang lho.ma [south chapel; E] have already been noted. Diag.1 lists all the deities in the different chapels in accordance with the information provided in *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston*.

The arrangement of the upper storey in the Jo.khang in the early years is much less well documented, and little information is at hand. In one of Nyang.ral's literary accounts, Khri.btsun is credited with having followed exactly the same architectural plan as that adopted for the ground

The Jo.khang

Tentative location of sculptures and murals originally set up during the reign of Srong.btsan sgam.po according to literary sources.

DIAGRAM 1 GROUND FLOOR

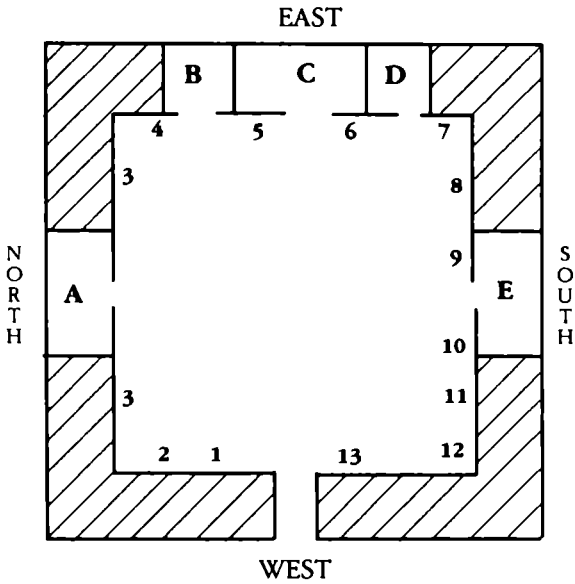
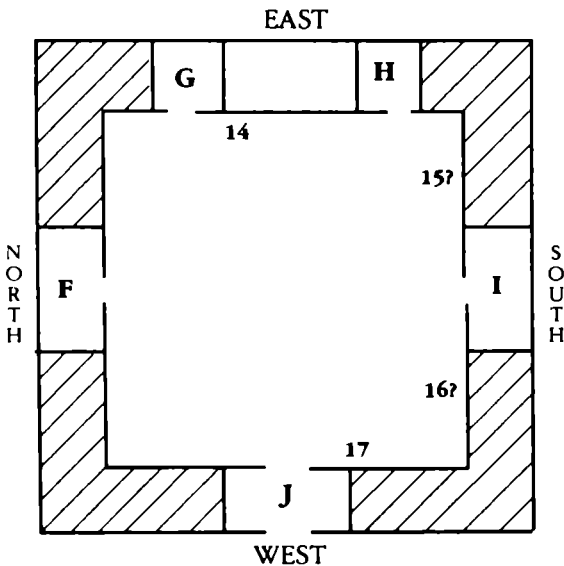


DIAGRAM 2 UPPER FLOOR



Sculptures:

Chapel **A** gTsang.khang byang.ma (north chapel):
— Thugs.rje chen.po (main image)

Chapel **B** gTsang.khang g.yas.na ('Od.dpag.med chapel):

- 'Od.dpag.med (main image)
- Eight Bodhisattvas
- Two Guardians

Chapel **C** gTsang.khang dbus.ma (Jo.bo chapel):

- Mi.'khrugs.pa (main image)
- Mar.me.mdzad
- Eight divinities of Mar.me.mdzad retinue
- Two Guardians

Chapel **D** gTsang.khang g.yon.na (Byams.pa chapel):

- Byams.pa chos.kyi 'khor.lo (main image)
- Eight manifestations of sGrol.ma

Chapel **E** gTsang.khang lho.ma (south chapel):

- Mi.bskyod rdo.rje (main image)
- sTong.chen rab.'jom
- So.sor 'brang.ma
- gShing.rje mthar.byed
- Shes.rab mthar.byed dkar.po
- Padma mthar.byed dmar.po
- bGegs mthar.byed mthing.ga
- gNod.sbyin
- rNam.sras
- 'Dzam.bha.la

Wall paintings:

- 1) Episodes of Srong.btsan sgam.po's life
- 2) Dus.gsum sangs.rgyas
- 3) Episodes of Shakyamuni's life
- 4) sGrol.ma
- 5) sPyan.ras.gzigs
- 6) Shakyamuni vanquishing the demons of Mara
- 7) Medicine Buddhas
- 8) Paradise of Kasarpani (including rTa.mgrin dkar.po, Lha.mo and sGrol.ma)
- 9) Be.bum rgya.rtsa paradise
- 10) Paradise of 'Jam.dpal dbyangs
- 11) Sukhavati paradise
- 12) Rigs.gsum mgon.po
- 13) Rigs.lnga

Sculptures

Chapel **F** gTsang.khang byang.ma (north chapel):
— gNod.sbyin.pho

Chapel **G** gTsang.khang g.yas.na (Srong.btsan sgam.po's chapel of residence)

Chapel **H** gTsang.khang g.yon.na

Chapel **I** gTsang.khang lho.ma (south chapel):
— gNod.sbyin.mo
— Two wrathful King.kang

Chapel **J** gTsang.khang nub.ma (west chapel):
— Sangs.rgyas rab.bdun

Wall paintings

- 14) bsgrub.pa lDe'u rgyud.ris
- 15) ? Lha.mo
- 16) ? Khro.gnyer can.ma
- 17) ? rTa.mgrin dkar.po

floor.⁷⁶ Indeed only one substantial difference exists: the pentadic disposition of the inner chapels was modified with the addition of a chapel on the west wing immediately above the ground floor entrance door [J], while no other chapel was superimposed on the Jo.bo sanctum [C]. On the east wing, two chapels were placed on either side of the central space which roughly corresponds to the gtsang.khang dbus.ma. In the absence of literary comment, how this central space was utilized remains a matter of conjecture. The north and south wings on this floor also have chapels corresponding to those below on the ground floor, and the west wing contains that extra chapel above the main entrance, noted above [see diag.2].

The only archaeological evidence to survive from the time of the construction of this floor are the two wooden door frames leading into the flanking chapels on the east wing. The work is very similar to that on the frames downstairs, both in terms of style and design. The noticeable differences pertain to a more complex decorative structure, and to a fresher condition because they have been less affected by the constant flow of pilgrims visiting the temple. They are correctly attributed by the Tibetan authors to Nepalese carvers,⁷⁷ said to have been guided by Khri.btsun herself who, according to Nyang.ral, was complimented on the skill of her Newar craftsmen by Srong.btsan sgam.po, challenging as it did the beauty of his own carving, so miraculously accomplished on the ground floor.⁷⁸ The other ancient original name for the Jo.khang [Phrul.snang] is said to derive from the above legend. After giving credit to the work of his Nepalese wife and her carvers, and having considered his miraculous work downstairs and the masterful achievements of Khri.btsun and the Newar craftsmen upstairs, Srong.btsan sgam.po decided to call the temple *phrul* [miraculous vision] *snang* [real phenomenon]. The close resemblance of the wooden fittings on the two floors positively attributes all of them to the art of 7th century Nepal.

Though identification of the contents of the upper floor chapels can only be a reductive process, some remarks are made in the sources about the original disposition of sacred images. Nyang.ral's *Mes.dbon.rnam.thar*⁷⁹ says that the north chapel [F] housed sculptures of gNod.sbyin.pho [yakshas], while the southern chapel [I] contained gNod.sbyin.mo [yakshis] and wrathful King.kang. The Fifth Dalai Lama states that statues of Sangs.rgyas rab.bdun, which he attributes to Srong.btsan sgam.po himself, were located inside the west chapel [J].⁸⁰ The king's residential room was the gtsang.khang on the north side of the central space above the gtsang.khang dbus.ma, marked as chapel [G] in diag.2. None of the ancient images have survived to the present.

The original wall paintings

Wall paintings were prominent on both the ground and upper floors. Literary sources claim that some of those on the ground floor were miraculously self-originated, and later extended and completed by Newar artists, while still others were painted by Srong.btsan sgam.po in person.⁸¹ None of these murals survive, yet a description of a self-originated Ka.sar.pa.ni painting, to which a Newar artist had added images of rTa.mgrin dkar.po [white Hayagriva], sGrol.ma [Tara] and Lha.mo, has been preserved, and the mural identified as having been in the east wing.⁸² dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba gives a detailed identification of the lost murals on this floor painted at the time of the foundation of the Jo.khang⁸³ [see diag.1].

Nyang.ral provides us with information, albeit scanty, on the upper floor murals⁸⁴ [diag.2]. However, assistance is provided in identifying some of their whereabouts. We know that murals of Lha.mo and Khro.gnyer can.ma [Bhrikuti] were painted on the walls of the south wing. It is mentioned that a mural of rTa.mgrin dkar.po existed in the west wing, said by traditional legend to be one of those images to have emitted a ray of light when Srong.btsan sgam.po and his wives passed away into the statue of Thugs.rje chen.po in the Jo.khang.

Of considerable significance is the information Nyang.ral provides about the existence of a mural on the north-west external wall of the Zhal.ras lha.khang [diag.3, wall w.iv] depicting the bsgrub.pa'i lDe'u rgyud.ris. As previously mentioned, the Jo.khang's earliest murals⁸⁵ have been removed very recently by Chinese archaeologists, one of these having been located on the north-west wall, depicting in the left section facing it among other subjects a group of Buddhist masters wearing caps and

flowing vests which corresponds to the group of figures mentioned by Nyang.ral. In addition to what is clearly a very ancient style of depiction, the literary evidence also supports the dating of this painted group to the time of the Jo.khang's foundation. In all likelihood, it constitutes the earliest wall painting to have been discovered in Tibet.

The evidence of the murals, added to that of the door frames, columns and fittings, unquestionably renders the whole of the original Jo.khang as the product of an integrated Newar enterprise.

The Jo.khang sanctum

Following the above attempt to identify the basic structure of the Jo.khang and place it in its artistic and historical context, let us now concentrate on the principal chapel, known as the gtsang.khang dbus.ma. The rear wall of this chapel was originally aligned with those of the flanking 'Od.dpag.med and Byams.pa chapels, but was modified later [diag 3]. The disposition of the images has also undergone drastic alteration, and none which adorned the chapel in Srong.btsan sgam.po's time have survived: virtually all the ancient statues have subsequently been substituted with images of different deities, with the exception of the Mar.me.mdzad [Dipankara] sculpture, which in any case is a replica of an original. (Diag.1 lists the original statues in the gtsang.khang dbus.ma and other chapels).

Practically all the sources dealing with the foundation of the Jo.khang indicate that Mi.'khrugs.pa was the original main image of the temple, and not the image of Mi.bskyod rdo.rje brought to Tibet by Khri.btsun, as is popularly held.⁸⁶ On the basis of these same texts, it seems that the statue of Mi.bskyod rdo.rje was placed in the gtsang.khang lho.ma. If the story of Khri.de.gtsug.rtsan's Chinese queen Kong.co swapping the main image of the Jo.khang with that of the Ra.mo.che a hundred years later is true, then the exchange could not have been between the two temples' main images, but between that of the Ra.mo.che (the Shakyamuni brought by Wen-ch'eng kung-chu), and the Mi.bskyod rdo.rje brought by Khri.btsun. When Kong.co went to search for the statue of Shakyamuni which she knew had been brought by her predecessor, and couldn't find it in the Ra.mo.che, she later discovered it hidden in the Jo.khang's gtsang.khang lho.ma, where the statue of Mi.bskyod rdo.rje was also located. It is possible that she took the statue of Mi.bskyod rdo.rje to the Ra.mo.che, and substituted the original main image in the Jo.khang, Mi.'khrugs.pa, with Wen-ch'eng kung-chu's statue of Shakyamuni.

Confirmation of the fact that the statues of Mi.'khrugs.pa and Mi.bskyod rdo.rje must not be confused is found in *mKhas.pa'i dga'.ston*, which states that the former was a *dar.sku* [effigy in clay pacted with medicinal herbs and fragments of consecrated scarves], while the latter is said to be made of *li.ma* [a precious alloy]. The li.ma statue is the one known for centuries to all Tibetan devotees.⁸⁷ The whereabouts of the original principal statue in the Jo.khang, the image of Mi.'khrugs.pa, was still known in the 11th century, when it was temporarily moved from the gtsang.khang dbus.ma to the upper floor by the great master from mNga'ris skor.gsum (West Tibet), Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba 'Phags.pa shes.rab, to permit renovation and expansion. It is said that the statue spoke to Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba at that time, refusing to be moved.⁸⁸

The adjacent space in front of the entrance to the Jo.bo chapel contains some very ancient columns and beams. The presence of similar wooden fittings in the corresponding area upstairs testifies to the fact that the corridor in which they stand was not interrupted as it is now, but ran around all four sides. This indicates that it was possible to make a complete *skor.ba* [circumambulation] of the whole upper floor corridor in ancient times.

Later renovations

I wish now to discuss the several transformations that the Jo.khang underwent in the centuries that followed its foundation up to the period broadly connected with resurgence of Buddhism in Tibet after gLang.dar.ma's persecution. During these centuries, the Jo.khang passed through phases of both care and neglect.

After the Jo.bo Shakyamuni figure was installed in the Jo.khang during the reign of Khri.lde.gtsug rtsan, successive phases of renovation are documented as taking place during the reigns of Sacl.na.legs and Ral.pa.can. The former king built the temple's khyams, which may refer to the external gallery in front of the entrance. This was developed later into the *khyams.ra*: the open area in front of the Jo.khang where assemblies were held.⁸⁹ Ral.pa.can expanded the Jo.khang compound by adding separate new temples, namely the dMar.ru and dKar.ru.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in accordance with Srong.btsan sgam.po's will, Ral.pa.can offered the first materials to be employed for the construction of 'On.chang.do to the Jo.khang.⁹¹ As an earth offering [sa.phud], he donated clay images of Tshangs.pa [Brahma] and rGya.byin [Indra] to be placed as the guardians of the Byams.pa chapel on the ground floor. As a wood offering [shing.phud], he donated four *gnam.yangs* pillars, whose whereabouts is unclear to me. As a painted offering [bris.phud], 108 *be.bum* were donated.⁹² As a metal cast offering [lugs.ma'i.phud] a large bell was installed.

The Jo.khang suffered sacrilege when gLang.dar.ma persecuted Buddhism, and it is said that derisive scenes of intoxicated monks were painted on its walls.⁹³ The temple remained closed to worship for many years, coming into use again during bstan.pa phyi.dar.⁹⁴ It received the brief attention of the great master Atisha, to whom the rediscovery in the Jo.khang of Srong.btsan sgam.po's will (the *bKa'.chems ka.khol.ma*) is attributed.⁹⁵ However, the temple did not regain its former splendour.

It was Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba who was responsible for the first major renovation in the Jo.khang, which took place in the 11th century following the long 'dark age'. When he arrived there, he discovered that the temple that had been built by the miracles of Srong.btsan sgam.po and the great skill of Newar artists had been transformed into a beggars' house.⁹⁶ With the help of mDol.chung *bskor.dpon*⁹⁷ (the title *bskor.dpon* possibly implies that he was a local, otherwise unknown officer), he moved the beggars out and gave them sustenance, and began to rededicate the chapels to Buddhism. In particular, he concentrated his renovation efforts on the gtsang.khang dbus.ma. He took the statues of the Jo.bo chapel upstairs,⁹⁸ and then started a major reshaping of the Jo.khang sanctum. The most significant addition consisted of the expansion of the room by creating a *glo.bur*, an expression describing anything that structurally bulges out from the building.

The Lhasa Jo.khang (upper floor - east wing)
The Zhal.ras lha.khang (the chapel overlooking the statue of Jo.bo)

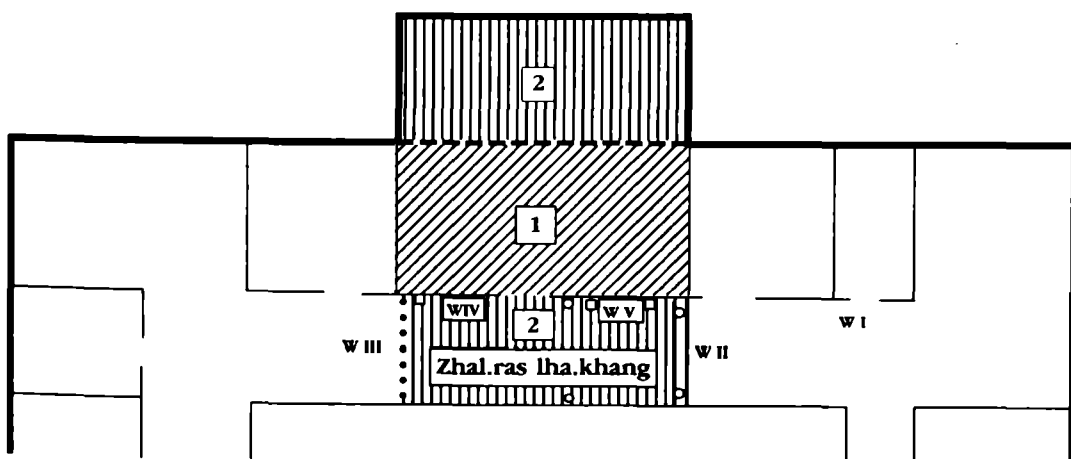


DIAGRAM 3

- 1: original structure going back to Srong.btsan sgam.po's reign
- 2: the 11th century expansion by Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba Phags.pa shes.rab (extension of the Jo.bo chapel at the rear and creation of the Zhal.ras lha.khang by the addition of wall w ii and grille w iii)

The gtsang.khang dbus.ma seen today is basically the same as when Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba left it, with its extension [glo.bur] in the rear wall leaving it no longer aligned with the corresponding walls in the flanking chapels [diag.3]. The extension of the rear wall was for reasons of space, allowing Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba to add more statues.⁹⁹ In addition to the Jo.bo Shakyamuni (or possibly Mi.khrugs.pa) and Mar.me.mdzad statues, he placed sculptures of Byams.pa and 'Jam.dpal.dbyangs flanking Jo.bo, as well as images of six male and six female standing Bodhisattvas along the side walls. The size of the latter statues obliged him to use the corresponding space on the upper floor, thus creating a newly-shaped main chapel with a high ceiling extending over two storeys. He also added the image of Thub.pa.gangs.chen.mtsho.rgyal, which can still be seen behind the Shakyamuni. Finally, he replaced Srong.btsan sgam.po's statues of the two door guardians.¹⁰⁰ The entrance on the ground floor was left untouched.

Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's renovations on the front side of the Jo.bo chapel consisted of the construction of the so-called Zhal.ras lha.khang on the upper floor, which looked out upon the space above the Shakyamuni statue, permitting a privileged close view of the sanctum's main image [diag.3].

The proof of Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's building activity here is to be found where the free-standing columns of the original temple have been integrated into his new wall [diag.3, wall w ii] on the south-east. This wall was added to create the required space for the Zhal.ras lha.khang, and effectively prevented complete circumambulations around the first floor corridor, thereby avoiding the possibility of 'stepping on the Jo.bo'.

The area which became the Zhal.ras lha.khang was bordered by the south-east wall described above [diag.3, wall w ii] on one side, and by an opening, usually kept shut by a metal grille, which acted as the chapel door [diag.3, wall w iii]¹⁰¹ on the other. Not only is this renovation dated to Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's time by the sources, but also proven by the existence of old mural fragments on the external face of the south-east wall [diag.3, wall w ii]. A large lotus-petal throne decorated with animals survives which is painted in the same style as some faded images which adorn the external wall of the Guru Rin.po.che and bDe.mchog chapels a few metres away [diag.3, wall w ii]. These fragments have been painted in a Pala style that is beholden to east Indian prototypes, and therefore contemporaneous with Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's work [pl.44]. They have been covered and protected by a thick layer of black soot, and came to light in recent years because they are in an area where pilgrims rub their backs against the wall to heal backaches. The speed of wear makes it probable that the pilgrims will have removed the wall paintings themselves within a short period.¹⁰²

There are two possible periods during Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's life when he could have worked on the gtsang.khang dbus.ma renovation. The first falls in the 1060's, after he had studied with lo.chung Legs.pa'i shes.rab in mNga'.ris skor.gsum, having been too late to become a disciple of Rin.chen bzang.po (958-1055) who, as discussed in Ch.2 (p.57), had already passed away by the time Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba reached Gu.ge.¹⁰³ One definite date we do have with regard to Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba is the fire-dragon year 1076, when he attended king rTse.lde's council in Tho.ling. Before this date it is known that he had returned to mNga'.ris skor.gsum and had gone to Kashmir to study. These activities were preceded by a stay in dBus.gTsang, and since they could not have been carried out in a short time, I am led to fix his sojourn in dBus.gTsang to the seventh decade of the 11th century. The second possible period for a visit falls after the Tho.ling council, in the latter part of his life, when rNgog mDo.sde (1090-1166) is known to have received instruction from him.¹⁰⁴ Since rNgog mDo.sde was probably very young at the time of their meeting, Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba must still have been alive at least until the beginning of the 12th century, so some time after 1076 should also be considered for his renovation of the gtsang.khang dbus.ma.

Zhwa.sgab.pa dBang.phyug bde.ldan helps clarify the problem, though admittedly without absolute precision. His *Jo.khang dkar.chag* [guide] says that Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's renovation took place during *rab.byung dang po* [the first sixty-year cycle of the Tibetan calendar (1027-1086)],¹⁰⁵ indicating that the Zhal.ras lha.khang was built before the hare year 1087. The style of the remaining murals on the external face of the Zhal.ras and Guru Rin.po.che chapels does not contradict such a date.



Plate 35 Lhasa Jo.khang. Column covered by a layer of plaster, dating from the time of its founding by Srong.btsan sgam.po (mid-7th century).



Plate 36 Ancient capital embedded in a modern wall from the Zhal.ras lha.khang located in the east wing of the upper floor (mid-7th century).

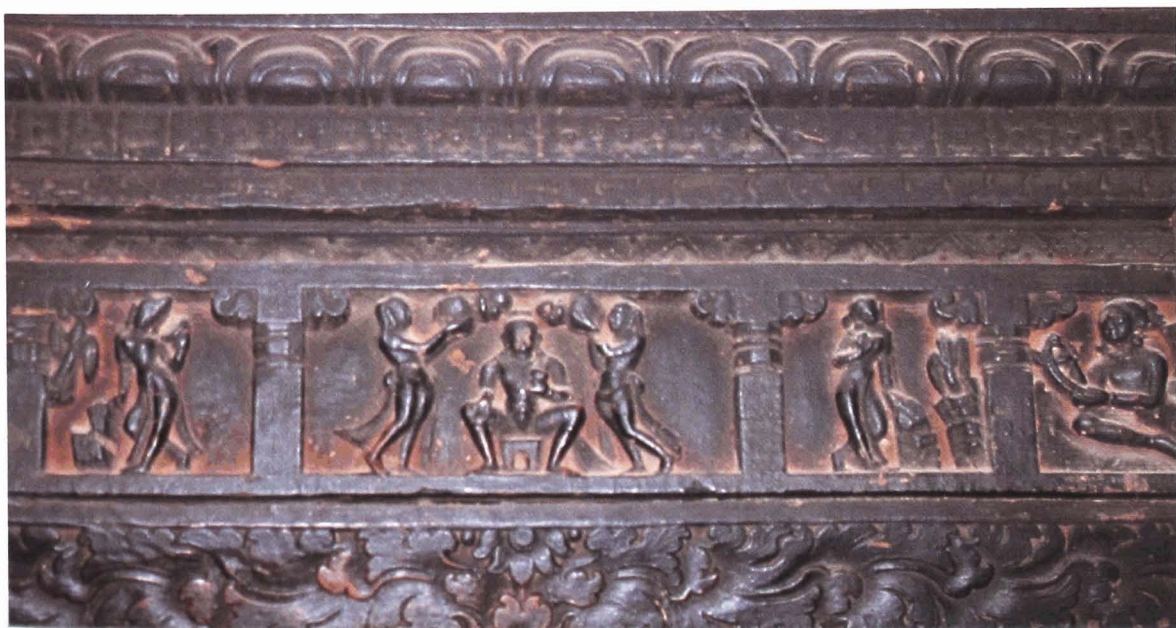
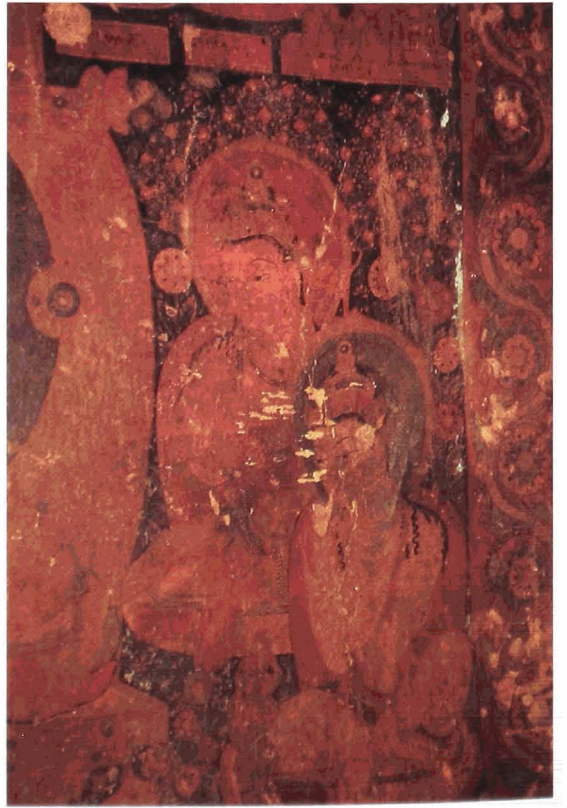
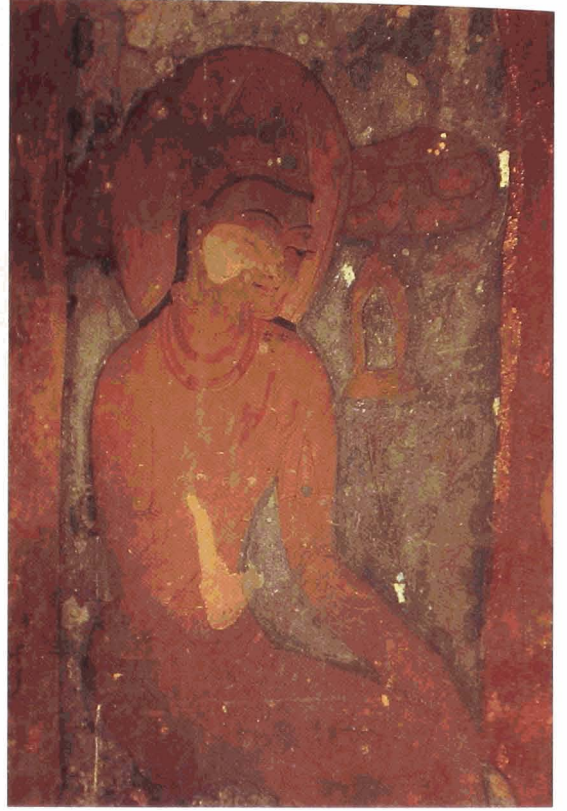


Plate 37 Door frame of the Byams.pa gtsang.khang situated on the ground floor of the east wing (mid-7th century).



Plates 38, 39, 40 & 41 Minor Bodhisattvas and deities from the Zhal.ras lha.khang. The mural was possibly commissioned by Dwags.po Tshul.khrims snying.po during a major renovation of Lhasa's main temple (12th c.)



Plates 42 & 43 Details from the Zhal.ras lha.khang. The chapel was constructed to provide on special occasions a privileged view of Jo.bo Shakyamuni, the most revered statue of Tibet.

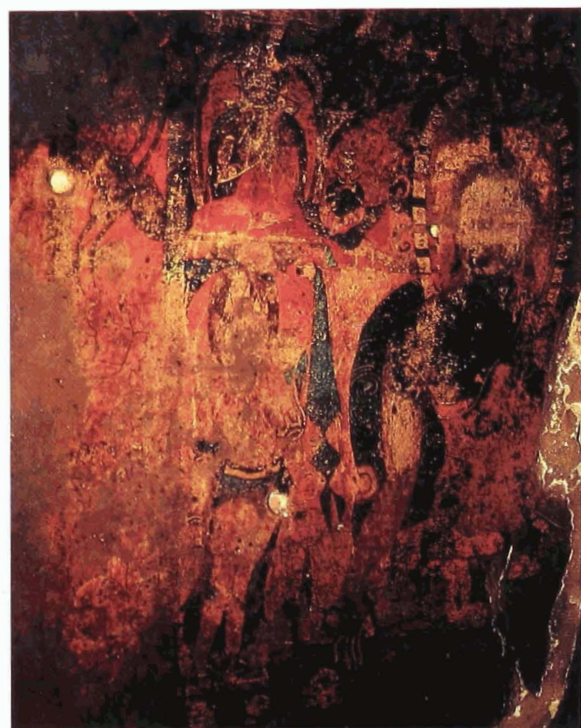


Plate 44 Mural depicting Shakyamuni with adjoining Bodhisattvas outside the Guru Rin.po.che chapel (before 1087), possibly from the renovation phase by Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba.



Plate 45 Mural from the north side of the Zhal.ras khang, possibly mid-7th century, when the Zhal.ras lha.khang was not yet constructed and the area was a processional corridor.



Plate 46 Mural from the Zhal.ras lha.khang: the central section (mid-12th century).

The Zhal.ras lha.khang mural

After inspecting the oddly-conceived little chapel mentioned above still surviving on the upper floor [diag.4], one deduces that it was part of the ancient Zhal.ras lha.khang, though at a first glance it would not appear to be so. This is due to the fact that part of its floor has been destroyed in recent times leaving only the area corresponding to the floor of the small chapel which is located on the south side of the Jo.bo sanctum, and another area on the opposite side of the gap thus formed above the ground floor entrance to the Jo.bo chapel [diag.4].

The Lhasa Jo.khang (upper floor - east wing)

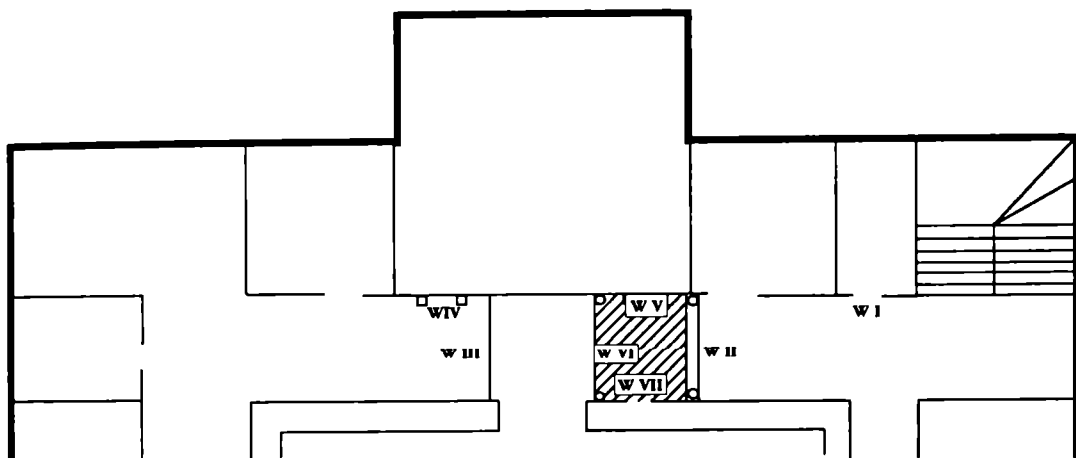


DIAGRAM 4

Modern chapel created by the addition of walls w vi and w vii

The chapel is composed of the newly built wall [diag.4, w vi] and door wall [w viii], and the ancient wall built by Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba [w ii]. Only a blank wall remains on the other side of the space above the Jo.bo chapel entrance, after the recent removal of the mural depicting bsgrub.pa'i lDe'u rgyud.ris and other subjects by Chinese archaeologists [w iv; pl.45]. As pl.36 shows, ancient columns dating from Srong.btsan sgam.po's time have been integrated into the new wall [w vii]. This part of the temple has been completely renovated, and in particular the inside of the ancient wall added by Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba [w ii], which bears the fragment of a Pala-style mural on its outer side.

However, there is a survival from ancient times on the rear wall [diag.4, w v] of the little chapel in the form of a mural, whose style certainly warrants attention. It is positioned on what once formed the south-east wall of the Zhal.ras lha.khang. The painting is divided into three sections by the presence of two wooden pillars which, though different in appearance from the Newar pillars already discussed, go back to the time of the foundation of the Jo.khang, since the bsgrub.pa'i lDe'u rgyud.ris mural [pl.45] on the same wall on the other side of the space above the entrance [w iv] was also divided into three sections by a pair of similar columns. The three sections do constitute a single entity, as the surrounding intricate floral border indicates. The central section has two superimposed main images that represent lamas in flowing robes [pl.46]. Unfortunately, the face of the upper figure has been repainted, but he carries a *khatvanga* [club] placed in front of his right shoulder, in the opposite position from that normally associated with Guru Rin.po.che. Both lamas wear their hair long, and appear to be *siddhas* of some kind. Other *siddhas* and Bodhisattvas complete the scene [pls.40,41,43]. The south section consists of a row of Bodhisattvas [pl.38] and of animals in the lower part, topped by the main image depicting a long-haired naked ascetic, and above him, a number of Bodhisattvas sit in superimposed rows [pl.39]. The north section [pl.42] contains more *siddhas* and Bodhisattvas shown worshipping a Buddha. The central section has a fragmentary inscription that is an invocation, and therefore does not help to clarify the historical circumstances under which the mural was executed. The presence of long-haired ascetics and a lama with esoteric paraphernalia seems to indicate a bKa'.rgyud.pa milieu.

This mural shows a distinctively different style from that on the twin wall on the other side of the gap in the floor [diag.4, w iv]. The latter was a painting dating as far back as Srong.btsan sgam.po and the foundation of the temple, and its evidence proves that the Zhal.ras lha.khang mural was part of a renovation. Furthermore, the style of the mural inside the modern chapel is also definitely dissimilar to those belonging to Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's renovation, and seems to be part of a successive phase, since it cannot be so evidently connected to the east Indian style that influenced the latter.

This indicates another important renovation, which was made by Dwags.po sgom.pa Tshul.khrims snying.po (1116-1169), a direct disciple of the great Dwags.po Lha.rje sGam.po.pa. Most of the sources dealing with the history of Jo.khang mention it.¹⁰⁶ When Tshul.khrims snying.po came to the Jo.khang, Lhasa was in the midst of civil war among the adherents of the smad 'dul.ba tradition. The gtsug.lag.khang was again in a state of decay and neglect. He felt the misery of the situation, and wondered whether he could find the strength to fulfil the demanding task of restoring the Jo.khang to past splendour. It is said, the Jo.bo Shakyamuni statue spoke to him, and asked not to be abandoned in such circumstances.¹⁰⁷ Tshul.khrims snying.po undertook large scale renovations involving the old Jo.khang structures. He restored whatever had been damaged by time and man. He built the *nang.skor* , which is the processional path inside the gtsug.lag.khang compound which runs around the Jo.khang edifice. He paid particular attention to the murals, and had paintings made on the nang.skor itself, and wherever else needed on the internal walls and beams of the Jo.khang.

In order to ensure stable maintainance of the Jo.khang, he entrusted the task to one of his chief disciples, Zhang rin.po.che (1123-1193), who founded the monastery of Tshal in the wood-sheep year 1175, and the adjoining monastery of Gung.thang, both located in the vicinity of Lhasa, in the fire-sheep year 1187.¹⁰⁸ For quite a few centuries to come, the *sde.pa* [local chiefs] of Tshal Gung.thang were Lhasa masters and the keepers of the Jo.khang.¹⁰⁹

In my view, the Zhal.ras lha.khang mural is an example from Tshul.khrims snying.po's renovation. Zhwa.sgab.pa mentions the iron-dragon year 1160 as the date when Tshul.khrims snying.po came to Lhasa and began his restoration work.¹¹⁰ The mural shows two different stylistic expressions adopted side by side for the central and south sections. The latter is not far from the well known style of a group of thang.ka that are rooted in the east Indian Pala prototypes. It is painted in a local idiom which has absorbed the foreign hints that were more manifest in Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's wall paintings. Compared to the Indian Pala prototypes, the south mural has a more suave linearity which has been achieved at the expense of volume, peculiar to the prototypes, as the use of shading was abandoned. The bodies are less neatly constructed with a certain amount of abstractness, while the bulging eyes that are so typical of the Indian Pala style have been dropped in favour of a restrained rendition [pls.38,39]. As in Pala art, the *ushnisbas* are very tall and the halos oval, though in the case of the latter with a diminutive tip at the top which deviates from the original format. Trees are painted to fill the corners, as in Pala art, yet they are formed with an elongation that speaks of a Tibetan expression. Typically Tibetan, again, is the use of a quantity of tiny flowers to decorate the background.

In consideration of these factors, the style of the south section can be classified as an autonomous Tibetan style of the 12th century from dBus.gTsang, rooted in Indian Pala art.

The central section shows a different stylistic provenance. It is less restrained and linear, abounding in an exuberant use of jewellery and headgear, and background displays of floral ornamentation consisting of trees and larger flowers [pls.40,41,43] which far exceeds in quantity those of the previously mentioned sections. These characteristics link this central section with the idiom of Nepal, born almost contemporarily to the east Indian Pala style. Two eye shapes are discernible in the same central section. In the first, the images have almond-shaped eyes with imposing pupils. In my view, this device has an iconographic role: it seems to underline some sort of '*siddha*-power' in a group of peaceful deities. The eyes of the others, who are otherwise iconographically similar to the previous group, are treated with the same restrained quality as those in the images in the south section. Eyes with imposing pupils is not rare feature in Nepalese art, both among peaceful and wrathful deities, and is employed to exhibit their inner spiritual strength. Even the colour tones are definitely more Nepalese in the case of the central section, being deeper, with darker reds, greens and blues; while in the south section pastel hues are employed. Finally, the north section is a synthesis of the two modes, proving the ability of the mural artist in both.

The fact that the artist's hand is identical in all three sections is particularly significant. The traits composing the images are similar, though the treatment differs. The Tibeto-Indian Pala style of the south section stands beside the Tibeto-Nepalese Pala style of the central section. The fact that the hand is the same leads us to conclude that the painter has transferred elements of one style to the other and vice versa. This is manifest in the north section.

The evidence of the Zhal.ras lha.khang negates the opinion, hitherto held by some authors, that a combined Tibeto-Newar style was popular in Tibet by the 11th-12th century, to the extent that the emergent characteristics the two styles had become practically indistinguishable.¹¹¹ The Zhal.ras lha.khang mural, though lying in virtual oblivion, is a unique example of monumental painting from 12th century dBus.gtsang in a style of art that has been well recognised to date solely on the basis of the existence of a group of thang.ka.¹¹² While thang.ka-s suffer from the shortcoming of not being definitively assessable in terms of period and provenance unless specifically inscribed, the Zhal.ras lha.khang mural constitutes solid evidence of the art style in Central Tibet during this century. Moreover the wall painting in question displays a stylistic complexity—Newar and Indian Pala influences, concurrently mastered by Tibetan artists, yet kept separate—so far unknown to Tibetan art historians.

Notes

1. See Richardson, in *Essays sur l'Art du Tibet*, 1977, 159.
2. The question as to whether Srong.btsan sgam.po had truly been responsible for a first, albeit partial, Buddhist diffusion in Tibet, or this claim was merely a posterior fabrication which evolved in a time when Buddhism was fully established is an old controversy among Tibetologists: not a subject of this paper. For a treatment of the problem see, inter alia, MacDonald, 1971, 387; Snellgrove and Richardson, 1980, 77; Wylie, in *Studies in the History of Buddhism*, 1980, 366; MacDonald, 1984, passim.
3. NyRCh, 419.
4. The rGyal.po bKa'.thang (see GPKT&LPKT, 157) gives a review of such concealed treasures [gter.mal] and their hiding places in the Jo.khang. Of particular note is that the king hid several silver *chang* pots. The Srong.btsan sgam.po chapel on the upper floor today houses a *chang* pot whose rediscovery tradition attributes to Tsong.kha.pa at dBus.stod Gye.re in the sTod.lung valley (5DL KCh, 36; ZKCh, 64). It is said that he brought it back to the Jo.khang. The latter two sources describe it as a horse-headed pot, though personal inspection suggested a camel's head, which means that it could be one of the three camel-headed silver *chang* pots mentioned in the rGyal.po bKa'.thang together with ten other silver pots bearing duck heads.
5. When I last visited the Jo.khang, in October-November 1988, the murals were no longer in place. I was told by the locals that they had been recently removed. For a detailed description of the Jo.khang, see Chan, (forthcoming). 1991.
6. DGBCh, 287; NyRCh, 244; MBNT, f.118; DTMP, 35; YLJCh, 52-53; MKB, f.137b; GRMML, 136-137; KPGT II, 233; Tucci, 1971, 148; GRYTs, f.81.
7. On Srong.btsan sgam.po's foundation of the Jo.khang, see the edict of Khri.srong.lde.btsan at bSam.yas (Richardson, 1985, 28-29), and that of Sad.na.legs at sKar.chung (ibid., 76-77). See also KPGT II, 373, and Richardson, 1980, 66, for Khri.srong.lde.btsan's bka'.mchid; and KPGT II, 409, for Sad.na.legs' bka'.gtsigs.
8. NyRCh, 167; DTMP, 35; TTsSN, 46; KPGT II, 175; GBYTs, 140.
9. NyRCh, 168; & as note 8, above.
10. Bushell, 1880, 443.
11. Beckwith, 1987, 19, and Shakabpa, 1967, 27, establish Gung.srong gung.btsan's reign as lasting from the ox year 641 to snake 645 or horse 646. Srong.btsan sgam.po would have abdicated in favour of his son and returned to the throne after the latter's death.
12. Later Tibetan literature attributes two separate reigns of such extraordinary length to Srong.btsan sgam.po that his successors' (accepted) reigns can no longer be accommodated; hence, these same sources prolong the existence of the Yar.lung dynasty well beyond its actual duration. They claim that he was enthroned when he was thirteen years old and, apart for the five years when his son Gung.srong was supposedly ruling, Srong.btsan sgam.po remained king until his death at the age of eighty-two. The 'Jam.dpal.rtsa.rgyud [Mañjuśrīmulatantra] claims that he lived for eighty years. For further details on these later sources, see the useful summary in BTsDR, 2-7.
13. The Tun-huang Annals actually begin with the dog year 650, but contain a summarized introduction which describes events from ox 641.
14. Bu.ston rin.po.che chos.'byung, in Obermiller, 1932, 184; DTMP, 35; MKB, f.117a; GRMML, 85; TTsSN, 47; KPGT II, 233.
15. Bu.ston rin.po.che chos.'byung, in Obermiller, ibid.; DTMP, ibid.; MKB, f.112b. However, GRMML, ibid., gives his name as De.ba.lha.
16. Petech, 1961, 230; Lévi, 1894; Sussler, 1982, 25.
17. On this controversy among authors, see Petech, 1961, 227-228, and recently Joshi, 1985, 42-59.
18. In spite of its relative age, Petech's article (1961) still remains the fundamental work on the early genealogy of Nepal. However, he attributes the identification and the fixing of the era to Sa.skya pan.di.ta (1961, 288), when it was bSod.nams rtse.mo who made the calculation (see ChJG, 345, f.1). The calculation of the 242 years before Ral.pa.can's accession to the Tibetan throne is based on early Sa.skya.pa historians' common understanding of an accession date in 817, which is not given by bSod.nams rtse.mo in ChJG, but is by Je.btsun Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan (BGR, 296, f.1), and also by 'Phags.pa, PBGR, 286, f.3. In the Tibetan mode of reckoning, 242 years before 817 comes to 576.

19. bSod.nams rtse.mo's dates were taken up by Bu.ston rin.po.che and Sum.pa mkhan.po. See Petech, 1961, 228.
20. Joshi, 1985, 48; Sussler, 1982, 29. & Appendix IV-1, no.93.
21. Udayadeva is mentioned as Yuvraja (heir apparent) by Anshuvarman in his inscriptions from the year 37 of the era onwards. Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.II, 159; Joshi, 1985, 278; Petech, 1961, 230.
22. Related in the New T'ang Annals; see Lévi, 1894, 63,68, n.1.
23. On Jisnugupta's first inscription, see Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.II, 159-160; Slusser, 1982, 29, & Appendix IV-1, no.105.
24. The account in the Old T'ang Annals, chapter 221, is resumed in Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.I, 165: & 1894, 68; and in Slusser, 1982, 32.
25. Petech, 1961, 230; Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.II, 159; Slusser, 1982, 29.
26. gNam.ri srong.btsan died in the ox year 629.
27. Bacot, et al., 1940, 13,29.
28. See note 24, above.
29. If Narendradeva returned to Nepal in the ox year 641 as recorded in the Tun-huang Annals, and his first extant inscription refers to the year 67 of the era, corresponding to 643, the chronology would seem to be sound and the Tun-huang Annals' record of his ascent of the throne faithful.
30. KPGT II, 204-206, gives an account of the construction of the dMar.po.ri palace which is attributed to Khri.btsun. Moreover, Srong.btsan sgam.po customarily employed Newar artists for the making of statues. See, for example, NyRCh, 241, and MBNT, ff.127-129, for the great number of images the king ordered his Newar artist to make.
31. There is a contradiction in KPGT II between 234, which gives water-dragon 632, and 204, which has wood-horse 634.
32. See TTsKT, 112.
33. NyRCh, 187. I am unable to identify Bi.ham.lo.bhi.pa.de.va as he is not listed in the genealogy of rulers, but the mention of him as son of Gu.na.ka.ma.ha.de.va and the *-deva* element in his own name imply that he must have belonged to a collateral branch of the Licchavi dynasty. DGBCh, 276, identifies Khri.btsun's father as the king 'Bri.lo.ha, and GRKK, f.29b, calls him Khri Ha.lom, which are even more obscure identifications, though they help confirm the existence of a tradition that affirms Khri.btsun was not the daughter of Anshuvarman which is definitely earlier than the tradition affirming she was.
34. Spelled as in the Gopalarajavamshavali.
35. Vajracarya and Malla, 1985, f.21, 124. The Kirkpatrick Vamshavali (see Petech, 1961, 230-231) confirms the existence of such a king, who possibly occupied the throne briefly during the time of Anshuvarman as mahasamanta.
36. See note 33, above.
37. YLJCh, 52; KPGT II, 233; TTsSN, 47.
38. For a summary of sources which place the construction of the Jo.khang after 639, see TTsKT, 115, which includes 5DL DzGT, Bai.du.rya dkar.po and the bSTan.rtsis of Sum.pa mkhan.po.
39. YLJCh, 53; TTsSN, 47. MBNT, f.148, gives the improbable building period of thirteen years.
40. See, inter alia, MKB, ff.133b,136a.
41. Bacot, et al., 1940, 13,29; Bushell, 1880, 444. The east face inscription of the pillar recording the 821-822 peace treaty between Tibet and China traces the history of matrimonial relations between the two countries. Twenty-three years after the establishment of the T'ang dynasty in China (i.e. in 639) Srong.btsan sgam.po and the Chinese emperor agreed to an alliance. In the fifteenth year of Heng-kuan (i.e. 641) Wen-ch'eng kung-chu was sent in marriage. See Li Fang Kuei, 1956, 67, n.24.
42. See note 41, above, for reference to the same passage.
43. Indicative of the good relations established between China and Tibet after the marriage treaty of 641 was the well-known military expedition sent to India by Srong.btsan sgam.po in 648 to revenge the bad treatment received by the envoy of the Chinese imperial court to India Wang Hsüan-ts'e. The expedition (to which a Nepalese contingent was added, once again confirming Nepal's vassalage to Tibet during this period) had devastating effects on North India. See Bushell, 1880, 446; Lévi, 1900, passim; Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.II, 165; Slusser, 1982, 36; Prakash, 1969, 40.
44. See the Tun-huang Chronicles, chapter VI, in Bacot, et al., 1940, 111-112,147-149.
45. Srong.btsan sgam.po died when his grandson Mang.srong was still at a tender age, and mGar sTong.btsan established a form of regency of the mGar clan which lasted up to the time when mGar Khri.bring was disgraced by king Dus.srong in the dog year 698. See Bacot, et al., 1940, 18,39.

46. On mGar sTong.btsan and his famous struggle to remove the other influential minister of Srong.btsan sgam.po, Khyung.po sPung.zad zu.tse, and reach the position of almost unchallenged protagonist of Tibetan policy during those years, see Bacot, et al., 1940, 111-112, 148-149. Among secondary sources on the subject, see esp. A. MacDonald, 1971, 249-255.

47. Bacot, et al., 1940, 16,35. The Old Tang Annals (Bushell, 1880, 451) reports her death in 680.

48. See Richardson, 1985, 74-75, for Sad.na.legs' edict [bka'.gtsigs] at sKar.chung.

49. The Bon.po tradition holds that Srong.btsan sgam.po was not exclusively devoted to dharma. See, for example, TPNS, f.86b, which states that Srong.btsan sgam.po rejoiced in Bon and that Buddhism was inauspicious and caused mishap and disease. According to this source, the king died young (when he was thirty-six years old) because of the malevolence of Buddhism.

50. See, for example, MKB, f.132b.

51. KPGT II, 205. Apart from one building which was constructed in the style of Sog.yul (see Hoffman, 1971), the others are described as having features which seem definitely Nepalese. In particular, the exteriors had balconies, and were decorated in silver, studded with precious gems and festooned in gilded copper.

52. Locke, 1980, passim; Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.II, 163; Slusser, 1982, 39.

53. Lévi, op. cit., 164.

54. Beckwith, 1987, 25, n.71.

55. Lévi, op. cit., 164.

56. Among the many sources giving this account, see NyRCh, 263; YLJCh, 55; MKB, f.210b.

57. KPGT II, 232,234. GRKK, f.45b, says that it was planned after the 'rGya'i lha.khang vihara' [Indian viharas].

58. For a very similar vihara at Ajanta, see Brown, 1976, pl.XLIX.

59. NyRCh, 241. In GRKK, f.53b, Srong.btsan sgam.po himself says that the Jo.khang was a Newar temple.

60. DGBCh, 288; NyRCh, 246-247; KPGT II, 232-233.

61. See notes 57 & 58, above. Khri.srong.lde.btsan's bka'.mchid and Sad.na.legs' bka'.gtsigs both describe the Jo.khang as a vihara. KPGT II, 373,409, quotes both; Richardson, 1980, 66, the bka'.mchid.

62. ZKCh, 65, no.80. GRKK, f.46b, affirms that Srong.btsan sgam.po personally encouraged people to become monks and to take care of the temples by promising them sustenance.

63. KPGT II, 232.

64. DGBCh, 287; NyRCh, 241; KPGT II, 232.

65. DGBCh, 287; NyRCh, 244-245; KPGT II, 235. Khri.btsun used to bring food to Srong.btsan sgam.po when he was busy building the temple, following his miraculous transformation into a multitude of workers. One day, the queen was unable to go herself, and sent a maid, who peeped inside the temple out of curiosity. When she saw the king's transformation she screamed in surprise, thereby disturbing his concentration and causing him to miss a stroke while his 5,000-fold form was simultaneously carving the columns, the beams, and the lions on top of the beams. This explains the imperfections in the carvings.

The most noticeable among these 'imperfections' is that the noses of all the lions were foreshortened. In my view, this is a legendary account of the fact that the lions in the Jo.khang were executed with short muzzles in the Indo-Newar tradition, while Tibetan lions are normally long-muzzled.

66. NyRCh, 253; MBNT, f.130ff, f.146; GRYTs, f.81; KPGT II, 238-239.

67. NyRCh, 252. GRKK, f.53a, states that she also built a third floor, but no archaeological evidence exists to substantiate this point.

68. NyRCh, 252.

69. NyRCh, 250.

70. BZh, 3-4; MBNT, f.168; KPGT II, 296; ZKCh, 15.

71. The story that Chinese troops invaded Tibet and reached Lha.sa at the time of Srong.btsan sgam.po's death is a fabrication devoid of historical foundation. It is no easy task to identify the set of circumstances that had slipped into the accounts and subsequently became so distorted. Nyang.ral's Mes.dbon nam.thar (MBNT, 162-163) offers an interesting insight. After Srong.btsan sgam.po's death, Chinese soldiers went to Lha.sa disguised as merchants. They visited the Ra.mo.che to see the statue of Shakyamuni which had been brought to Lha.sa by Wen-ch'eng kung-chu, found it to be different from the statue that they knew and suspected a replacement. To determine the truth, they called in an old Chinese man who had seen the statue years before, when it was still in China, and he discovered that it was missing some lakshanas, as well as its original pedestal. He also doubted its authenticity.

Nyang.ral, besides adding a juicy and ancient episode on the long time disputed subject of the antiquity of the Jo.bo statue, excludes the possibility of a Chinese invasion in this account. One suggestion towards explaining the presence of this 'Chinese army', which 'invaded Lha.sa', would be to see the missions of the Chinese imperial envoy Wang hsüan-ts'e as the seed of subsequent exaggeration and distortion, as they did take place during these years.

72. BZh, 3-4; MBNT, f.168; KPGT II, 296.

73. DGBCh, 288; NyRCh, 246-247; MBNT, ff.134-135; KPGT II, 235-236.

74. KPGT II, 232-233, gives details on the precise location of the images in the various gtsang.khang.

See also diag.1.

75. KPGT II, 238.

76. MBNT, f.147.

77. NyRCh, 252; GRKK, f.53a. MBNT, f.147 numbers the craftsmen at 1,000.

78. NyRCh, 253.

79. MBNT, ff.147-148.

80. 5DL KCh, 27.

81. The most complete description of Srong.btsan sgam.po's wall paintings is to be found in KPGT II, 239.

82. Another painting of Kasarpani on the wall of the south wing, though not contemporary with the temple's foundation, is known to Tibetan tradition by the name of 'Jam.dbyangs kho.yon, which refers to the fact that when Kong.co decided to demolish the walled-in area on which the god was painted. Mañjughosha moved aside; hence 'kho.yon': 'he who moved aside'. Richardson, in *Essays sur l'Art du Tibet*, 1977, 170, offers an alternative interpretation of 'kho.yon'. On the Kong.co episode, see ZKCh, 57, n.49.

83. KPGT II, 239.

84. MBNT, ff.147-148.

85. On these ancient murals, see Liu Lizhong, ed., 1988, pls.271-272; and *The Jokhang*, 1985, 76-77.

86. DGBCh, 288; NyRCh, 246; MBNT, f.134; KPGT II, 235.

87. KPGT II, 278.

88. KPGT II, 448.

89. See LTLG, 17.

90. KPGT II, 418; 5DL KCh, 33-34. The latter refers to dMar.ru [Red Horn] in parallel with dKar.ru [White Horn]. The temple is more commonly known today as rMe.ru: see Ferrari, 1958, 94-95, n.70.

91. NyRCh, 419; KPGT II, 417-418.

92. Depictions of ancient edifying legends originally sung by the bards.

93. KPGT II, 426, gives an account of how the two statues of Phyang.na rdo.rje [Vajrapani] and the wrathful rMe.brtsags were able to protect the Jo.khang from destruction. On gLang.dar.ma's profanation of the Jo.khang, see ZKCh, 16, where the untenable date pig 830 is given.

94. KPGT II, 447; ZKCh, 17.

95. ZKCh, 17, mentions the rediscovery of the bKa'.chems ka.khol.ma by Atisha from beneath the wooden pillar carved with leaf motifs.

96. KPGT II, 448.

97. KPGT II, 448-449. The passage recalls the sacrifice of mDol.chung in what appears to have been a mystic rapture. It says that he wrapped his head in a cloth sprinkled with oil and set fire to it. He twice recited the bsam.spyod prayer. While he was reciting it a third time, he exclaimed that he was dying before the benefactors of humanity, and as he said this, his skull fell away and a ray of light emanated from it and shone to the sky, while the earth shook.

98. KPGT II, 447.

99. KPGT II, 448; 5DL DzGT, 22,34; ZKCh, 17.

100. See Richardson, in *Essays sur l'Art du Tibet*, 1977, 171, fig.3.

101. See Richardson, *ibid.*, 181, where he talks of an obstructive grille barring entrance to the Zhal.ras chapel. He also mentions a 'temporary grille' on the opposite side of the chapel, which is incomprehensible to me due to the presence of Zangs.dkar lo.tsa.ba's wall (diag.3, wall w ii), which exercises the same function as Mr. Richardson's grille.

102. In the short span of years between my own visits to the Jo.khang, I noticed that the pilgrims, having removed the soot layer with their heavy robes, have already begun to rub away the first layer of the paintings as well.

103. Roerich, 1979, 324.

104. *Ibid.*, 406-407.

105. ZKCh, 17.

106. KPGT, 448; ZKCh, 17-18; LTLG, 19.

107. KPGT, 448; ZKCh, 17-18; LTLG, 18-19.

108. 5DL KCh, 34; and LTLG, 19, who quotes a Tshal dkar.chag, which is unavailable to me.

109. KPGT, 448-449; and LTLG, 19-20, attribute the renovation of the dam on the Lha.sa river (the sKyid.chu) to the Tshal.pa khri.dpon dGe.ba.bum, who was active in the first half of the 13th century, while 5DL DzGT, 131, mentions the construction of the bar.skor by sMon.lam rdo.rje, the Tshal.pa khri.dpon active at the beginning of the 14th century and father of Kun.dga' rdo.rje, author of the Deb.ther dmar.po.

110. ZKCh, 17.

111. Snellgrove, 1978, 235; and Lo Bue, 1985, 265.

112. See Tucci, 1949, vol.3, pls.E,F; Pal, 1983, pl.P1; Pal, *Tibetan Paintings*, 1984, fig.10, & pls.6,8,9,11,12,15,16,17,18, and Appendix; Pal, *Light of Asia*, 1984, cat. no.11.

Shalu Serkhang

and the Newar Style of the Yüan Court

lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas established Zhwa.lu gSer.khang [Shalu Serkhang] because he had promised his master Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug to build a temple 'as big as a small hat'¹ at the distance of an arrow shot.

"He made an arrow with a golden tip and offered it to Lo.ston, who put the arrow on his bow and exclaimed, 'bser!' [imitating the sound of a flying arrow]. After repeating the formula three times, he shot. The place where the arrow landed was the area on which the present gTsang.khang rnying.ma'i.mda'.bum ['the temple where the arrow landed'] is standing. Since the arrow hit Zhwa.lu, it was called dPal Zhwa.lu. As the arrow had a golden tip, the temple was known as the gSer.khang. Because the ground where the arrow landed was multicoloured, the complete name of the temple was dPal Zhwa.lu gSer.khang khra.mo."²

From archaeological and literary evidence, the temple of Zhwa.lu as conceived at the time of its foundation shared a shape typical of several unassuming religious buildings erected during *hstan.pa phyi.dar* [the later diffusion of Buddhism] in Central Tibet during the 11th century. They were part of the extensive network of spiritual communities founded at that time by the religious zeal of less well-known Tibetan masters.

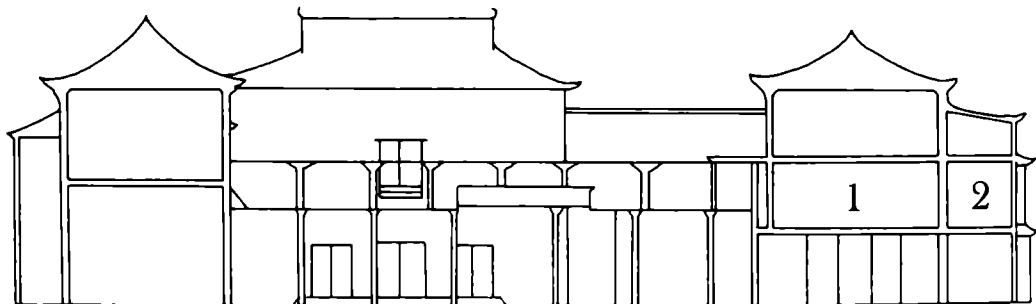
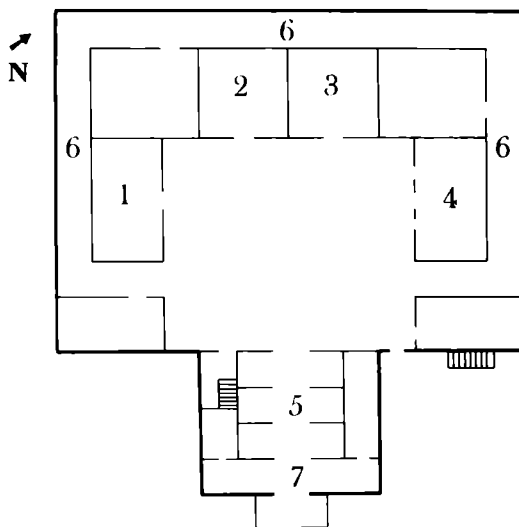
Zhwa.lu was conceived by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas as a modified *vihara* with a remote resemblance to the Indian prototypes used as models during the first embryonic appearance of Buddhism in Tibet in the 7th century.³ Very little of that conception remained at Zhwa.lu: the only point of contact was the arrangement of its inner sanctum, which consisted of twin chapels recalling a *vihara*, in the same manner as that adopted for *rKyang.bu lba.khang*, another temple founded during *hstan.pa phyi.dar*.⁴

It seems that the gSer.khang remained unaltered for the following two centuries, up to the time it underwent another substantial building phase. The history of Zhwa.lu can thus be subdivided into two broad periods, as done in a letter written during the 14th century by Bu.ston rin.po.che, the greatest Zhwa.lu master of all time, to Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan, by then the lord of Central Tibet,⁵ in order to follow the lives and deeds of members of the lCe clan who, since lCe.btsun's original foundation, attended and inhabited the temple. In this letter, the first phase, initiated by lCe.btsun, covers the 11th and 12th centuries from the introduction of *hstan.pa phyi.dar* onwards. The second phase, which occurred from the mid-13th century, when Zhwa.lu experienced a period of renewed splendour, corresponds to the joint Yüan-Sa.skya.pa rule of Tibet. During this latter phase, under the patronage of the most charismatic lay member of the lCe clan, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan, Zhwa.lu gSer.khang was thoroughly renovated and transformed into a complex conceived in accordance with the fashion in vogue in China at that time,⁶ both internal and external structures being added. The latter were strictly placed at the cardinal points of the compass. The combination of the early structure with later additions and expansions accounts for the unconventional appearance of the gSer.khang's plan—one that is seldom encountered in Tibet at any period. The gSer.khang was originally conceived according to Indian architectural models, though it is considerably more vague in interpretation, and evolved into a Chinese plan without losing its essential Indian features. The most striking peculiarity of its plan, constituting the meeting point of the two different and successive traditions, is Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's addition of a great *skor.lam* [processional path, or corridor] around the twin chapels and other temple spaces, thereby creating a surprising ensemble of two architectural ideas: that of a modified *vihara*, and that of a corridor encircling the sanctum, which is a constant in Tibetan temples of the period.

The Temple of Shalu

Ground floor

- 1 bSe.sgo.ma chapel
- 2 lha.khang lho.ma
- 3 lha.khang byang.ma
- 4 sGo.gsum chapel
- 5 mgon.khang
- 6 skor.lam
- 7 Eleventh century blocked-up corridor

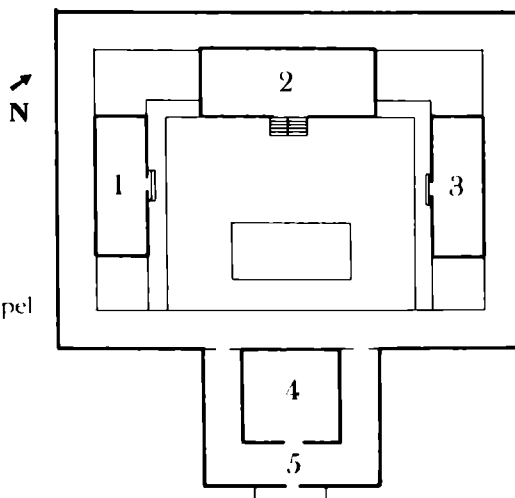


Shalu as seen from the north (after Wang Yi, 1960, 8)

1 middle floor with the Yum.chen.mo chapel 2 skor.lam

Top floor

- 1 gNas.rten chapel
- 2 bDe.ltan chapel
- 3 Tshe.dpag.med chapel
- 4 bsTan.gyur chapel
- 5 skor.lam



What can still be seen of the structure today is the gSer.khang, which was lavishly expanded during Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's phase of renovation [pl.47],⁷ although much of its inner decoration has been irreparably lost in recent times. The plan of Zhwa.lu is square: the chapels open to its four sides around the main assembly hall. All wings are pavilioned, with glazed tile roofs in the Yüan style, and consist of two storeys; the exception is the east side, which has three including the *bar.khang*, or middle level. The main door to the temple used to open to the east, but another door is now used as the entrance for a reason noted later. Zhwa.lu's sanctum is located on the west wing, or *dbu.rtse (glo.'bur) nub.ma* (also called *dbus.ma*, 'central') which consists of twin chapels placed side by side, traditionally called *dbu.rtse (glo.'bur) nub.ma'i lha.khang lbo.ma* and *lha.khang byang.ma* [south and north chapels of the west wing] from their actual location. On the opposite side, across the spacious assembly hall [du.khang], the east wing, or *dbu.rtse (glo.'bur) shar.ma*, where the original door opened, was later occupied by a *mgon.khang* [chapel of wrathful deities], which has obstructed the original skor.lam adjoining the ancient entrance. At the south wing, or *dbu.rtse (glo.'bur) lbo.ma*, stands the so-called *hSe.sgo.ma* [chapel with a rhino skin-covered door], alternatively *bKa'.gyur lha.khang*, and at the north wing, known as *dbu.rtse (glo.'bur) byang.ma*, the chapel named *sGo.gsum lha.khang* [chapel with a triple door]. All the chapels on the south, west and north wings are surrounded by the previously mentioned great skor.lam, or processional corridor. On the east wing *bar.khang*, there is a chapel known as *Yum.chen.mo lha.khang*, around which another processional path runs, though of much smaller dimensions. On the uppermost storeys of the pavilions constituting the four wings, known as the four *zhal.yas.khang*, there are four additional main chapels under the tiled roofs. These are: the *bsTan.gyur lha.khang* in the east *zhal.yas.khang*; the *gNas.rten lha.khang* [chapel of the (sixteen) Arhats] in the south; the *bDe.lidan lha.khang* in the west; and the Tshe.dpag.med chapel in the north *zhal.yas.khang*. Consequently, the east pavilion, having three floors, possesses three tiled roofs, while the other pavilions, being two-storeyed, have only two.⁸ The ridges of the pagoda roofs of the north and east pavilions once bore three-dimensional glazed images, sadly lost today; the other two pavilions seem not to have had such decoration, at least not in the recent past.⁹

Zhwa.lu gSer.khang, though not reaching the huge dimensions of later religious complexes, is an imposing, solid structure which is the fruit of successive building phases. The temple still considered a gem of artistic creativity, was the constant wonder of the Zhwa.lu princes. In studying the temple, one is led into several periods of Tibetan history and culture. In the pages that follow, an outline of the historical, religious and artistic circumstances under which Zhwa.lu was developed in the course of time will be attempted and the associated problems critically discussed on the basis of the two broad periods indicated by Bu.ston rin.po.che, Zhwa.lu's most authoritative and respected master in the eyes of Tibetan tradition.

The foundation of Zhwa.lu

The date of Zhwa.lu's foundation is a vexed problem of Tibetan chronology. Basically, three different orders of dating are mentioned in the sources. *The Chronicles of Zha.lu* attributes the foundation of the gSer.khang to a hare year at the beginning of bstan.pa phyi.dar.¹⁰ An early order of dating sees such a hare year as water-hare 1003,¹¹ while an intermediate order of dating considers it to be fire-hare 1027.¹² Finally, a late dating fixes the foundation in the iron-dragon year 1040, possibly recording it with a one year lapse from another hare year, earth-hare 1039.¹³ The attribution of the foundation of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang to a hare year therefore seems positive, though the identification of the actual date remains to be ascertained. This can be done only by considering the additional evidence offered by historical elements, including the life of lCe.btsun.

lCe.btsun's religious career is connected with that of his master, Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug, one of the 'men of dBus.gTsang' who reintroduced Buddhism to Central Tibet at the end of the 10th century.¹⁴ Lo.ston laid the foundation of rGyan.gong, the earliest temple of the bstan.pa phyi.dar, in a bird year considered by some sources to be water-bird 973,¹⁵ while other sources place it in the fire-bird year 997.¹⁶ If the view of 'Gos lo.tsa.ba, that 'Brom.ston.pa correctly calculated the date of the

return of the men of dBus.gTsang to Central Tibet as earth-tiger 978¹⁷, is as correct as it seems, then a foundation date for rGyan.gong in 973 would be out of the question, since the men of dBus.gTsang had not yet returned by then. The year 997 seems more reliable, even in the light of the fact that the great kLu.mes, one of Lo.ston's companions among the men of dBus.gTsang, established his first temple Mora.'gyel in the earth-bird year 1009.¹⁸ If the 973 date is evaluated against this evidence, a gap of thirty years between the building activities of two companions who had returned to Central Tibet together, is too conspicuous to accept.

The foundation date of rGyan.gong is relevant to a chronological assessment of the events of lCe.btsun's life. *Zhwa.lu nam.thar* says that lCe.btsun was born in the year when Lo.ston consecrated the rGyan.gong ground and laid the foundations of the temple: fire-bird 997.¹⁹ At the time of his birth, seven inauspicious omens against his family became manifest at Zho.chu khar.mo.che, though an otherwise unknown person called dPyal Ratna.shri succeeded in blocking their effects for seven full years. When this period passed, the subjects of the lCe clan revolted, and most members of the clan were killed. lCe.btsun fled and found refuge with Lo.ston, who tonsured him and accepted him as his disciple.²⁰ lCe.btsun must have met his master in the water-hare year 1003 when he was seven years old—on the basis of this dating, the foundation of Zhwa.lu has little or no grounds. Yet, even if 973 is accepted as the year of foundation of rGyan.gong as well as of lCe.btsun's birth, thereby making lCe.btsun an adult capable of having founded Zhwa.lu in 1003, this hypothesis must still be discarded in that it would mean that the foundation of Zhwa.lu predated that of Mora.'gyel by kLu.mes, who was of an earlier generation than lCe.btsun.

lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas studied dharma with Lo.ston for many years, and finally completed the construction of rGyan.gong started by his teacher,²¹ including the statues.²² It seems that rGyan.gong was in the meantime devastated by a fire.²³ When he was thirty years old, in the fire-tiger year 1026, lCe.btsun was fully ordained by Lo.ston. In the following year, fire-hare 1027, he decided to build a temple and laid the foundations of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang.²⁴ A brief, but important passage in dPa'.bo gtsug.lag 'phreng.ba's *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston*²⁵ states that lCe.btsun founded the 'main part' of Zhwa.lu at that time. No archaeological evidence remains of lCe.btsun's initial effort to create Buddhist shrines, but from additional literary evidence in other sources, a fairly good idea of what the 'main part' of Zhwa.lu was can be gained. The sources are unanimous in affirming that he built a clay statue of sPyan.ras.gzigs and a mchod.rten on the spot where Lo.ston's arrow landed in order to establish the gSer.khang at the distance of the flight of an arrow. It is further recorded that the statue of sPyan.ras.gzigs spoke to him, advising to go to India and bring another, very holy statue of sPyan.ras.gzigs Kasarpani from Bodhgaya.²⁶

The twin chapels mentioned above were thus constructed to house the religious objects lCe.btsun had made. The so-called lha.khang lho.ma in what was later to become the west wing was made to house the sPyan.ras.gzigs statue, while the lha.khang byang.ma [or *gtsung.khang rnying.ma'i.mdha*: ancient temple of the arrow], also in the future west wing, was constructed to store a statue of rNam.par snang.mdzad as main image, and the *stupa* containing the golden tipped arrow.²⁷ They thus seem to be the 'main part' of Zhwa.lu built by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas before his departure for India.

Later, possibly in the 1030's, lCe.btsun left for Bodhgaya to find the statue and to take pure vows, as those he had taken in Tibet were inappropriate. He left his other teacher mGo.ba Ye.shes g.yung.drung in charge of Zhwa.lu as temporary abbot.²⁸ This indicates that Zhwa.lu was a functioning institute by that time, and renders the late foundation date for Zhwa.lu (iron-dragon 1040) untenable; moreover, this date is unsupported by any kind of evidence.

The sources do not offer any chronological certification of his sojourn in India: all that is known is that lCe.btsun fulfilled his task. He took pure vows from the Bodhgaya pandita called Abhayakara, and obtained the stone statue of sPyan.ras.gzigs Kasarpani, which was made to fly through the air from the banks of the Ganges to Zhwa.lu by a miraculous transformation of mGon.po beng. This legendary account is remarkably similar to the fantastic circumstances under which some of Khotan's most revered images are claimed to have arrived from India.²⁹ The statue was deliberately placed next to the clay image of sPyan.ras.gzigs made by lCe.btsun which had spoken to him.³⁰

The statement in *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston* that lCe.btsun built the 'main part' of Zhwa.lu, meaning the twin chapels, before leaving for India suggests that the gSer.khang was built by lCe.btsun in two phases. The *Myang chos. byung* implicitly confirms this in a passage referring to another chapel, that of Yum.chen.mo, which all sources attribute to lCe.btsun. It relates a phrase of Atisha, when the great Bengali master was at Zhwa.lu after lCe.btsun had returned from India.³¹ (The sources date the Atisha episode after lCe.btsun had placed the Indian stone image of sPyan.ras.gzigs in the sanctum's lha.khang lho.ma). Atisha told lCe.btsun that it was very auspicious to consecrate the image of Yum.chen.mo, implying that Atisha himself had carried out the consecration ceremony (rab.gnas) for the image. Hence, the Yum.chen.mo lha.khang must have been built shortly before Atisha's visit to Zhwa.lu, and surely after lCe.btsun's return from Bodhgaya. It was this, therefore, that constituted the subject of lCe.btsun's later phase of building. At the time of Atisha's consecration the sPyan.ras.gzigs statue made by lCe.btsun spoke for the second time.

At this juncture, mention must be made of the question as to when Atisha stayed at Zhwa.lu. The *bsTan.rtsis.gsal.ba'i.nyin.byed* recalls that he spent three months in the Zhwa.lu area upon his arrival from West Tibet.³² Since Tibetan literature affirms that Atisha reached gTsang, where Zhwa.lu is located, in the wood-bird year 1045³³ and then went to dBus, this would seem to confirm that he stayed at Zhwa.lu in that same year.³⁴ As a result, it is quite feasible that the construction of the Yum.chen.mo lha.khang was completed by 1045.

Literary sources maintain that lCe.btsun built the Yum.chen.mo lha.khang on an upper level, while on the ground floor he made the entrance to the gSer.khang facing east, and a processional corridor (skor.lam) connected to this entrance.³⁵ The gSer.khang was, therefore, strictly arranged on an east-west axis, with a wide space left between the east and west wings.

Although no archaeological evidence remains today of the original Yum.chen.mo chapel, since the area was renovated by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan when the gSer.khang was expanded during the period of Yüan-Sa.skya.pa rule in Tibet, a clue still remains to assess the art that was employed in the Yum.chen.mo chapel during lCe.btsun's time. On the ground floor Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan built a mgon.khang occupying the space in the centre of lCe.btsun's entrance corridor. Part of the walls of the mgon.khang were formed by the original walls of lCe.btsun's entrance corridor, namely those on the north and south sides of the ancient door. These two sides of lCe.btsun's corridor have been repainted during Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's time, some of the paintings showing a striking combination of stylistic elements. As one would expect, the artistic idiom of their main Buddha images is in the style of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's renovation, and therefore can be dated to that time [pl.62] (see below). Yet, the Buddhas are surrounded by groups of secondary images in the act of worship that include rows of Bodhisattvas in the most classical Pala style. These Bodhisattvas betray a surprising affinity to the east Indian prototypes of the 11th century [pl.50]. The stylistic enigma posed by these minor figures is solved if one considers that Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's paintings were made on the original walls of the corridor, built around 1045 by lCe.btsun. The original Bodhisattva paintings were restored/repainted during the Yüan-Sa.skya.pa period, preserving intact their 11th century Pala features. That the artists of the Yüan-Sa.skya.pa period have followed pre-existing models for the secondary images on these walls is confirmed by a similar scene nearby, where Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's artists painted a Buddha worshipped by a group of attendants in their own style [pl.51]: it is probable that the Pala-style paintings had already disappeared on that portion of the wall in the meantime. Where pre-existing paintings of minor images were found, they were preserved by repainting in the same style. The latter assumption is strengthened by the original north wall of lCe.btsun's corridor: because of its location—north walls being always more exposed to deterioration—there are no traces of repainting in the older style [pl.48].

There are further peculiarities characteristic of these wall paintings. Among the groups of attendants which include Pala-style Bodhisattvas, images of monks, princes, and figures of different ethnic origins are found [pl.50]. The posture and the attitude of the monks, who give an impression of overwhelming grief, are reminiscent of a *parinirvana* scene. Could it be that the gSer.khang corridor wall originally held a parinirvana scene painted by lCe.btsun's artists? The princes' turbans are conceived in the same way as those of the Yarlung kings at Grwa.thang temple.³⁶ A further similarity to the Grwa.thang scenes is found in the depiction of the ethnic figures with short, trimmed beards

(they are possibly of Central Asian stock) in adoration of the Buddha. These elements, added to the adoption of a Pala style and the arrangement of secondary images in groups around the main Buddha, constitute a point of intersection between lCe.btsun's Zhwa.lu wall paintings, dating originally to around 1045, and the Grwa.thang murals, painted between 1081 and 1093. Moreover, the introduction of a different aesthetic element in the Pala idiom—group scenes around the main figures in place of the arrangement by individual images, assessed by me to have been executed in around the 1030's in the case of rTsis gNas.gsar (Ch.2, p.59)—finds confirmation in the slightly later murals at Zhwa.lu gSer.khang, dated to around 1045.

All in all, these assumptions regarding the original style adopted by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas for his temple seem to indicate that Zhwa.lu gSer.khang was part of the artistic movement consistently predominant in dBus.gTsang during the 11th century, which benefitted from the insemination of Pala art from different sources: not only from India itself.³⁷

The founder of Zhwa.lu and his clan

lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas was a typical eminent figure of the bstan.pa phyi.dar period. In the pattern established by his master Lo.ston and the other men of dBus.gTsang, he embodied both religious and lay power over his territory and subjects. With his presence, the area of Zhwa.lu in Myang.smad (lower Myang, situated along the Myang river, not far from gZhis.ka.rtse [Shigatsé] came under the control of his lCe clan.³⁸

In common with other noble families and ancient clans of Tibet, the lCe clan claimed supernatural origin.³⁹ According to the *Myang chos 'byung* and the *Zhwa.lu dgon.gyi lo.rgyus*, the clan's founder was born in the sky from the tongue [lcel] of a tortoise (symbol of primordial creation) as father, and 'earth melting with fire' as mother, both of whom dwelt in the thirteen layers of the sky.⁴⁰ Many generations later, a member of the clan descended to earth and first became king of sTag.gzig, then of Zhang.zhung. In the generations that followed, after other lCe exponents mythologically accomplished the conquest of China and Hor, members of the clan became the interior ministers of the Yarlung dynasty kings.⁴¹ In particular Khri.srong.lde.btsan, out of gratitude towards the lCe minister responsible for the invitation of Guru Rin.po.che to Tibet, rewarded him with the territory of Myang.ro in gTsang: roughly corresponding to Myang.smad. Bu.ston rin.po.che, in the letter to Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan mentioned earlier, identifies him as lCe Jñanasiddhi, and confirms the endowment of the territory.⁴² The latter had a brother called lCe Khyi.'brug,⁴³ who is recognized by the *Bu.ston rin.po.che nam.thar* as one of the exalted of the lCe clan.⁴⁴ The *Zhwa.lu dgon.gyi lo.rgyus* attributes the invitation of Guru Rin.po.che to this brother,⁴⁵ though Bu.ston rin.po.che's authority on matters pertaining to Zhwa.lu appears to be fairly conclusive.

A further, drastically different, account of the circumstances under which the lCe clan took possession of Myang.smad is preserved in the *rGya.Bod.yig.tshang*.⁴⁶ The text refers extensively to what must broadly be considered the division of the Myang territory into its three canonical areas of Myang.stod, Myang.bar and Myang.smad [upper, middle and lower Myang], ruled respectively by the Khyung.po, 'Bre and lCe clans. Similar classifications can be found in sources dealing with the ancient administrative organization of Tibet during the Yarlung dynasty.⁴⁷ An historical abnormality in the account of the *rGya.Bod.yig.tshang* is that the divisions are considered to have originated from the family of Khri bKra.shis brtsegs.pa.dpal, who was the brother of the founder of the Gu.ge dynasty of West Tibet. He settled in Mang.yul during the 10th century, and became king there in the aftermath of the long period of obscurity which followed the fall of the Yarlung dynasty. Evidently, a confusion of the relevant periods has slipped into the account, which may be due to the desire of later local dynasties to claim descent from the Yarlung kings.⁴⁸ As it stands, the story tells of three brothers—Khyung.rtsad, 'Bre.rtsad and lCe.rtsad—taking possession of their territories, and finally of how lCe.rtsad supersedes his brothers. lCe.rtsad [lord of the lCe clan] managed to bring unprecedented prosperity to the territories by organizing the *ka.ba hzhi* [lit. four pillars: reserves of water and fodder] on which the welfare of the country was based. Because of lCe Jñanasiddhi, (could it be that he was

none other than lCe.rtsad, lord of the lCe?) the territory of Myang.ro passed under the control of the lCe clan.

In his well-known letter, which is a veritable summary of the history of the Zhwa.lu princes, Bu.ston rin.po.che states that the following period was one of mixed fortunes for the clan. It was a time of internal conflict, during which the clan broke up into different branches, most notably the white and black lCe, and it seems that disagreements within the family were more than occasional.⁴⁹ The *Myang chos 'byung* contains a passage which is of interest for several reasons. In its discussion of sPos.khang,⁵⁰ a 13th century temple connected with the lineage of Kha.che pan.chen Shakya-shribhadra located not far from Zhwa.lu on the other side of the Myang river, the text mentions a temple in the vicinity called 'lCe.khri dgon.pa' [the monastery which is the throne of the lCe] built together by the lCe.nag, lCe.dkar and lCe.khra [black, white and multicoloured branches of the lCe clan].⁵¹ In the first instance, it is possible that the passage conveys the sense that the temple was the ancestral home of the lCe and, moreover, that it was jointly built by the different branches comprising the clan prior to their break-up. Its location confirms the attribution of the Myang.smad-Myang.ro territory to the lCe clan. Finally, it proves that they did not split into only two branches. In another passage,⁵² the same source adds a red branch to the black, white and multicoloured lCe already identified, in the best tradition of ancient Tibetan mythology.⁵³ Tibetan literature offers an insight as to when the split into two branches occurred:⁵⁴ during the life of lCe Khrom.gzher 'dong.khri,⁵⁵ who lived three generations before lCe.btsun, thus approximately during the early 10th century.

It is no easy task to assess which branch of the clan lCe.btsun belonged to in the absence of precise literary references. One far from certain hypothesis can be hazarded from the full name of the temple he founded: dPal Zhwa.lu gSer.khang khra.mo. In my view, 'khra.mo' [multicoloured] does not necessarily stand for the colour of the earth upon which the temple was founded, but may refer to lCe.btsun's branch of the clan, conveyed in the name of his temple. The fact that some of the sources stress the division of the lCe clan into white and black lCe can be considered reductive, as demonstrated. The fact that the disputes primarily involved the white and black branches of the clan does not mean that the others were not involved, directly or indirectly.

lCe Khrom.gzher 'dong.khri had a son called lCe sTag.gi.rgyal.mtshan, among whose many sons two in particular are relevant to the history of Zhwa.lu. One was lCe g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang, who will be discussed below, the other was from a different wife, and he was called lCe Yum.'bum. In fact, lCe Yum.'bum had two sons: the elder was lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas himself, and the younger lCe Shes.rab ye.shes.⁵⁶ As a consequence of the disputes within the clan and with its subjects, the infant lCe.btsun fled, finding initial refuge in a fief called Khyim.mkhar located in an area of Myang.bar to the east of the Zhwa.lu valley and not far from it.⁵⁷ lCe.btsun's branch of the clan still, therefore, nominally controlled an area which was assigned to them during the reign of Khri.srong.lde.btsan.

At the time lCe.btsun fled to save his life, a new social and religious order was emerging from the ashes of the ancient Tibetan royal administrative system, whose disruption brought about a long period of decadence and obscurity. The lCe owed their power to the old system. With bstan.pa phyi.dar, the territories of dBus.gTsang were divided into new entities called tsho (see also Ch.2, p.38). These entities were ruled by religious masters from the old clans, who often exercised their authority in the same areas where their families had held the right to rule since ancient times.⁵⁸ One of the initiators of this system was Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug, with whom lCe.btsun finally sought refuge. He had just founded the rGyan.skor tsho containing the temple of rGyan.gong. Another of lCe.btsun's teachers, mGo.ba Ye.shes g.yung.drung, had established his seat in the tsho called 'A.tsho, ruled by the 'A.zhwa clan to which he belonged, close to where Khyim.mkhar was located.⁵⁹ It cannot be ruled out that lCe.btsun, or someone else in his stead, found it expedient to embrace the new order inaugurated during bstan.pa phyi.dar. In this respect, lCe.btsun's presentation to Lo.ston of a sacred book of the lCe, given to the clan by king Khri.srong.lde.btsan, may be symbolic of the change in the power structure.⁶⁰ lCe.btsun had left behind the decadence of old for a new vigour.⁶¹ Whatever may have been the case, it is true to say that with lCe.btsun came the initial hold of the lCe clan upon the territory of Zhwa.lu.⁶²

Relations between the newly established religious communities were not always peaceful. The *Zhwa.lu dgon.gyi.lo.rgyus* records episodes of hostility to Lo.ston and his temple of rGyan.gong by the Thar.pa community settled in the interior of the same Zhwa.lu valley. The adoption of rDo.rje Rab.brtan.ma (a form of Lha.mo) at that time as the tutelary deity of rGyan.gong and later of Zhwa.lu⁶⁵—one who has remained protectress of both temples ever since—may signify the overcoming of difficulties with neighbours. The text does go on to recall that with the installment of a statue of rDo.rje Rab.brtan.ma at rGyan.gong, the prosperity of both the latter and Zhwa.lu was enhanced.⁶⁴

In addition to the building of Zhwa.lu, all sources attribute four 'reasons of glory' (the so-called ka.ba bzhi), which are lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas's main achievements.⁶⁵ His first 'glory' was that his religious vows were pure, and originated in the land of the Buddha. This should not be underestimated in the light of the fact that Tibetan masters of this same period were often introduced to Buddhism in ways far from the canonical ideal.⁶⁶ As lCe.btsun did not regard the vows received from Lo.ston sufficiently appropriate, he went to India to study with the Indian master Abhayakara of Bodhgaya, from whom he received renewed vows. This ostensibly gave him great religious authority. His second 'glory' derived from the fact that he obtained royal patronage from the Newar [Bal.po] king. The circumstances of this sponsorship remain obscure in the sources, yet a succinct passage in the *Zhwa.lu nam.thar* lends an element of consistency to the claim. The text says that he was patronized by the *Bal.po rgyal.po* [king] and, moreover, by the *Bal.po rtsad.po*.⁶⁷ In this context the term 'rtsad.po', which can also be translated as 'king', seems to imply that a minor monarch was ruling jointly. This does find support in the political situation in the Kathmandu valley at this time; from 1039 the unity of the kingdom was fragmented, and more than one king ruled.⁶⁸ This succinct passage is, however, a telling account of the actual political situation of the valley, and moreover, permits an assessment of the period of lCe.btsun's contacts with the Newar kings that chronologically fits the rest of lCe.btsun's dates and activities. In fact, since it is highly improbable that the patronage occurred as a result of Newar presence at Zhwa.lu at this time (at least no source offers any evidence of this), it can be assumed that lCe.btsun came into contact with the Newar rulers during the time that he was in India. This assumption helps to assess the date that lCe.btsun was in India to around 1039, or slightly later: certainly before 1045, when he met Atisha at Zhwa.lu. His third 'glory' was to belong to the lCe clan. This may not have had much significance at the time of bstan.pa phyi.dar, yet for a master who was well rooted in the fresh tradition, the honour of being descended from a clan claiming supernatural origin, royal blood and ancient loyalty to the Yarlung kings was evidently no little merit in the eyes of his contemporaries. His fourth 'glory' derived from the fiefs he owned, defined as the 'four pillars' and the 'six-' or 'eight beams', which gave Zhwa.lu the material prosperity to support its religious activities. Literary sources mention that the four pillars and six beams passed under the sway of Zhwa.lu during the time of mGo.ba Ye.shes g.yung.drung's temporary abbotship.⁶⁹ Some of these fiefs are credited by the sources with having been part of the 'A.tsho division controlled by Ye.shes g.yung.drung:⁷⁰ Zhwa.lu secured its welfare by absorbing new fiefs into its sphere.

Having established religious and temporal control over the area, Zhwa.lu remained within the lCe family for the following millennium up to the very recent past.

Zhwa.lu after lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas (11th-12th centuries)

Upon his death, which took place at a date undetermined in the sources, lCe.btsun left the see of Zhwa.lu to his brother Shes.rab ye.shes.⁷¹ The latter's abbotship was either brief or rather insignificant, since Tibetan literature adds nothing more about it.⁷² Shes.rab ye.shes in turn left the see to lCe g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang,⁷³ who had been to meet lCe.btsun at Zhwa.lu and was ordained there by him. He is described by the sources as the step-uncle of lCe.btsun,⁷⁴ since he was the son of lCe sTag.gi.rgyal.mtshan. While the authority of the sources has to be accepted, the possibility that g.Yu.thog.sgra was lCe.btsun's uncle is rather odd, since it would mean that in spite of belonging to a generation before lCe.btsun and Shes.rab ye.shes, he inherited the see after both nephews had ruled.

Moreover, all sources agree that he was succeeded by his own son, who would have to have belonged to the same generation as lCe.btsun and Shes.rab ye.shes.

In contrast to the other sources, which assess the period in which the following episode took place more vaguely, the *Zhwa.lu rnam.thar*⁷⁵ clearly states that another image of sPyan.ras.gzigs came to enrich Zhwa.lu gSer.khang during the time of g.Yu.thog.sgra, as prophesied by Atisha as well as by the clay statue built by lCe.btsun, which did so when it spoke for the third time. The image, in white stone, was said to be self-originated and found by a miraculous white goat with a turquoise beard. When the Zhwa.lu.pa-s managed to take it to their temple, the statue spoke and asked to sit on the lap of its 'mother', referring to the sPyan.ras.gzigs statue brought from India by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas. It was, therefore, housed in the lha.khang lho.ma of what was to later become the west wing. Ultimately, this chapel contained the stone image brought by lCe.btsun from India, the clay sPyan.ras.gzigs made by him, the self-originated statue found by the miraculous goat, and another stone image made by the great *pandita* sMri.ti.⁷⁶ All were representations of Thugs.rje chen.po sPyan.ras.gzigs. The latter three images were referred to collectively as *Sems.dpa' gsum.brtsegs* [the three stacked saviours].⁷⁷

At the time of the miraculous discovery of the self-originated statue, the first mention is made by the sources of Ri.phug, the hermitage on the hill immediately west of the gSer.khang. This hermitage played a conspicuous role in the history of Zhwa.lu, especially during the abbotship of Bu.ston rin.po.che, when it was used for meditational retreat. Ri.phug was particularly revered because Atisha had dwelt in a cave at the site, found a spring of holy water and made a great number of *tsha.tsha* [clay tablets with moulded stupa or deity images] which had been among Ri.phug's main relics since that time.⁷⁸ The sources certify that a community attached to Zhwa.lu had settled at Ri.phug during the time of g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang,⁷⁹ and one has to wonder whether the hermitage was already active in lCe.btsun's time because of Atisha's presence at the site.⁸⁰

Connected to the same episode of the self-originated image's miraculous appearance is the first mention in the sources of a disturbance with another neighbouring religious and lay institute: that of Chu.mig.⁸¹ Relations between Zhwa.lu and Chu.mig were to remain strained with occasional direct clashes up to the time of the Sa.skya.pa rule, in spite of the likely contribution of the Zhwa.lu.pa-s to the foundation of sNar.thang (in 1153), the main temple in the Chu.mig area.⁸²

It seems that the patronage of the Kathmandu valley, established during the time of lCe.btsun, turned into a direct Newar presence at Zhwa.lu under g.Yu.thog.sgra. It is known that the Newars built a *stupa* on Zhwal.ri, another hill adjoining Zhwa.lu,⁸³ though no details are extant, since the evidence of the discovery of the few Newar books with colophons dating to the period in the monasteries of Sa.skya and Ngor, which had contacts with Zhwa.lu at a later time, is too meagre.⁸⁴

The merit of giving Zhwa.lu a definitive asset which continued to remain a characteristic, albeit non-exclusive, of the temple for the centuries to come has to be ascribed to g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang. He renounced the religious vows he had taken from lCe.btsun and established himself and his descendents as the lay rulers of Zhwa.lu.⁸⁵ Through the secularization of his clan he assured the continuity of Zhwa.lu's tenure of power. A further achievement was his decision to raid and overpower rGyan.gong, and bring its religious objects to Zhwa.lu.⁸⁶ This instance of *real politik* gave Zhwa.lu total control over the whole territory in both the religious and temporal spheres. Moreover, having confined the role of his clan to lay matters, g.Yu.thog.sgra realized that religious leadership was better left to those prestigious figures who have successively appeared on the Tibetan spiritual stage: this was a pattern that was also followed by his successors and constituted another long-lasting characteristic of Zhwa.lu. He chose to rule as lay *dpon* [leader], and appointed a new abbot of Zhwa.lu in the person of Khyung.po Grags.seng, who was no minor Buddhist personage of this time.⁸⁷ Therefore, all the sources record that there were three lCe abbots of Zhwa.lu.⁸⁸ A contemporary of Po.to.ba (1031-1105), Khyung.po Grags.seng attended the Tho.ling council held by rTse.lde, king of mNga'.ris skor.gsum, together with many other prestigious exponents of the doctrine, in the fire-dragon year 1076.⁸⁹ On his return from the council to Central Tibet with his companion Dwags.po dBang.gyal, he founded a school of logic on the Po.ta.ri and dMar.po.ri hills at Lhasa.⁹⁰ From the evidence of these two events, his abbotship at Zhwa.lu must have taken place some time after his return from the council of Tho.ling, thus after 1076. Khyung.po Grags.seng later became

displeased with g.Yu.thog.sgra as a consequence of the latter's raid on rGyan.gong and left the see of Zhwa.lu, returning after pressing insistence from g.Yu.thog.sgra. The raid on rGyan.gong must, therefore, have taken place sometime in the 1080's, or soon after.

Khyung.po Grags.seng was succeeded as abbot by mNgon.pa.pa, who was a disciple of Rwa lo.tsa.ba⁹¹ and a contemporary of rNgog bLo.ldan Shes.rab (1059-1109).⁹² He worked at Zhwa.lu with the latter and, moreover, with the great Kashmiri teacher 'Bum.phrag gsum.pa. Since both rNgog bLo.ldan Shes.rab and 'Bum.phrag gsum.pa returned to Tibet from Kashmir in the water-bird year 1093 and reached the area of dBus.gTsang some time later, mNgon.pa.pa must have occupied the throne of Zhwa.lu during the last decade of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th.⁹³ A sign of 'Bum.phrag gsum.pa's presence at Zhwa.lu is a famous conch shell he once owned, which was kept in the main assembly hall, and could produce sound without being blown.⁹⁴ mNgon.pa.pa was succeeded by gZhon.nu brtson.'grus, who was in turn succeeded by Wa Chos.byang.⁹⁵ These two probably ruled in the first half of the 11th century, since no apparent break in the succession of abbots seems to have taken place.

The abbots of Zhwa.lu did not all belong to the same religious school.⁹⁶ At this period, the temple benefitted from an eclectic religious approach, as the successive *mkhan.po* [abbots] brought with them their own religious backgrounds. Under lCe.btsun, mGo.ba Ye.shes g.yung.drung and the other lCe abbots, the *'dul.ba* [vinaya] tradition was stressed, and was generally to remain fundamental for generations to come. Presumably, under Khyung.po Grags.seng the *tsbad.ma* [logic] tradition was practised, while mNgon.pa.pa would favour the *mngon.pa* [abhidharma], as his name suggests.⁹⁷

Using the rough estimates made above, and with the assistance of the literary sources,⁹⁸ it is possible to propose an approximate chronological outline of the genealogies of the temporal rulers of Zhwa.lu. g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang was succeeded by his son lCe.'bum, whose mkhan.po was mNgon.pa.pa during the first part of his life and gZhon.nu brtson.'grus during the second part. It can be extrapolated from this that g.Yu.thog.sgra was no longer the secular ruler in the 1090's, while lCe.'bum probably ruled from the final years of the 11th century to the first decades of the 12th. He was succeeded by 'Bum.dar, whose abbots were gZhon.nu brtson.'grus, renowned for bringing *madhyamika* teachings to Zhwa.lu, in the earlier part of his life, and Wa Chos.byang in the latter part. So 'Bum.dar must have ruled Zhwa.lu around the 2nd-3rd decades of the 12th century. The next temporal lord of Zhwa.lu was 'Bum.brtañ, who ruled with Wa Chos.byang and can be placed in the period before 1150.

After Wa Chos.byang and 'Bum.brtañ, the history of Zhwa.lu slips into a period of obscurity. Zhwa.lu's fortunes may have declined, as no activities and no protagonists are recorded in the sources, while the genealogies are silent for about a century. It may be that after Khyung.po Grags.seng, religious prestige became less charismatic, and, after g.Yu.thog.sgra gser.bzang, from whom the lineage of Zhwa.lu leaders descended, lay authority became less enlightened.

Zhwa.lu's dark age came to an end with the onset of the 13th century. This was a time that assured the temple a renaissance in religious practice, inspiring both patronage and the arts.

Zhwa.lu sku.zhang: the 'uncles' of the Sa.skya.pa rulers of Tibet

Zhwa.lu's second historical phase begins with the next Zhwa.lu ruler recorded by the sources, A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes, during which the temple's fortunes were fully restored. It is well-known that Zhwa.lu's season of renovated splendour has to be ascribed to the links between the lords of Zhwa.lu and the Sa.skya rulers. *The Chronicles of Zha.lu* states that without the Zhwa.lu princesses, the royal lamas of Sa.skya could not have been lords of the earth.⁹⁹ One could add that without the Zhwa.lu princesses, the gSer.khang could not have been brought to the peak of its splendour. In fact, Zhwa.lu benefitted from the spiritual master-imperial patron relationship [yon.mchod] between the Sa.skya.pa rulers and the Yüan emperors of China. The intermarriages between the Zhwa.lu.pa and the Sa.skya.pa brought them into the latter's orbit, and consequently into that of the Yüan court as well: circumstances that greatly enhanced the florescence of Zhwa.lu.

An antecedent to the later close links between the Sa.skya sect and Zhwa.lu occurred during the early life of Sa.skya pan.di.ta Kun.dga' rgyal.mtshan (1182-1251), the Sa.skya.pa lama responsible in his old age for the initial contacts of the sect with the Mongols. Sa.skya pan.di.ta was fully ordained at rGyan.gong in the earth-dragon year 1208¹⁰⁰ by the great Kha.che pan.chen Shakyashribhadra, whose best Tibetan disciple he became. This provides a glimpse of the fact that the 'dul.ba tradition, of which Kha.che pan.chen was an exponent, was still highly revered at rGyan.gong and possibly at Zhwa.lu. More relevantly in this context, the presence of Sa.skya pan.di.ta in the area may have been the catalyst in the contacts, to bloom half a century later, between the lords of Zhwa.lu and the Sa.skya.pa, who shared a point of religious intersection in the person of Kha.che pan.chen.

The relationship developed when the daughter of A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes, Ma.gcig bKha'.gro 'bum, was given in marriage to Phyag.na rdo.rje (1239-1267).¹⁰¹ who was appointed by Se.chen rgyal.po [Khubilai khan] as the first viceroy of Tibet.¹⁰² Because of the marriage, A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes was awarded the title *sku.zhang* [respected uncle] of the Sa.skya.pa rulers of Tibet, and the Zhwa.lu rulers held this title ever since. The granting of the title must have taken place in the wood-bird year 1265, or soon after, which is the date Phyag.na rdo.rje returned from the Yüan court with his brother 'Phags.pa to Sa.skya, and when he probably married bKha'.gro 'bum.¹⁰³ It is known that a son called Dharmapalarakshita was born to them in earth-dragon 1268.¹⁰⁴ and the title would clearly have been granted before the son's birth. It should be stressed that no other clan in Tibet was in a similar position of strength and authority, so firmly rooted in that of the Sa.skya.pa-s, than the Zhwa.lu.pa.

In the period before its ascendancy began, Zhwa.lu again clashed with Chu.mig. There is a legend about a statue of rTa.mgrin [Hayagriva] with a particular power: when it neighed three times, the Chu.mig.pa were defeated.¹⁰⁵ Though now lost, that statue was kept in the lha.khang byang.ma of what was to become the west wing.¹⁰⁶

A sign of the new political environment which transcended the narrow limits of provincial dispute is the fact that Se.chen rgyal.po granted A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes the fief of sMon.gro in person. Indeed, Bu.ston rin.po.che underlines the good relations between Sans.rgyas ye.shes and the emperor of China in his letter to Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan.¹⁰⁷

The period of A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes' rule can be estimated from the evidence at hand. He was obviously ruling Zhwa.lu for some time before his daughter married Phyag.na rdo.rje in 1265, and he kept his post up to sometime before 1277. It is known from some sources that his abbot was Bu.ston Seng.ge 'od, who attended the council of Chu.mig as one of the four protagonists. This council took place in that same fire-ox year 1277, and the sources inform us that A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes was no longer sku.zhang at the time.¹⁰⁸

He was succeeded by his son sku.zhang sNga.sgra, with Bu.ston Seng.ge 'od and later 'Dul.'dsin.pa Grags.pa brtson.'grus as abbots.¹⁰⁹ It is likely that sNga.sgra ruled from sometime before fire-ox 1277, when the sources say that his father was no longer sku.zhang, to some time before iron-tiger 1290. From *Zha.lu Document I*, part of a series of imperial edicts published by Prof. Tucci, it is known that sNga.sgra's brother mGon.po dpal was the secular ruler of Zhwa.lu in 1290.¹¹⁰ The document is issued in the name of mGon.po dpal, Zhwa.lu sku.zhang during the time of Ye.shes rin.chen's appointment as *Ti.shri* (1286-1291).¹¹¹ The year in which it was written is given as a tiger year, which can only be iron-tiger 1290. mGon.po dpal's tenure of the position of sku.zhang is confirmed by *Zha.lu Document II*, which was issued by Ti.shri Grags.pa 'od.zer (1291-1303)¹¹² in a sheep year: wood-sheep 1295.¹¹³

Under mGon.po dpal, another building phase at Zhwa.lu took place. This sku.zhang was responsible for the construction of the so-called *sGo.gsum lha.khang*, which formed the north wing of the gSer.khang.¹¹⁴ The chapel derived its name from the fact that it had access from a triple door. mGon.po dpal built a shrine for his father A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes in the sGo.gsum lha.khang, with an image of Mahamuni in gilt copper, a *torana* and statues of the Buddha's two disciples in clay.¹¹⁵ The chapel was possibly built in the years in which the edicts were written, at the end of the 13th century, during the period when a new abbot, Grags.pa gzhon.nu, ascended the religious see of Zhwa.lu.¹¹⁶ His arrival at Zhwa.lu is recorded as taking place some time after wood-horse 1294.¹¹⁷

mGon.po dpal was succeeded as secular ruler by his son rDo.rje dbang.phyug, who is credited by the sources as having held the office of sku.zhang for three years. *Zha.lu Document III* assists us in identifying his tenure more precisely. The edict was issued by Ti.shri Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan (1304-

1305)¹¹⁸ in the dragon year,¹¹⁹ which can only refer to wood-dragon 1304. The three years of his rule may thus tentatively be assessed as 1303-1305. These dates also constitute a *terminus ante quem* for the end of his father mGon.po dpal's tenure of office. The sources note that during the period when father, then son occupied the post of sku.zhang, Grags.pa gzhon.nu held the abbot's throne.¹²⁰ He maintained the 'dul.ba tradition as fundamental, in accordance with the system of Kha.che pan.chen,¹²¹ and the teachings were revered ever since.

The next sku.zhang was Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan,¹²² son of sNga.sgra, and the greatest sku.zhang of them all. In spite of their privileged contacts with the Yüan court, previous Zhwa.lu sku.zhang had only modestly benefitted the gSer.khang. Under Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's rule, Zhwa.lu gSer.khang was thoroughly renovated and expanded (see below).¹²³ All sources agree that he was appointed to rule Zhwa.lu, receiving the title of *Gu.shri* [imperial avdisor]¹²⁴ by Ol.ja.du [Themur, 1265-1307], who succeeded Se.chen rgyal.po to the throne of China in 1294. The appointment fell in a period of Tibetan-Mongol history in which internal intrigue was undermining the power of the Sa.sakya.pa, and which was culturally and politically characterized by the efforts of the ruling Tibetan princes to secure favour for themselves at the Yüan court through the influence of the lamas.

The date of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's appointment as sku.zhang can be estimated on the evidence that Ol.ja.du died in the fire-sheep year 1307,¹²⁵ and that on the basis of evidence in *Zha.lu Document III* the three-year rule of his predecessor rDo.rje dbang.phyug as sku.zhang was probably in the years 1303-1305. Therefore the appointment of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan can be assessed with a considerable degree of certainty to the fire-horse year 1306. The significance of this date lies in the fact that it is known that shortly after he came to power, he began restoration of the gSer.khang.¹²⁶ Ol.ja.du in person encouraged the enterprise and offered Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan substantial funds for the purpose.¹²⁷ Such an act was in perfect accord with Ol.ja.du's policy of protecting and sponsoring the Buddhist institutes and clergy of Tibet, as testified by the edict issued by him in the fire-bird year 1297.¹²⁸

Ol.ja.du expressed his support for Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan, addressing him as 'uncle', since he was the uncle of his own spiritual teachers. He stressed the fact that from the time of Phyag.na rdo.rje's marriage to the Zhwa.lu princess, the lords of Zhwa.lu were the sku.zhang of the Sa.skya.pa, the spiritual and temporal advisors of the Yüan emperors. The links between Zhwa.lu and the Sa.skya.pa had, in the meantime, been reinforced. The son of Phyag.na rdo.rje and Zhwa.lu bKha'.gro 'bum, Dharmapalarakshita (1268-1287), had married his Zhwa.lu.pa aunt, Jo.mo sTag.'bum. Moreover, the new ruler of the Sa.skya see was bDag.nyid chen.po bZang.po dpal, who had been appointed to the post in that same year 1306, and who had among his spouses a sister of rDo.rje dbang.phyug, the previous Zhwa.lu sku.zhang. This act of benevolence towards bDag.nyid chen.po bZang.po dpal put an end to the latter's long period of exile in China and to his compulsory retirement at Sa.skya and prohibition to carry out official duties.¹²⁹ It is feasible that bDag.nyid chen.po bZang.po dpal's rehabilitation by the emperor in person enhanced Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's own acceptance at court.

A further implication that can be deduced from the words Ol.ja.du addressed to Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan is that the emperor acknowledged an imperial bond to the Zhwa.lu.pa-s. The lords of Zhwa.lu were related to Phyag.na rdo.rje and 'Phags.pa, and Ol.ja.du's father Jin.gim, son of Se.chen rgyal.po, was particularly devoted to 'Phags.pa, since the latter had been his personal preceptor.¹³⁰ The *rGya.Bod.yig.tshang* offers evidence of a direct tie with Ol.ja.du's family. In a rather corrupt passage, the text identifies Dharmapalarakshita as the one who arranged the invitation of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan to the Yüan court.¹³¹ Since the former could not have been the son of Phyag.na rdo.rje, who died in 1287, he must have been none other than Ol.ja.du's elder brother, Dharmapala.¹³²

Apart from his favour at court, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan must also have enjoyed a remarkably high position on the Tibetan political stage, due to his matrimonial links with both the Sa.skya.pa and the powerful Tshal.pa clan, having married Tshal.pa dPa'.mo 'Dsum.'bum dpal.shis.¹³³

During Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's tenure as Zhwa.lu sku.zhang, Grags.pa gzhon.nu continued as abbot. In the light of the fact that the latter passed away in the wood-hare year 1315, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's thorough reconstruction of the gSer.khang, which was begun soon after 1306, fell in the period of Grags.pa gzhon.nu's abbotship, and not under Bu.ston rin.po.che's tenure of the see.¹³⁴ *The Chronicles of Zha.lu* suggest that the see was vacant after the former's death, which is fully confirmed

by *Zhwa.lu nam.thar*. An interregnum of five years occurred between Grags.pa gzhon.nu's death in 1315 and Bu.ston rin.po.che's advent in iron-monkey 1320.¹³⁵ During this period, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan is said to have had a dream, in which 'Jam.dpal [Mañjushri] and rNam.thos.sras [Vaishnavana] appeared to him and told him that dge.bshes 'Jam.dbyangs, a monk of about eighty years of age, was a suitable temporary abbot for a period of three or four years.¹³⁶ Since his position was that of regent, he is not mentioned in the official lists of Zhwa.lu abbots.

Following the death of the old monk, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan strove to secure a great master worthy of his fine temple in the position of abbot. The *Bu.ston rin.po.che nam.thar* and, in more detail, the *Zhwa.lu dgon.gyi.lo.rgyus*, tell of another dream Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan had, in which Bu.ston rin.po.che was indicated as the right choice for abbot.¹³⁷ Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan then sent a messenger with a 'golden letter' to a Chinese astrologer called Kim ha.shang¹³⁸ to confirm whether he should invite Bu.ston rin.po.che to become abbot. The astrologer sent him a mask that was a likeness of Bu.ston rin.po.che, though the astrologer had never seen him before. Kept in the gSer.khang, this mask was an object of particular veneration for centuries.¹³⁹

It is well-known that Bu.ston rin.po.che became abbot of Zhwa.lu in the-iron monkey year 1320. With his accession, the old lineage came to an end and the new one began.¹⁴⁰ the Zhwa.lu.pa or Bu.lugs.pa sect was founded by him. In the year of his arrival at Zhwa.lu, Bu.ston rin.po.che built a gtsug.lag.khang at Ri.phug under the auspices of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan.¹⁴¹ Being more secluded than the gSer.khang, the hermitage was to remain Bu.ston rin.po.che's favourite retreat for study, teaching, writing and meditation.

The rule of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan seems to exemplify a peculiarity characterizing the sku.zhang rank. In the ox year during the period when Kun.dga' blo.gros rgyal.mtshan was Ti.shri (1314-1327),¹⁴² which can only be wood-ox 1325, *Zha.lu Document VII* was issued by the latter to sku.zhang rDo.rje dbang.phyug.¹⁴³ It would thus appear that Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan was not Zhwa.lu sku.zhang at that time, although he is mentioned later as having passed the post to his son Kun.dga' don.grub¹⁴⁴ This leads to the assumption that the position was granted on a temporary basis: it was not inherited for life, but was transferred among the members of the Zhwa.lu family. Other examples of this do exist, and will be discussed below.

The date of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's final resignation of sku.zhang powers does not seem to be the subject of controversy. No mention of him as sku.zhang is made in the *bsTan.gyur dkar.chag* (the catalogue of Bu.ston rin.po.che's final edition of the *bsTan.gyur*, accomplished by him at Zhwa.lu). In its opening section, the work describes the events which took place during the preparation of the work, and the patrons involved in the project. The catalogue was written between 8th and 12th months of the wood-dog year (approx. Oct. 1334-Feb. 1335), when Kun.dga' don.grub was already Zhwa.lu sku.zhang.¹⁴⁵ Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan must have relinquished his position to Kun.dga' don.grub before that date. The description of a chapel in the gSer.khang which contained a statue in honour of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan¹⁴⁶ reconfirms that he had left the active rulership of Zhwa.lu, since the chapel was built by sku.zhang Kun.dga' don.grub and Bu.ston rin.po.che during the time when the new edition of the *bsTan.gyur* was being prepared, as an act of homage to the previous sku.zhang, in the same way that mGon.po.dpal had dedicated an image to his father A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes in the sGo.gsum lha.khang, after he had become the secular lord of Zhwa.lu.

Kun.dga' don.grub succeeded with Bu.ston rin.po.che as abbot; a more precise indication of his appointment as sku.zhang can be found in the *Bu.ston rin.po.che nam.thar*.¹⁴⁷ The text claims that Bu.ston rin.po.che twice had a vision of the great Sa.skya master rJe.btsun Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan (1147-1216), [not to be confused with Zhwa.lu sku.zhang Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan], in the water-monkey year 1332, shortly before mentioning the succession of Kun.dga' don.grub. In the light of this, I am inclined to conclusively fix Kun.dga' don.grub's accession in water-bird 1333. This could well be the bird year quoted as his accession date in *Zha.lu Document X*, issued in favour of sku.zhang Kun.dga' don.grub, though the fact that the name of the current Ti.shri is not given in that source prevents confirmation.¹⁴⁸

After his elevation to sku.zhang, Kun.dga' don.grub was responsible for another phase of chapel consecration at the gSer.khang which, following Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's building activities, brought the temple to its final form. This phase was completed by the beginning of the wood-pig year 1335,

when the volumes of the conclusive edition of the *bsTan. gyur* prepared by Bu.ston rin.po.che were installed with grand ceremony in a temple built for the purpose: the *bsTan. gyur lha.khang*.¹⁴⁹ However, this further phase was much more extensive than a single chapel, and will be discussed below with Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's work, of which it constituted the ideal completion.¹⁵⁰

Inscriptions for the mystical cycles painted in the chapels dictated by Bu.ston rin.po.che in person contain the name of another son of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan who worked on them with his brother Kun.dga' don.grub, though his contribution is forgotten by most sources. Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan is credited by the sources as having had seven children, daughters as well as sons, of whom six names are recorded.¹⁵¹ The seventh is remembered only in Bu.ston rin.po.che's inscriptions,¹⁵² his name being bSod.nams dpal.yon. The epigraphs suggest that he was a monk, and his contribution to the greatness of Zhwa.lu should be remembered here.

A new two-fold trend is discernable with regard to sponsorship during the rule of Kun.dga' don.grub. On the one hand, Sa.skya.pa favour at the Yüan court was in decline and new local lords were starting to patronize Zhwa.lu, on the other patronage was no longer attracted in the name of the secular sku.zhang, but in that of the religious master Bu.ston rin.po.che. The new emperors of Yüan China started to favour eminent masters as well as the Sa.skya.pa Ti.shri. The trend was introduced at the time of the emperor Khu.lug (r.1308-1311) and continued by Tho.gon The.mur (r.1333-1368), who respectively invited to court Chos.sku 'od.zer and the third Karma.pa Rang.'byung rdo.rje (1284-1338).¹⁵³ Tho.gon The.mur took personal interest in Bu.ston rin.po.che¹⁵⁴ after Rang.'byung rdo.rje's untimely death, and invited the Zhwa.lu abbot in the wood-monkey year 1344—an attempt which met with no success—according to the *Bu.ston rin.po.che nam.thar*.¹⁵⁵ The edict contained in *Zha.lu Document IX*¹⁵⁶ represents acquiescence to Bu.ston rin.po.che's refusal to accept the invitation, and poses two problems. The first pertains to the date of the imperial invitation. As noted, the *nam.mthar* says that it took place in 1344, but the edict states a sheep year, which would seem to be the preceding water-sheep year 1343. I believe the edict, as an official document, should be given the greater credence. The second problem concerns the tone of acquiescent acceptance of the refusal, which is in striking contrast to the tone of imperial command used by the same emperor in the invitation extended to Rang.'byung rdo.rje more than a decade earlier.¹⁵⁷ This consideration moves me to envisage the possibility that the edict, whose signatory's name is defaced, was issued by a high ranking official rather than the emperor himself. The reasons for the refusal given by Bu.ston rin.po.che, that he was unable to move due to his scholarly and monastic commitments, may hide deeper concerns in a period when the power of the Sa.skya.pa (as well as of the Zhwa.lu.pa) was on the wane: a feeling of dissent because of the preference the emperor had accorded to other sects may also have been present. However, more than anything else, it is quite possible that Bu.ston rin.po.che simply had no desire or intention of becoming a court teacher.

In addition to the interest shown by Tho.gon The.mur, Bu.ston rin.po.che received the constant care and support of a lord of a considerably lesser status called bSod.nams.lde, who became the king of Ya.rtse (a provincial kingdom on the border between West Tibet and West Nepal) under the name Punyamalla.¹⁵⁸ Before becoming a ruler in the western Himalayas (he was king of sPu.rang prior to his enthronement as king of Ya.rtse), he was a follower of the Sa.skya.pa tradition, and had been to gTsang.¹⁵⁹ In the *Bu.ston rin.po.che nam.thar*, mention is made about exchanges of letters between Punyamalla and Bu.ston rin.po.che. The first instance occurred soon before Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan was succeeded by Kun.dga' don.grub in 1333. In it, Punyamalla is still addressed as bSod.nams.lde, and there is no indication that he was yet king of Ya.rtse. The second instance is recorded after he had become king of Ya.rtse, and he is referred to as Punyamalla.¹⁶⁰ One of Bu.ston rin.po.che's replies to him is preserved in the master's collected works, and dates from earth-hare 1339.¹⁶¹

The period, in the case of Tho.gon The.mur, and the type, in the case of Punyamalla, of these royal patronages indicates that neither were conducive to the renovation of the gSer.khang. Kun.dga' don.grub's phase would still seem to be a continuation of the effort undertaken by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan: in Bu.ston rin.po.che's own words, he brought to completion the project undertaken by his father.¹⁶²

Kun.dga' don.grub left the post of sku.zhang to his step-brother from another of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's wives,¹⁶³ Ye.shes kun.dga', and went to Hor.yul.¹⁶⁴ This move further confirms the fact

that the role of sku.zhang was held on a temporary basis, and transferred among the members of the family. The abbot at this time was still Bu.ston rin.po.che, who held the see under three successive sku.zhang: Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan, Kun.dga' don.grub and Ye.shes kun.dga'. The date when Kun.dga' don.grub renounced his powers is not clear. In Bu.ston rin.po.che's letter to Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan, Kun.dga' don.grub is addressed as the ruling Zhwa.lu sku.zhang. The letter was written in a horse year¹⁶⁵ which, since it fell during the reign of Kun.dga' don.grub, could be either 1342 or 1354. From the mode of address Bu.ston rin.po.che employs for Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan, it would appear that the latter had accomplished the conquest of gTsang at the expense of the Sa.skya.pa-s, a consideration that led Prof. Tucci to conclude that the year in question was wood-horse 1354.¹⁶⁶ Kun.dga' don.grub possibly became displeased with the turn of political events, since Sa.skya.pa power was initially undermined and finally disrupted by Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan in 1354. Bu.ston rin.po.che records the humiliation the sku.zhang had to suffer in his letter.¹⁶⁷ For these reasons, I would tentatively place Kun.dga' don.grub's abdication at around 1355. Ye.shes kun.dga' did not meet with the political difficulties that his predecessor had had to face in the last years of his rule. Although Zhwa.lu's position remained precarious after the newly established ascendancy of the Phag.mo.gru.pa-s, and in spite of the fact that Ye.shes kun.dga' himself was considered unreliable and obstinate by the new lord of Tibet, he was personally protected by Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan, who saw in the Zhwa.lu sku.zhang a lineage of princes who were to be revered, and not harmed.¹⁶⁸

Under Ye.shes kun.dga', a statue of Mi.khrug.pa was made, some decaying wall-paintings were renovated, and murals were painted on external galleries.¹⁶⁹ Thus the final minor touches were given to Zhwa.lu's main temple: the gSer.khang had already been brought to its definitive shape.

Artistic exchanges between Sa.skya, the Kathmandu valley and the Yüan court

There are certain background factors which, although not directly concerned with Zhwa.lu itself, are helpful to understanding the circumstances under which the gSer.khang was greatly renovated and expanded by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan. When Se.chen rgyal.po [Khubilai khan] proclaimed himself great khan of the Mongols in 1260, a reform in the concept of the Mongol rulership took place. He accepted the formula devised for him by the young Sa.skya.pa monk 'Phags.pa, who legitimized his power by deifying his lineage and defining him as a *Chakravartin* [universal monarch], entitled to rule over a vast empire composed of an array of different ethnic peoples. The *yon.mchod* [spiritual master-imperial patron] relation was thus born, and the Sa.skya.pa lamas were appointed as religious advisors of the emperor with influence also in temporal affairs.¹⁷⁰ In my view the new formula suited Se.chen well, not only with regard to relations with his foreign subjects, but also in his claims to be the overlord of all the Mongol clans, some of which disputed his appointment. The preference that Se.chen accorded to 'Phags.pa, in place of Karma Pakshi (who had abandoned him in 1258 to go to the court of the by then emperor Mon.gor [Mongkal]) highlights, in my opinion, his interest in *real politik* rather than Karma.pa miracles. With the *yon.mchod* relationship coupled with the *Chakravartin* notion, a global strategy for the whole empire was conceived.

In the same year, iron-monkey 1260, an act of munificence by the emperor is recorded in favour of 'Phags.pa and his monastery of Sa.skya.¹⁷¹ The event is well-known, and was instrumental to the invitation of a delegation of eighty artists from the Kathmandu valley to work at Sa.skya. Although fully independent of the Mongol empire, the Newar king, Jayabhimadeva, probably felt compelled to accede to 'Phags.pa's request out of respect and fear for his mighty patron's power. 'Phags.pa's choice in inviting Newar artists does not come as a surprise in the light of the high esteem in which artists from the Kathmandu valley were held by the Tibetans in that period. An example of such esteem, among others, can be found in the *Myang chos. 'byung*, where it is mentioned that Pad.ma.can, a master from Thar.pa.gling (in the vicinity of Zhwa.lu and also not far from Sa.skya), who belonged to the same lineage as one of the Kha.che pan.chens' disciples, had a *torana* made in Nepal for a Bodhisattva statue housed at his temple, around the same time as 'Phags.pa's request.¹⁷² The head of the delegation of Newar artists was the precocious genius Aniko (1244-1306), who was seventeen years old when he reached Sa.skya in iron-bird 1261.¹⁷³ The structure which Se.chen rgyal.po ordered

'Phags.pa to build is identified as a *stupa* by Prof. Petech, and as a golden pagoda by Sylvain Lévi before him.¹⁷⁴ Yet there is no record of the construction of a *stupa* among the building activities at Sa.skya during that precise period in the *Sa.skya gdung.rabs*. Instead, this source records in the water-dog year 1262, the building of the *gSer.thog* (a temple with a golden roof, which could well have been a golden pagoda) of the *dBu.rtse rmying.ma*, one of the oldest religious buildings at Sa.skya.¹⁷⁵ It is less than sure that the edifice built by Aniko was the *gSer.thog*, and not a *stupa*. Nevertheless, the mention of its construction for the year after Aniko's arrival at Sa.skya seems to be more than a simple coincidence, particularly in the light of Aniko's words to Se.chen upon reaching the Yüan capital, when he said that he had accomplished the task assigned to him at Sa.skya in two years (1261-1262).¹⁷⁶ This period corresponds exactly to that of the construction of the *gSer.thog*.

Aniko, then, was at court in 1263. The sources tell us that 'Phags.pa invited Aniko to go to China because he was amazed by his virtuosity. In my view, 'Phags.pa's move was compelled by more practical considerations in respect of the events taking place in those years at the Yüan court. When Se.chen rgyal.po devised the notion of addressing himself to his subjects as *Chakravartin*, the traditional Mongol nomadic way of life was ill-suited to the concept of a universal monarch, so they settled, thereby transforming the Mongol empire into the Yüan dynasty of China.¹⁷⁷ The foundations of Se.chen rgyal.po's new capital were laid at T'ai-tu in 1267, a few years after Aniko had joined the Mongol court,¹⁷⁸ and subjects of all nationalities were called to take part in the construction of the seat of the *Chakravartin*. Even before he became emperor of China, Se.chen rgyal.po had encouraged sedentary projects: a preliminary capital, which later became the summer capital Shang-tu, was built in 1256.¹⁷⁹ The employment of non-Chinese in all ranks of the civil and religious organs of the state was politically motivated to counter-balance the overwhelming Chinese predominance in the bureaucracy and government.¹⁸⁰ Aniko's summons to China came amidst this ambitious fervour for new works and projects, in which all the peoples of the empire were making their contribution to the the birth of the Yüan state. In the young Newar artist 'Phags.pa had a candidate to play a significant role in the eyes of the court, and gain favour for the Tibetan side.

The story of Aniko's increasing good fortune at the Yüan court is a well-known one, and I intend only to briefly summarize it here. He worked at both Yüan capitals. At T'ai-tu he built the Ta-hu-kuo-jen-wang ssu temple, and a pavillion in its grounds, while he also worked on a temple at Shang-tu, and constructed an ancestral temple at Cho-chu.¹⁸¹ In 1274 he was appointed general director of all works in bronze, and in 1278 controller of the imperial manufacturers.¹⁸² Aniko's fame did not diminish during the reign of Ol.ja.du, the sponsor of the Zhwa.lu *gSer.khang*. In 1299, he was commissioned to create one hundred and ninety-one statues and sixty-four painted panels for the temple of Bei-tu; in 1304 he was assigned the task of preparing images for the temple of Sanqing dian and to repair some that had decayed—one hundred and eighty-one statues in all; in 1305, he was ordered to cast copper images of Avalokiteshvara, Amitabha and four other Buddhas.¹⁸³

Aniko may have worked on some of the religious institutions built at the capital by the different Sa.skya Ti.shri recorded in the sources. The second Ti.shri, Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan (r.1276-1279), built a residence near the palace of T'ai-tu for the community of Tibetan monks, thus before 1279.¹⁸⁴ The *Sa.skya gdun.rabs* affirms that Dharmapalarakshita erected a *gtsug.lag.khang* at the capital to house the crystal *stupa* containing 'Phags.pa's relics.¹⁸⁵ The same passage states that he was at court for a total of five years after leaving Sa.skya for the capital in iron-snake 1281, returning to his ancestral see where he found an untimely death in 1287. The construction of the monk's complex must have taken place between 1282 and 1286. The building programmes of both Ti.shri fell in a period when Aniko was active, and because of his relationship with the Sa.skya.pa, he may well have been involved in them.

Aniko described himself as a master of painting, metal casting, and the techniques of textiles and portraiture.¹⁸⁶ His skills were instrumental in the birth of an art school at court: a fact that will be seen to be particularly noteworthy with regard to Zhwa.lu. He had a number of disciples, three of whom have been recorded for posterity: his two sons Asengko and Ashula, and the Chinese artist Liu Yüan.¹⁸⁷ Asengko in particular followed in his father's footsteps, and is known to have taken part in at least two projects involving temples at the capital: in 1310 he made cast and clay images, and in 1313 he worked on other Buddhist images.¹⁸⁸ According to his biography, Liu Yüan was a disciple of Aniko



Plate 47 Zhwa.lu gSer.khang built between 1027 and 1045 by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas. The temple underwent a thorough expansion and renovation, mainly accomplished by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan, after 1306.



Plate 48 Wall painting from the north wing of the mgon.khang (after 1306), depicting Phyag.na rdo.rje and dragons.



Plate 49 Detail of a Guardian King from the north wing of the mgon.khang.



Plates 50 & 51 Details of attendants from the south wing of the mgon.khang. The mural was repainted over an ancient one (c.1045) by artists summoned by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan after 1306.





Plate 52 Detail of a coracle from the great skor.lam (processional corridor) on the ground floor (after 1306). The wall paintings illustrate the Buddha's hundred deeds.



Plate 53 Detail of a royal scene from the ground floor's skor.lam. The murals were painted under the supervision of the third Karma.pa, Rang.byung rdo.rje (after 1306).



Plate 54 Water meadow from the ground floor skor.lam.



Plate 55 A procession from the ground floor skor.lam. Court personages are portrayed in distinctive Yüan fashion.



Plate 56 Nagaraja with a flamboyant tree in the background, from the ground floor skor.lam.



Plate 57 Yüan architecture with tile roofs similar to those of the Zhwa.lu gSer.khang, from the ground floor skor.lam.



Plate 58 Upper part of a court scene, with Newar dancers, from the ground floor skor.lam.



Plate 59 Lower part of the same court scene of plate 58.



Plate 60 Monks on the outer wall of the skor.lam outside the Yum.chen.mo chapel, renovated by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan after 1306, on the gSer.khang's middle floor, east wing.



Plate 61 Detail of attendant Bodhisattvas on the outer wall from the skor.lam outside the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 62 Part of a scene depicting the worship of Shakyamuni, painted in the mgon.khang's south wing (after 1306).



Plate 63 A main Shakyamuni image, part of a paradise on the outer wall of the skor.lam surrounding the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 64 A diminutive seated Buddha, and a devotee wearing a garment with wings as those of Newar Garudas. From outer wall of the skor.lam around the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 65 An Indian siddha surrounded by other sadhus, part of narrative scenes depicting the Ma.ga.dha bzang.mo, on the outer wall of the skor.lam surrounding the Yum.chen.mo chapel.

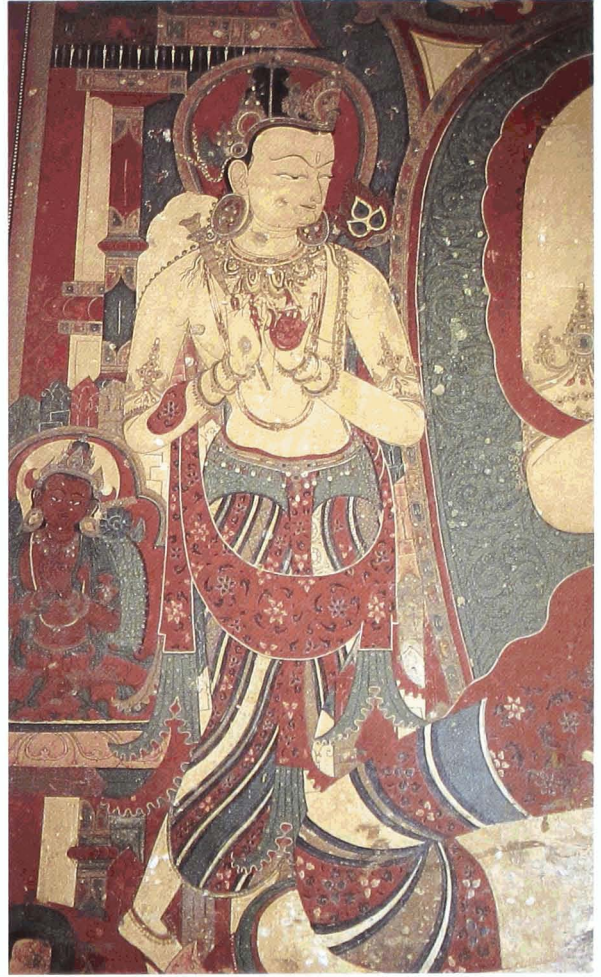


Plate 66 A flanking Bodhisattva on the inner wall, signed by the artist 'Chims.pa bSod.nams 'bum. From the skor.lam encircling the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 67 Detail of a main image on the inner wall of skor.lam around the Yum.chen.mo chapel, signed by 'Chims.pa bSod.nams 'bum and portraying rNam.par snang.mdzad (Vairochana).

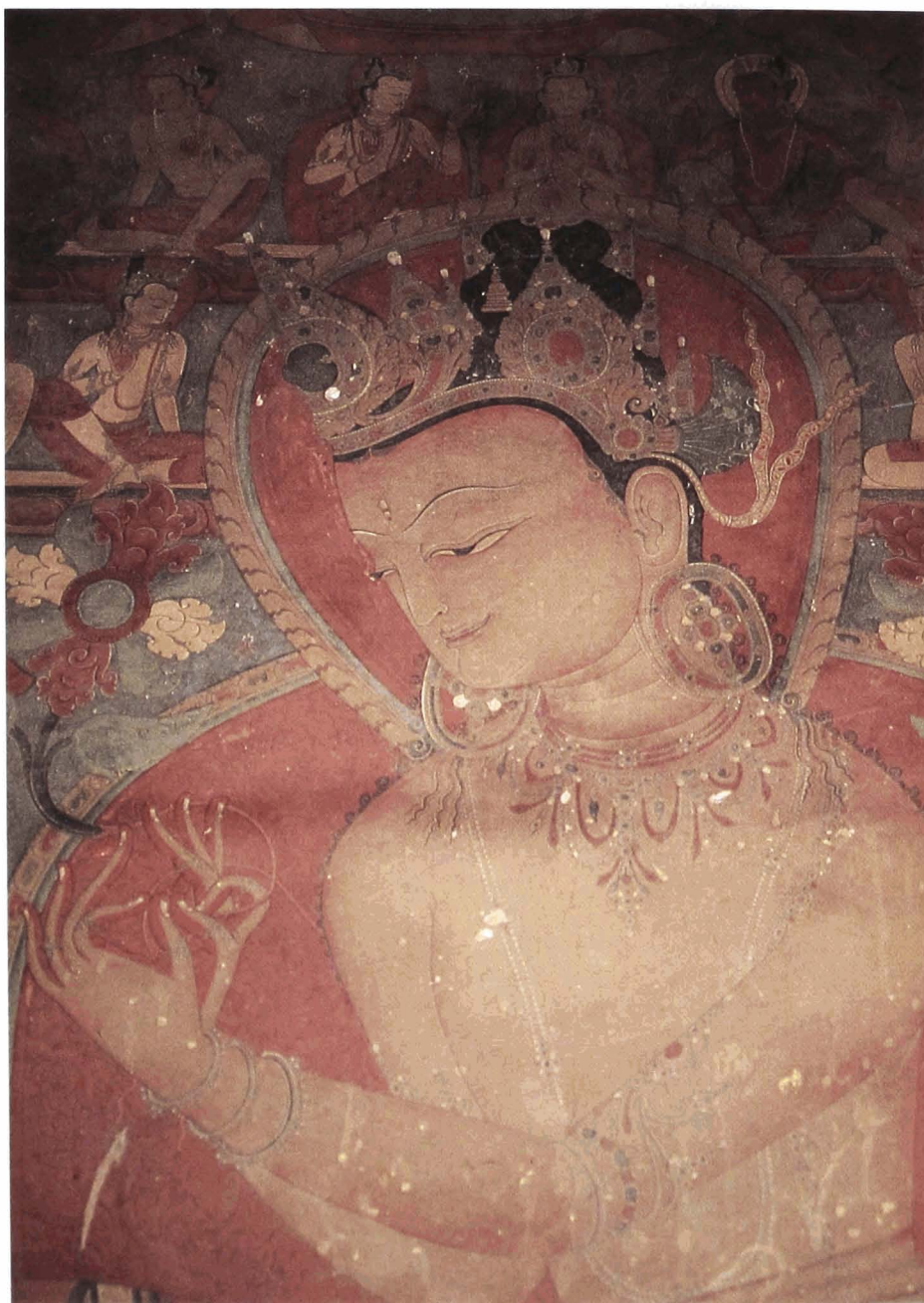


Plate 68 Detail of two Bodhisattvas facing each other on the inner wall. Signed by 'Chims.pa bSod.nams 'bum. From the skor.lam outside the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 69 A main Akshobhya image. Yum.chen.mo chapel, inner wall of the skor.lam.



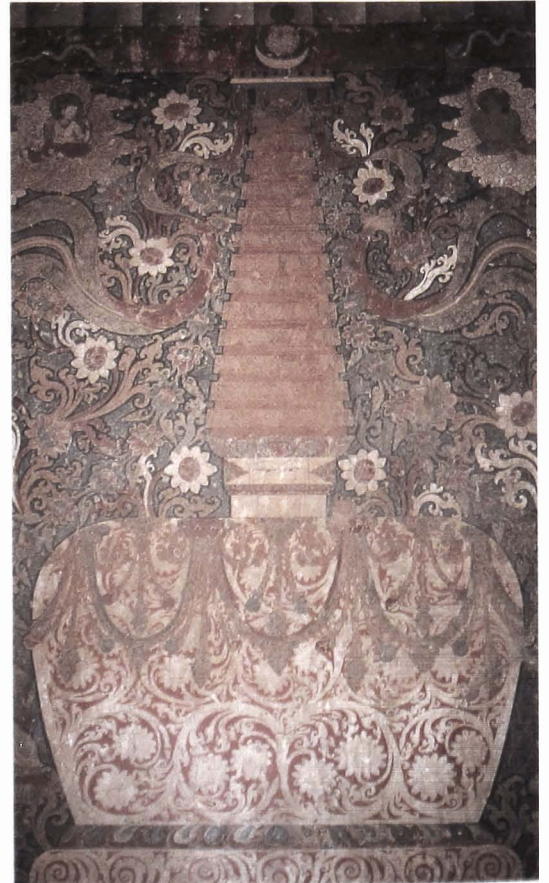
Plate 70 A main Mañjushri image on the inner wall of the skor.lam surrounding the Yum.chen.mo chapel.



Plate 71 Ratnasambhava from the bSe.sgo.ma (the chapel with its door covered by a rhino skin) or bKa'.gyur lha.khang, built by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan after 1306. gSer.khang ground floor, south wing. The chapel houses murals of the Rigs.Inga (Five Tathagatas).



Plate 72 Vairocana from the bSe.sgo.ma or bKa!'gyur lha.khang.



Plates 73 & 74 A Lokeshvara and a stupa amidst floral and clouds decorations in the skor.lam around the bsTan.'gyur lha.khang, east pavillion, top floor. The works of art in this pavillion date to 1333-1335 and were commissioned by Kun.dga' don.grub under the supervision of Bu.ston rin.po.che.

and is described as a follower of the 'Western style of image-making'.¹⁸⁹ The indication of the existence of such a style is particularly relevant, as it seems to imply that not only had Aniko's idiom developed into a recognized school of art, but also that the style maintained its Newar features.

Examples of the Yüan court's Newar school of art are still extant in China. The Fei-lai-feng site preserves some distinctively Newar-style rock carvings,¹⁹⁰ which are accompanied by an inscription dating the works to 1292, and recalling the munificence of Yang Lien-chen-chia (=Rin.chen skyabs?). The donor was a well-known official of the court of possible Tibetan or Tangut origin, who was posted in the area of Hang-chow, where Fei-lai-feng is located. Yang was a bold supporter of Buddhism at the expense of Taoist institutes, against which he committed a series of crimes until he was finally dismissed.¹⁹¹ When compared to other rock carvings at Fei-lai-feng which were executed in the Chinese idiom and dated by inscriptions to 1282, the 1292 carvings testify that a Newar style was chosen in place of the local idiom, and that it had expanded beyond the boundaries of the two capitals. This is confirmed by the Hang-chow block-prints of the Tangut *Tripitaka*, which was under preparation in the same area where Yang was active. In some of the block-prints, particularly in one dating to 1301, the Newar style of the Yüan court is adopted, while in others a more Chinese rendition is preferred.¹⁹² Yang's affiliation to the Tibetans at the court may account for his patronage of Aniko's workshop. In spite of his disgrace in 1291,¹⁹³ the date of the Fei-lai-feng rock carvings raises the question as to whether Yang was completely out of touch after his fall, particularly in his one-time fief of Hang-chow.

Finally, I wish to consider some Newar manuscripts, book covers, thang.kas and at least one dated miniature bronze. These far from extensive remains could well represent specimens of a roughly contemporary and indigenous Newar idiom, to which Aniko's art originally belonged. On stylistic evidence, their style probably constituted the starting point for the development of Aniko's idiom which, while highly individual, nevertheless always remained close to its roots. During the reign of the Newar king Anantamalla (1274-1310), a small number of manuscripts and wooden book covers found their way to Tibet. They were discovered during this century by the Indian pandita Rahulji Sankrityayana in the monasteries of Zhwa.lu, Sa.skya and Ngor. Some plates published by him depict Newar-style illuminations which seem to be antecedents of the Fei-lai-feng carvings and Hang-chow block-prints,¹⁹⁴ and may have been produced during Anantamalla's reign. The bronze portrays Vighnantaka and dates to 1297, and again displays characteristics that were transferred to the Newar-style works in China. Similarly, several thang.kas possess elements that suggest they may have been a source for the art style at the Yüan court.¹⁹⁵

In the year 1306, Aniko died at the Yüan court, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan went to the capital to be appointed as Zhwa.lu sku.zhang, and arrangements were made at court to fulfil his ambitious plan to expand the gSer.khang. Obviously, Aniko himself could not have had a direct hand in them, but his disciples, trained in the Newar style of the Yüan court, did.

The 14th century renovation and expansion of the gSer.khang

Tibetan literary sources affirm that having secured Ol.ja.du's patronage in order to fulfil his project to expand and embellish the gSer.khang, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan was able to summon artists from rGya.Hor for that purpose.¹⁹⁶ The identity of these artists is crucial to understanding Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's phase of art at the gSer.khang. 'rGya.Hor' is a term used for the Mongols of China, and is best translated as 'Yüan dynasty'. Other examples of the term 'rGya.Hor' used in connection with Se.chen rgyal.po, founder of the Yüan dynasty, are extant in the sources.¹⁹⁷ It can be understood, therefore, that the artists invited to Zhwa.lu by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan were from the Yüan court: evidence of Ol.ja.du's personal patronage and encouragement of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan when the latter was at his capital. The possibility that the artists accompanied the Zhwa.lu sku.zhang on his return to Tibet should not be excluded, though this is by no means certain.

The dominant Lamaist art school at the Yüan court, referred to in Chinese literature as the 'Western school of image-making', was that of Aniko and his disciples. A Tibetan source dealing with the

gSer.khang, defines those works of art in an area of the temple that has to be definitely attributed to Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan as being made in the Newar style.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the lamaist artists employed by the Yüan court worked in the Newar idiom. The contradiction is obviously only illusory, since the artists trained in the Newar style of the Yüan court were disciples of Aniko's workshop, no longer necessarily only Newar as mentioned earlier, but of various nationalities. Whether the archaeological evidence in the gSer.khang confirms these literary statements will be considered below, but I first wish to introduce an outline of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's building phase.

With his expansion and renovation, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan accomplished a veritable structural *tour de force*. All sources attribute to him the overall architectural plan of the temple, comprising the four pavillions at the cardinal points, with their tiled roofs, and the enlargement of the gSer.khang on the ground floor, with its superb wall paintings in 'one hundred and one colours'.¹⁹⁹ He built the entire south wing, placing the bSe.sgo.ma chapel [=bKa'.gyur lha.khang] there. The chapel derives its first name from the door covered by rhinoceros skin at its entrance, while its other name comes from the fact that the Zhwa.lu sku.zhang housed a *bKa'.gyur* collection there, which was written in gold and other precious materials. The rhino skin was painted with the images of the Buddhas of the Golden Age, and was one of the many marvels of the temple. Sadly, today the door is lost, but the interior wall paintings are magnificently preserved. The bSe.sgo.ma chapel once contained statues of the Buddhas of the Three Times [Dus.gsum sangs.rgyas] in gilt copper made according to literary sources by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas, but they are no longer extant.²⁰⁰ These literary references envisage that the images were moved from some other pre-existing chapel, but I am not in a position to say from where.

Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan built a great skor.lam [processional corridor] of remarkable dimensions decorated with a long theory of narrative scenes. These murals remain in good condition to this day, and portray the hundred deeds of Shakyamuni Buddha.²⁰¹ The skor.lam encircles the entire south, west and north wings, which respectively contained the newly built bSe.sgo.ma chapel, the ancient twin chapels constituting the gSer.khang sanctum, and the sGo.gsum chapel built by sku.zhang mGon.po dpal.

As noted in the early part of the chapter, he constructed the mgon.khang in the east wing utilizing the ancient walls built during lCe.btsun's time. It was dedicated to rNam.thos.sras [Vaishnavana], which appears to confirm claims in the sources that Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan considered himself a manifestation of that deity.²⁰² As stated above, the mgon.khang murals are partially preserved, while the statues have been lost. In the middle storey [bar.khang] of the east wing, Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan renovated the Yum.chen.mo lha.khang, which had been built by his ancestor lCe.btsun. This chapel used to contain a four-armed statue of Yum.chen.mo surrounded by the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions in flowing dresses, but still surviving on the external skor.lam are the paintings of deities about one floor in height, as well as narrative scenes of the Ma.ga.dha bzang.mo [Sumagadhavadana].²⁰³

Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan built the top floors of all the wings, thereby creating four pavillions: the south, west and north pavillions were two-storeyed, while the east pavillion with its bar.khang [p.91] had three levels. He had the roofs and glazed tiles for each storey of all the pavillions made in a style uncommon to Tibet, recognized in the sources as being Chinese.²⁰⁴ Yet, the fact that no traces of his munificence remain in the interiors of the top floors of the four pavillions, either *in situ* or in the sources, indicates that he did not fulfil all of his plans for them, and the project was left incomplete.

The works of art placed in various parts of the gSer.khang by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan that have survived to the present time, are all murals, providing a welcome basis for a stylistic analysis.²⁰⁵ Turning first to the art in the great skor.lam, the area of Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's renovation where the paintings are indicated in the sources to be in Newar style, the scenes painted on the walls portray refreshing sketches of religious and secular life with an inventiveness and inspiration seldom encountered in Tibet. They are divided into frames and rows of images, in accordance with a tradition found in Newar art, yet the spatial arrangement demonstrates a fluidity and freedom which suggests a progressive abandonment of the typically rigid Newar form. Inside the frames a wide array of ethnic

peoples, crafts, architectural forms, varieties of indigenous and fantastic animals and landscapes appear. From the widest perspective they represent curious observations of daily life and lively narratives of mythical lands. Yet the complexity of the representations can be reduced to two basic sources of inspiration: Nepal (the Kathmandu valley), and Yüan China. The Newar elements can be found in the landscapes, with their geometrical rocks, their rivers [pl.52], gorges, and banana trees; also in the Newar pavillions and *stupas*; the Nagarajas [pl.56], brahmins, dark skinned *sadhuis* and *yogis* in meditation caves, peasants, noblemen and women [pls.58,59]; and in certain clothing, instruments such as tablas, and fans. The influences of Yüan China are to be found in the bearded dignitaries wearing flowing robes, small black caps and white pleated gowns held at the waist by belts [pl.53]; Yüan court scenes and processions [pl.55]; Yüan palaces and pavillions with latticed windows, tiled roofs [pl.57] and dragons on the walls and fittings; various implements such as vases and fans; Mongol warriors and dignitaries, as well as other Central Asian characters, and the presence of camels. The artists' intimate exposure to the most mundane aspects of the cultures of the two countries, and their detailed knowledge of their manifestations is visible proof that the masters who worked on the murals belonged to the workshop at the Yüan court that was trained in Newar art. Moreover, wherever figures dressed in the Yüan fashion are represented, though effectively characterized by Yüan clothing and artifacts, they retain distinctive Newar features and physiognomic traits. The exceptions are the occasional Chinese-Central Asian portraits. To paraphrase the Chinese definition, the 'Western school of image-making' is the cohesive element of the murals and takes the leading role, while the Yüan stylistic features are mainly used to add minor details, such as decorations and ethnic characteristics.²⁰⁶

Another literary reference concerning the great skor.lam is relevant to understanding the circumstances of Gags.pa rgyal.mtshan's expansion of the gSer.khang. The third Karma.pa, Rang.byung rdo.rje (1284-1338), is credited with having supervised the art works in the great skor.lam.²⁰⁷ Even if the unanimous evidence of all the sources is considered insufficient evidence, the fact that Bu.ston rin.po.che is quoted as having instructed that narrative scenes, similar in genre to those of the great skor.lam, be painted in a Zhwa.lu chapel other than those built by Gags.pa rgyal.mtshan²⁰⁸ indirectly proves that the latter actually carried out his renovations before the arrival of Bu.ston rin.po.che at Zhwa.lu. Karma.pa Rang.byung rdo.rje, a brilliant leading master of his time, is not credited in his biographies with any stay at Zhwa.lu.²⁰⁹ A hint that he was physically present in the area of Zhwa.lu is provided by reference to a sojourn at the meditation cave at Thar.pa in the close vicinity of Zhwa.lu.²¹⁰ The practice of inviting the most eminent living masters of his time to Zhwa.lu, later adopted by Gags.pa rgyal.mtshan with Bu.ston rin.po.che, had already been experimented with in the case of Rang.byung rdo.rje. It is no more than a possibility that Gags.pa rgyal.mtshan's ties to the Tshal.pa-s, to whom he was related on his wife's side, may have been conducive to placing him in contact with the Karma.pa. Both the Tshal.pa and Karma.pa were sub-sects of the same bKa'.rgyud.pa sect, and in his youth at roughly the time he was involved with Zhwa.lu, Rang.byung rdo.rje was a disciple of Tshal.pa Si.dhu chos.rje.²¹¹

The murals contained in the corridor of the Yum.chen.mo chapel offer the best example to ascertain the chief characteristics of the Newar style born at the Yüan court, since they include traditional images of deities. The most notable invention of the style is the adoption of elliptical lines to depict the heads and bodies of the peaceful deities [pls.63,69], a device that confers dynamism to the paintings, while respecting the calm of the peaceful deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. A further distinguishing feature compared to the original Newar style lies in the use of a different colour palette, in which transparent, sometimes brilliant other times soft hues of light blue and red, cream and pale green are employed at the expenses of the more typically Newar rich, deep tones. A third innovation was the use of a new spatial arrangement based on landscape and attention to lively details, which is predominantly encountered in the scenes of daily life, though also found in the religious paintings. Examples, which include the presence of voluminous, rounded trees with intricate masses of foliage outlined by thin contour lines in black that give them a three-dimensional appearance, are a concession to expressive freedom which, judging by their works, has motivated Zhwa.lu's own artists.²¹² The predominance accorded to clouds as decorative motifs in classical Chinese painting has been fully accepted by the artists of the Newar style of the Yüan court, yet the

veritable array of patterns and shapes, ranging from 'clouds of smoke' to geometrical structures, exemplifies the artists' personal inventiveness. The richness of the Buddhas' robes, with their decorated edges in geometrical or brocaded patterns, and the occasional contrast in colour between the inside and outside of the robes coupled with their general conception—though less flowing than the originals—represent absorptions of Yüan features.²¹⁵

The most evident features of the style as regards anthropomorphic representations consist of elliptical contours, particularly in the heart-shaped heads and the torsos, as said earlier; fairly close curvilinear eyes; long, subtle noses, sometimes marked with double vertical lines; diminutive mouths; slim ears with very long earlobes; minimal hair thickness; imposing sloping shoulders; thin arms; and elongated standing Bodhisattvas which contrast with their well-articulated faces.

The influence of the original Newar prototypes can still be felt among the characteristics of the Newar style of the Yüan court. The division of narratives into frames still occurs in some cases, though in a less rigid and intrusive manner. Pala-type crowns, long adopted by the Newar tradition; composite *toranas*; medallioned decorations filling the whole space in the deities' background; simple lotus designs with petals in contrasting colours; ribbons and fan-like decoration at the temples; winged garments of minor images [pl.64] recalling Newar Garudas are all definite features of this surviving stylistic identity. However, in spite of these resemblances to the root style, the added possibilities which the Newar style of the Yüan court brought to the creativity of the artists gave them the possibility to express themselves in some aesthetic variations which constituted the fundamental vocabulary of their art.

The internal wall of the skor.lam of the Yum.chen.mo chapel is conceived as a series of individual deities flanked by Bodhisattvas. Some of these paintings bear inscriptions which are of considerable importance in that some include the name of the artist who painted these images, given as mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum. The clan appellative 'mChims.pa' indicates the artist could only have been a Tibetan, certifying that at this time of conspicuous Sa.skya.pa presence at the Yüan capital, Tibetans were trained in Aniko's court workshop.²¹⁴ The fact that the literary sources stress that artists were summoned from Yüan China to Zhwa.lu reinforces the evidence that mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum was a member of the Yüan court workshop. Hence, a Tibetan painter has to be added to the ranks of Aniko's more well-known Newar and Chinese followers. While it is feasible that the works of Asengko or Liu Yüan have disappeared, the walls of Zhwa.lu offer us a unique example of art in the Aniko style by mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum which is entrusted to posterity.

The signed paintings of bSod.nams 'bum are images of Jam.dpal.dbyangs [Mañjushri] and Byams.pa [Maitreya] facing each other in a mystical conversation [pl.68], an image of Shakyamuni, one of rNam.par snang.mdzad [Vairocana] [pls.66,67], another Shakyamuni and a sMan.bla [Bhaishajyagurul]. However, identical details and recurring stylistic affinities prove that mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum painted the whole internal wall of the skor.lam, even though many of the works are unsigned. On the basis of the stylistic evidence borne by the signed works, bSod.nams 'bum made full use of the expressive potential of his school. His paintings display different stylistic variations on the main body of the Yüan court's Newar idiom as outlined above. These variations, while retaining the characteristic features of the style, introduced subtle differences, classified below in increasing degrees of affinity to the original Newar prototypes: from those variations closest to the idiom of Aniko's workshop, to those closest to the original Newar style.

While the two paintings of Shakyamuni were made according to the main corpus of the style, the first variation (the closest to it) is exemplified by the two facing Bodhisattvas [pl.68]. The latter figures display unique elements: sweet, plain faces without the usual elliptical lines; exceptionally small noses; large eye sockets; prominent jaws; smaller shoulders; crowns with sun and moon motifs; and large circular earrings. An unsigned painting of Mañjushri [pl.70], also executed with the same stylistic variations, is flanked by Bodhisattvas with the sweet, plain faces mentioned above, but in a stiff, frontal position and surprisingly rigid-looking legs.

The second variation is exemplified by the paintings of sMan.bla and rNam.par snang.mdzad [pls.66,67]. Its most apparent characteristic is the use of subdued, restrained colours—neutral tones of dark red, white and dark green which contrast with the rich, deep colours of the Newar prototypes. In portrait, the elliptical lines of the basic style no longer predominate in the faces, becoming rounded,

with wider nostrils; while in profile, the facial features are dramatically outlined: bulging eyes, pointed chins and aquiline noses. This variation also has an accent on decoration, characterised by a profusion of necklaces, armlets and bracelets, and ornate *dbolis*.

The third variation is exemplified by an unsigned rendition of 'Tshe.dpag.med [Amitayus] that may well have been by mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum since it is again on the wall with murals signed by him, and is closest to original Newar art. It retains most of the features of the second variation, but adds several purely Newar elements—not only the choice of colours, but the rounder faces of the deities, the stance of the standing Bodhisattvas, the rich, yet sober decorations, and the *toranas*, where the tails of mythical animals evolve into roundels and medallioned motifs portrayed in rolling scroll patterns.

The three variations in style found separately on the internal walls of the skor.lam are also present on the external wall, but intermingled in a lavish display of synthesis. The subjects are a series of Buddhas shown in their paradises [pl.63], surrounded by secondary images [pl.61] arranged in semicircular patterns, and are painted with an attention to secular detail and human forms so typical of the basic Newar style of the Yüan court [pls.60,64,65]. One portion of the external wall, less inspired and less well executed than the rest, contains strict sub-divisions into square frames, but different in nature and spatial concept from the framed episodes typical of the classical Newar style.

The murals inside the bSe.sgo.ma chapel, on the ground floor of the south wing, depict the *rGyal.ba rigs.lnga* [the Five Tathagatas] [pls.71,72]. In further evidence of their spectacular skills, the Zhwa.lu artists have elected to employ a mode of expression, not to be found among the murals of the Yum.chen.mo chapel skor.lam, which has the closest affinities to the most classical Newar art of the Kathmandu valley. It is almost as if the new lessons learned at Aniko's workshop at the Yüan court had for once been forgotten. The newly acquired spatial freedom in composition is dropped, and the artists now strictly adhere to the original Newar form of a large main deity with both medallioned decorative elements and secondary images pushed out to the edges of the composition and arranged in successive frames. When empty of other decoration, the background is dotted about with individual flowers. Pala-type crowns display the Newar sun and moon motif. The thrones are very Newar, though with the added novelty of increased angularity. While these features demonstrate a loyalty to the original Newar idiom that was the root of their style, innovations are also immediately apparent. The colours, which often maintain the deep, rich tonalities of the prototypes, often burst into brilliant, bold hues seldom found in the art of the Kathmandu valley. However, the most characteristic feature, unique to the paintings of this chapel, is that shading (unfortunately not shown in any of the accompanying plates) is introduced on some of the Buddhas. This device was ignored by earlier and contemporary Newar art: although the influence of east Indian Pala art was certainly felt in the Kathmandu valley,²¹⁵ the use of chiaroscuro did not find its way into the Newar style in anything like the degree that it was present in the east Indian prototypes.

Lastly, the murals in the mgon.khang, situated on the ground floor of the east wing, have to be analyzed. The central part of the chapel is now devoid of any painted or sculpted images, but paintings still remain on the walls which originally formed part of the skor.lam built by lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas and absorbed into the mgon.khang during Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's renovation. For the sake of clarity, these walls can be divided into south and north sections. The south section has been discussed above [under *The foundation of Zhwa.lu*, p.93]: it originally had Pala-style paintings made by lCe.btsun around 1045, which were later repainted by artists trained in the Yüan court Newar style, faithfully maintaining the Pala features of certain of the Bodhisattvas, princes, monks and foreign figures [pl.50]. Since the main Buddhas [pl.62] and, in one instance, all of the surrounding group of Bodhisattvas [pl.51] are painted in the main style of Aniko's workshop, these murals display a surprising combination of early 14th century features with those of a much earlier age.

A further stylistic expression is in evidence in the north section that has not been encountered anywhere else in the gSer.khang. This mural is dedicated to the Four Guardian Kings [rGyal.chen.bzhil] on a background filled completely by a sea of clouds. The style is deeply Yüan Chinese, with no traces of Newar art present, the Kings being painted with distinctive Chinese features and physiognomy [pl.49], as is the princess who bears offerings to them. Moreover, their warrior attire and the flowing garments of the princess definitely follow the fashion prevalent during the Yüan dynasty.

The pattern of the clouds is particularly distinctive, and reveals the Chinese esteem for its decorative value. It evolves into a continuous, almost geometrical motif, where cloud formations change direction at right angles to run on all sides of the surface without interruption. One can fully appreciate the obvious differences between the Yüan Chinese style and the main corpus of the Newar idiom of Aniko's workshop from the depiction of *Phyag.na rdo.rje* in the latter idiom found next to two imposing Yüan dragons, much more explicitly painted than the diminutive examples in the great *skor.lam*, on a realistic wooden background [pl.48].

To conclude this review of *Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan*'s work at the *gSer.khang*, a few words on the tiled roofs are necessary.²¹⁶ As mentioned above, the sources consider them to have been made according to the Chinese style: in fact the glazing technique and the actual architectural concept are unknown to both Newar and Tibetan art. It cannot be ruled out that the artisans who actually made these *g.yu.thog* [lit. turquoise roofs: the Tibetan expression for this genre] belonged to a different tradition to that of the artists of Aniko's workshop, though they would have worked alongside them. Where Yüan-style palaces appear in the paintings of the great *skor.lam*, they have roofs with turquoise glazed tiles similar to those of the *gSer.khang*. The roof tiles at *Zhwa.lu* are decorated with auspicious symbols and other themes with a Tibetan content. It is possible that Chinese artisans were exposed to such subjects in China itself, and worked on them on a commission basis. This is the case, for example, with textile *thang.ka*-s of this and later periods, made with Chinese skills for a foreign clientele. The multiplication of the same subjects represented on the tiles, such as *stupas*, *makara* heads and the auspicious symbols, indicates that the tiles were produced using of moulds that were probably brought from Yüan China.

Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan did not complete his grand renovation and expansion of the *gSer.khang*. Although most of the work was finished, the interiors of the upper storeys of the four pavillions remained, and this was the task accomplished by his son, *sku.zhang Kun.dga' don.grub*, and *Bu.ston rin.po.che*. Insofar as their nature and intention are concerned, the two phases represented by the father and the son's activities were a natural continuation. In the authoritative inscriptions dictated by *Bu.ston rin.po.che* in person for the murals in the four *zhal.yas.khang* [the chapels in the four pavillions], it is often stressed that *Kun.dga' don.grub* finished the work according to the wishes of his father.²¹⁷ From the evidence assessed above [under *Zhwa.lu sku.zhang: the 'uncles' of the Sa.skya.pa rulers of Tibet*, p.101], this second phase took place between the water-bird year 1333, when *Kun.dga' don.grub* became secular ruler, and early wood-pig 1335, when the interiors of the four *zhal.yas.khang* were completed. *Bu.ston rin.po.che*'s edition of the *bsTan.gyur* was deposited in one of the chapels.

Kun.dga' don.grub is credited by the sources with having created the chapels in the four existing pavillions built by his father.²¹⁸ In the south pavillion he built the *gNas.rten lha.khang* [chapel of the Arhats], containing a statue of Shakyamuni surrounded by the sixteen Arhats, whose statues were reportedly filled with relics of the Tathagatas.²¹⁹ All these sculptures are no longer extant today. I presume that the statue of Shakyamuni was the *nang.rten* [inner receptacle] dedicated to *Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan*. *Bu.ston rin.po.che* supervised the execution of the narrative scenes painted on the walls, which illustrated the previous lives of the Bodhisattvas, the acts of the Buddha, a painting of Udrayana and various other subjects.²²⁰ In the west pavillion he built the *bDe.lhan lha.khang* [Sukhavati chapel], whose contents are practically unknown since literary sources are mute on the subject, and the present condition of the chapel is not conducive to their identification. In the north pavillion, *Kun.dga' don.grub* built a *Tshe.dpag.med* chapel containing a statue of that deity as the main image, a cabinet with one thousand *tsha.tsha* of the same god, and several statues of minor deities, all no longer extant. Finally, in the east pavillion, known as the *Rin.chen zhal.yas.khang*,²²¹ he built the *bsTan.gyur lha.khang* to house the final edition of the *bsTan.gyur* prepared by *Bu.ston rin.po.che*.²²² The chapel once housed statues of *Bu.ston rin.po.che* and his disciples, unfortunately now lost.²²³

In all four chapels, long series of *mandalas* were painted on the walls under the supervision of *Bu.ston rin.po.che*. The south chapel contains the cycle of the *dPal.mchog*, in the west chapel is the cycle of *rDo.rje dbyings*, in the north, the cycle of *Kun.rig*, and in the east chapel is the cycle of *Jam.dpal*, the sketches for the latter having been prepared by *Bu.ston rin.po.che* himself.²²¹

In common with the rest of the gSer.khang, the works of art that have survived in these top floor chapels are the murals. The remaining painted mandalas are to be found inside the four chapels themselves, and further murals on the inside walls of the skor.lam surrounding the bsTan.'gyur lha.khang in the east pavillion. These skor.lam murals are particularly interesting. A group of Lokeshvaras [pl.73], the eight types of *stupa* [pl.74] and an architectural *yantra* are set amidst a profusion of floral and vegetal ornamentation. Their art style represents a break in the continuity of the two successive phases enhanced by Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan and his son Kun.dga' don.grub, since the wall paintings are executed in a style that can be described as an initial, local adaptation of the Newar idiom developed at the Yüan court. The *stupas*, while still betraying Newar inspiration, are already displaying features that were to become popular in gTsang in the next century. Their structure is entirely ornate, with medallions painted in white on a red background, similar to some of the *stupa* decorations that appear in the murals in the great skor.lam on the ground floor. Though the Lokeshvaras are seated figures, they owe a great deal to the paintings of standing Bodhisattvas in the first stylistic variation of the Newar style of the Yüan court, best exemplified by the figures of 'Jam.dpal and Byams.pa engaged in a mystical conversation [pl.68] painted by mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum [see above]. The stiff stance of these standing Bodhisattvas is naturally absent in seated images, yet the traits characteristic of the Bodhisattvas in the Yum.chen.mo chapel skor.lam (exceptionally small noses, sweet expressions, plain facial surfaces) are retained in their features [pl.73]. The crowns and the lotuses have already become a Tibetan expression emerging from an elaboration on the original stylistic source; this is also the case with the festoons that run all along the top border of the murals. The profusion of vegetal motifs filling the backgrounds, painted in rolling scroll patterns that echo the portrayal of the tails of mythical animals on the *toranas* depicted in the third variation of the main Newar style of the Yüan court on the inner wall of the Yum.chen.mo chapel skor.lam, have come to exist independently. The flowers which also surround the main subjects of the murals are large, and have a prominence never found in the paintings of the Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan phase. The clouds, which are also prominent, derive in type from those painted in the murals of the great skor.lam and the Yum.chen.mo chapel, while their continuous angular motif derives from those of the mgon.khang's north section, painted in the Yüan Chinese stylistic variation.

No literary source attests to the presence of artists trained in foreign *ateliers* at Zhwa.lu during Kun.dga' don.grub's phase: the zhal.yas.khang inscriptions talk of 'artists supervised by local monks', but they do not specify that their tradition was not Tibetan.²²⁵ This fact confirms the *in situ* evidence that the murals in the the bsTan.'gyur lha.khang skor.lam are local in origin. They were not been made by artists of the Newar school of the Yüan court, as Aniko's disciples had left Zhwa.lu by that time.

The *mandalas* painted inside the four chapels on the top floors of the pavillions present rather more difficulties, since their condition is so poor as to preclude any critical assessment. These murals have undergone a long process of decay, and although their basic outlines are still traceable, the deities placed both inside and around them are completely disfigured. While these factors prevent a stylistic analysis, some historical-cultural observations can be made. A conceptual antecedent to the practice of painting extensive cycles of *mandalas* can be found at Sa.skya, a temple that exercised a considerable influence on Zhwa.lu during the period under consideration. A tremendous number of *mandalas* were painted at Sa.skya between the iron-dragon year 1280 and the wood-snake year 1305. In 1280, dpon.chen Kun.dga' bzang.po built a structure called *Thigs.khang* on 'Phags.pa's command to house a set of *mandalas*.²²⁶ At a later date, Shar.pa 'Jam.dbyangs Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan had *mandalas* painted there, and subsequently dpon.chen Ang.len began a project for the inclusion of one set of 148 *mandalas*, and another of 639, all of which were accomplished between wood-sheep 1295 and wood-snake 1305.²²⁷

No evidence exists to prove that the Zhwa.lu *mandalas* made during Kun.dga' don.grub's time were a successive development, internal to Zhwa.lu, of the art produced by Aniko's disciples, since no *mandalas* were painted by the artists trained in that style in the gSer.khang, with the exception of a few diagrams of a different nature. Since no foreign artists are recorded as working at Zhwa.lu during Kun.dga' don.grub's phase, the *mandalas* there must have followed models already in existence in the country. The few clues present—deep, rich shades of colour, and the use of medallions surrounding

minor images—link them to the Newar style, which could have been inherited via Sa.skya, where Aniko had personally been active and where his original Newar style was possibly followed later. Archaeological evidence also suggests a local origin for the *mandalas*: if the art on the skor.lam of the bsTan.gyur lha.khang is certifiably local, it seems likely that Tibetan artists would be employed for the interiors of all the chapels in the pavillions.

After the gSer.khang was completed by Kun.dga' don.grub, and his successor Ye.shes kun.dga' added the final touches, Zhwa.lu lost its momentum, particularly after the death of Bu.ston rin.po.che in the wood-dragon year 1364. The reasons are several. A figure like Bu.ston rin.po.che was irreplaceable. The Sa.skya.pa lost power in Tibet, and the Yüan dynasty was overthrown in China. No Zhwa.lu sku.zhang could emerge to match Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's greatness in the absence of another religious figure of Bu.ston rin.po.che's stature. Yet Zhwa.lu's importance continued: the temple maintained a high status, although without its past brilliance.

The legacy of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang

In summary, Zhwa.lu gSer.khang reached its final appearance in four different building phases:

- lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas' foundations (carried out between 1027-1045).
- A minor extension by sku.zhang mGon.po dpal (during the 1290's).
- The great renovation and expansion by sku.zhang Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan (after 1306).
- The completion of the previous phase by sku.zhang Kun.dga' don.grub and Bu.ston rin.po.che (1333-1335).

The influence that the art housed in the gSer.khang has exercised on later religious institutes in terms of stylistic inspiration is considerable. The following chapter examines just one of Zhwa.lu's developments. Zhwa.lu was a starting point for subsequent art in Tibet, especially in gTsang. Aniko's master disciples, in particular the Tibetan mChims.pa bSod.nams 'bum, have left copious examples of their art and their creativity for posterity, expressed in subtle stylistic variations, and recorded/restored specimens of the Pala style dating to the time of Zhwa.lu's foundation in a rather peculiar way. The gSer.khang is the only temple complex in Tibet known to house lavish instances of the Newar style of art engendered at the Yüan court of China.

Notes

1. Sources such as MyCh, 160; GBYTs, 369; UTKN, 405; state that the name *Zhwa.lu* derives from *Zhwa* [hat] and *lu* [small]. KPGT II, 478, offers a different etymology: When lCe.btsun shes.rab 'byung.gnas went to Bodhgaya after founding the temple in order to take purer vows, he made his Indian master's bowl, known as a 'Zhal.bur', the main object of his devotion. Upon his return to Tibet, he named his temple 'Zha.lu' in honour of his Indian guru.
2. ZGLG, 10-11; UTKN, 409.
3. For example, the Lhasa Jo.khang and Khra.'brug in the Yarlung valley. On the plan of the Jo.khang, see ZKCh; The Jokhang, 1985, 115, fig.5; Mortari-Vergara and Beguin, 1987, 250, fig.100. For the plan of Khra.'brug see Wang Yi, 1961, pl.15; Mortari-Vergara and Beguin, 1987, 252, fig.105.
4. rKyang.bu lha.khang (see Ch. 2) is only a collection of mute ruins today. Tucci's description is, therefore, crucial to an understanding of the original arrangement of the temple (Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 98-106). rKyang.bu's sanctum was composed of two chapels arranged side by side, like that of the gSer.khang. Like Zhwa.lu, rKyang.bu had a wide space in front of its sanctum which, in the case of rKyang.bu, remained a courtyard; I am not in a position to ascertain whether the space in front of the gSer.khang sanctum was originally covered, or was transformed into the 'du.khang at a later stage. An evident difference between the two temples was that two more chapels were added to rKyang.bu's upper storey, whereas the gSer.khang had no such extra storey when it was founded. Such a difference pertains, in my view, to the dimensions of the two temples under consideration, and not to their structural conception. In the absence of other temples dating to the same decades, the peculiarity of the twin chapels may well be a feature of religious edifices built during bstan.pa phyi.dar in Central Tibet.
5. Bu.ston rin.po.che's letter to lByang.chub rgyal.mtshan is in BTSB, 338-341; see also Tucci, 1949, 673-674, for a translation of the letter.
6. MyCh, 168-169; BTNT, ff.14a-14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 89-91; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.30b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19-20; ZYK, 3.26,36.
7. For a description of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang before the recent damage, see UTKN, ff.405-412. For a present-day account, see Chan, (forthcoming), 1991.
8. All sources dealing with the gSer.khang make a point of specifying the number of roofs on each pavillion. See MyCh, 168; BTNT, ff.14a-14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 90; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.30b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 21.
9. For a photograph of a gSer.khang roof with glazed three-dimensional images before the recent damage, see Tucci, 1949, 178, fig.19, 179, fig.20.
10. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.12b, in Tucci, 1949, 657. In 1949, 700, n.618, Tucci understands this rabbit year to be 1039 which, in his view, is the foundation date given by Sum.pa mkhan.po in the Re'u.mig. Yet the latter in fact dates it to the iron-dragon year 1040,—see note 13 below. Other useful sources on Zhwa.lu, such as BTNT, MyCh, and GBYTs do not propose a date.
11. ZLNT, 355; UTKN, 407.
12. ZGLG, 11; TTsKT, 155 mentions another text, rGyal.dbang bca'yig, (unavailable to me) which gives the foundation of the gSer.khang as 1027.
13. Sum.pa mkhan.po, Re'u.mig, in Das, 1889, 40, gives 1040.
14. Refer to Ch. 2 for more information on Lo.ston rDo.rje dbang.phyug. Among the Tibetan sources dealing with him, see DGBCh, 302-304; MTP, 128-133; Bu.ston rin.po.che chos.'byung, in Obermiller, 1932, 203-205; DTMP, 41,56; YLjCh, 392-394; GBYTs, 368-369; KPGT II, 477-478.
15. ZLNT, 355.
16. MyCh, 148; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.12a, in Tucci, 1949, 657; UTKN, 407; ZGLG, 5.
17. Roerich, 1979, 61. See also Chapter Two.
18. Roerich, 1979, 79; TTsSN, 69.
19. ZLNT, 355.
20. MyCh, 160; ZLNT, 355; ZGLG, 4.
21. MyCh, 155,156; ZLNT, 355; ZGLG, 8. UTKN, 407, after correctly giving the consecration of rGyan.gong's ground in 997, claims that the temple was finished in the following thirteen years. Since other

sources state that lCe.btsun worked at rGyan.gong and brought the temple to completion, this would render the UTNK information untenable: thirteen years after 997 lCe.btsun would have been too young for such a task. However, the information does confirm that rGyan.gong was built in two phases.

22. With the exception of UTNK, no description of the temple is given in the sources. By the early twentieth century, when Si.tu visited rGyan.gong, the edifice looked quite unassuming; it consisted of only two chapels, one above the other. The ground floor was a mgon.khang, and the upper storey a temple for peaceful deities. See UTNK, 418.

23. ZGLG, 4, contains an account of the fire. All the religious objects were destroyed, with the exception of the book that lCe.btsun offered to Lo.ston when he met his teacher for the first time. The book had been given to an ancestor of lCe.btsun, lCe Khri.bzang, by Khri.srong.lde.btsan. ZGLG explains the etymology of the text's name *lCe 'bum*. Since the book was just darkened in the fire, but not burned, it became known as *'bum.nag*, the black 'bum.

24. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.12b, in Tucci, 1949, 657, is the text that records the foundation of the temple with the greatest chronological accuracy. All other sources ascribe Zhwa.lu to lCe.btsun: ZYK, 3; BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 90; MyCh, 160; GBYTs, 369; ZLNT, 355; UTNK, 407; ZGLG, 10.

25. KPGT II, 478.

26. MyCh, 160; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.14a, in Tucci, 1949, 657; UTNK, 407; ZGLG, 11-12.

27. On lCe.btsun's twin chapels and the main objects housed there, see MyCh, 160; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.13b, in Tucci, 1949, 657; UTNK, 406-409; ZGLG, 11-12. The twin chapels are also called btsan.khang: a definition whose implication is never explained in the sources, but that may suggest an area of the temple reserved for special devotional care (see MyCh, 164; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.23a, in Tucci, 1949, 658). The statue of sPyan.ras.gzigs, sometimes addressed as Thugs.rje chen.po, is called sPhyi.ste Gu.ru in MyCh, 160, possibly recollecting the fact that the image gave advice to lCe.btsun. The sources, when discussing the later phase of renovations during the Yüan-Sa.skya.pa lordship of Tibet, record a set of statues portraying Dus.gsum.sangs.rgyas [the Buddhas of the Three Times] made by lCe.btsun: see MyCh, 168-169; BTNT, f.14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 91; UTNK, 406; ZGLG, 21. The matter has to be left there, as no further details exist to permit the discovery of their original location.

It is interesting to note that the images of sPyan.ras.gzigs, rNam.par.snang.mdzad and Dus.gsum.sangs.rgyas, which were obviously an iconographical/religious constant during the bstan.pa phyi.dar, were also found at rKyang.bu lha.khang.

28. MyCh, 160-161; GBYTs, 369; ZLNT, 355; UTNK, 407; ZGLG, 12.

29. Khotanese accounts of statues flying through the air from India to Khotan are mentioned in Williams, 1973, 125-129; Soymié, 1984, 87-93 (the Khotanese images being listed under numbers 4,7,9,11,13 by the author); Soper, 1965; it is curious to find the same myth in Tibet. On the basis of the episode regarding Zhwa.lu's stone sPyan.ras.gzigs, found by lCe.btsun in India, it cannot be ruled out that famous images—replicas of the holiest statues of Buddhist India—were known and sought after in Tibet as well, even as late in Buddhist history as the 11th century, in the same way as recounted by the greatest of the Chinese pilgrims to India of a much earlier time. For example, Hsüan-tsang tells us that the statue of Pi-mo was claimed to have been made by king Udayana of Kausambi as a portrait of the Enlightened One and to have flown from India to Khotan after the Buddha's parinirvana; see Beal, 1981, 322-323.

30. MyCh, 161; UTNK, 408; ZGLG, 12.

31. MyCh, 161; also ZGLG, 13. On his consecration at Zhwa.lu, see BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 90.

32. TTsSN, 104.

33. See, inter alia, NyRCh, 469; Roerich, 1979, 254-256; TTsSN, 102-104.

34. The evidence that lCe.btsun met Atisha in 1045 is further proof that he could not have been born in 973. This also adds weight to the view that rGyan.gong was not consecrated in the same year, otherwise lCe.btsun would have been too old to have just returned from India, to have built a new wing at Zhwa.lu and to have invited Atisha to his temple.

35. MyCh, 160; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.13b, in Tucci, 1949, 657; ZGLG, 12-13. UTNK, 410, supplies further proof of Atisha's consecration of Yum.chen.mo in stating that he also consecrated a stone on which there was a self-originated letter 'A', and placed fragments of this stone inside the Yum.chen.mo statue.

36. The Grwa.thang paintings are described in Ch. 2; see also the relevant plates.

37. See Ch. 2.

38. BTsB, f.338; Tucci, 1949, 673.

39. Other examples include the rLangs family, who became the Phag.mo.gru.pa (PTSR, 1-28 and The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama, in Tucci, 1949, 632-634); the Khyung.po clan from Zhang.zhung (see

BTP, 309-310); the Sa.skya.pa family of 'Khon (SKDR, 3-8; The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama, in Tucci, 1949, 625).

40. MyCh, 162; ZGLG, 17.

41. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.8b-10b in Tucci, 1949, 657; ZGLG, 17-18.

42. BTSB, f.338; Tucci, 1949, 673. On the presence of the lCe clan there. see also MyCh, 120-121.

43. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.8b-9a, in Tucci, 1949, 657.

44. BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89.

45. ZGLG, 17.

46. GBYTs, 364-368.

47. Such as DGBCh. 273; GPKT&LPKT, 437-438; KPGT II, 187.

48. This is the case not only of the Gu.ge-sPu.rang and Mang.yul dynasties, but also of the princes of Tsong.kha, who claimed descent from one of bKra.shis brtsegs.pa dpal's sons, gNam.lde. See Petech, 1983, 176.

49. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a, in Tucci, 1949, 658.

50. Tucci, 1949, 201-204; Ferrari, 1958, 59,142, n.422.

51. MyCh, 120.

52. MyCh, 120.

53. The rLangs and Khyung.po clans mentioned in note 39 above are also commonly divided into four branches, but unlike the case of the lCe, these divisions existed from their ancient beginnings.

54. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a, in Tucci, 1949, 658.

55. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, *ibid.*, spells his name 'Khro.bzher brtan.khri' (f.11b, 657), and 'Khro.gzher gdon.khri' (f.17a, 658).

56. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.11b-12a, in Tucci, 1949, 657; ZGLG, 18.

57. The fief where lCe.btsun and his family sought refuge is called Khyim.mkhar in The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a, in Tucci, 1949, 658. According to the MyCh, 105; and Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 67; Khyim.mkhar was located in the valley of 'Dul.byung, well inside the Myang.bar territory associated with the 'Bre clan. Its location is confirmed by GBYTs, 366.

58. For example, Lo.ston was originally from mGur.mo, very close to Zhwa.lu and rGyan.gong. See Bu.ston rin.po.che chos.'byung, in Obermiller, 1932, 203.

59. KPGT II, 478,480. Ye.shes g.yung.drung had occupied the area by taking possession of 'Bre lha.khang, [the temple of the 'Bre clan]. The clan originally held the territory of Myang.bar where it was located (see note 57, above). Ye.shes g.yung.drung was himself a member the clan. Bu.ston rin.po.che (see his Chos.'byung, in Obermiller, 1932, 209) and dPa'bo gtsug.lag (KPGT II) state that Ye.shes g.yung.drung's power derives from a painted image of Mahakala in the Lhasa Jo.khang that promised to protect him.

60. ZLNT, 355; ZGLG, 4.

61. The story related in ZGLG, 4, about dPyal Ratna.shri being able to hold off the conflict between the lCe branches and their subjects for seven years from the birth of lCe.btsun could be a legendary account of a new authority superseding the old.

62. BTSB, f.338; Tucci, 1949, 673.

63. ZGLG, 5-7.

64. At the time of Si.tu's visit to rGyan.gong in the early 20th century, a statue of the tutelary deity was still housed in the mgon.khang. See UTNK, 418.

65. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.16b, in Tucci, 1949, 657-658; GBYTs, 369; ZLNT, 356; ZGLG, 13.

66. Bu.ston rin.po.che chos.'byung, in Obermiller, 209; and KPGT II, 481, both give the circumstances of the ordination of lCe.btsun's teacher mGo.ba Ye.shes g.yung.drung: he went to Khams and met Tre.bo mchog.bla, a disciple of mGon.po Rab.gsal. The latter agreed to ordain Ye.shes g.yung.drung, but died while he was preparing to do so. The fact that he was able to murmur few syllables before he passed away was evidently sufficient, as Ye.shes g.yung.drung considered himself to have been ordained.

67. ZLNT, 356. Regarding the point of lCe.btsun's royal sponsorship, Tucci neglected (1949, 700, n.626) the distinction present in ZLNT between rgyal.po and rtsad.po, possibly considering it redundant. In my opinion, it is indicative of the situation in Nepal during that period.

68. Petech, 1984, 39-45. To give a chronological framework to the break-up of the unity of the Kathmandu valley, I have elected to use the indications offered by the dates of the extant colophons published by Petech. The war which brought about disunity is recorded in a contemporary colophon dating to 1039, during the time of king Lakshmikamadeva. The period of joint rule lasted until about 1069, judging from another colophon issued in that year in the reign of Shankaradeva.

69. MyCh, 157.
70. KPGT II, 480-481. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.22b, in Tucci, 1949, 658; specify that there was a Zhwa.lu fief nicknamed 'the Mane of the Lion in the North' in the 'U.yug territory, north of the gTsang.po, where the 'A.tsho division had one of its additional seats.
71. ZLNT, 356. The other sources simply say that he was succeeded by his brother. See MyCh, 162,166; GBYTs, 369; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a? (the folio number is not clearly specified in Tucci's translation), in Tucci, 1949, 658; ZGLG, 16.
72. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a?, *ibid.*; ZGLG, 18.
73. MyCh, 162,166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.48a, in Tucci, 1949, 661; ZLNT, 356; ZGLG, 16.
74. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a, in Tucci, 1949, 658. MyCh,129, in a rather corrupt passage describes him as step-brother of lCe.btsun and Shes.rab ye.shes.
75. ZLNT, 356. More vague are MyCh, 163-164; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.21a, in Tucci, 1949, 658; UTKN, 408; ZGLG, 13-14.
76. MyCh, 164; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.21a, in Tucci, 1949, 658 (Tucci's translation gives only the detail that the self-originated image of sPyan.ras.gzigs was put in the southernmost of the twin chapels); UTKN, 408; ZGLG, 15.
77. UTKN, 408.
78. For its description (spelled 'Ri.sbug' in the text) prior to its destruction, see UTKN, 414-418.
79. MyCh, 163; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.21a, in Tucci, 1949, 658; ZGLG, 14-15. The community of Ri.phug wanted to take the self-originated image of sPyan.ras.gzigs to its hermitage, while the gSer.khang community wished to house it in the main temple. Eventually, it was decided that it would benefit the greatest number of living beings at the gSer.khang.
80. ZGLG, 28, affirms that Ri.phug was founded by Atisha.
81. MyCh, 163; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.20b, in Tucci, 1949, 658; ZGLG, 14-15. The Chu.mig.pa-s tried to take the image away from the Zhwa.lu.pa-s, but were stopped by a miracle performed by a nun. The Chu.mig.pa-s belonged to a division [tsho] centred on the temple of Chu.mig ring.mo, which was ruled by gZhu.ston gZhon.nu brtson.'grus at the beginning of bstan.pa phyi.dar in Central Tibet (see MyCh, 156). On Chu.mig ring.mo, see Ferrari, 1958, 42,146.
82. BTSB, f.338, expressly affirms this fact; see also Tucci, 1949, 673. On the history of sNar.thang, see the section on its abbots in KDNT, and also NTLG.
83. MyCh, 164; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.21a, in Tucci, 1949, 658.
84. Petech, 1984, 45-46,50. A passage in UTKN (409) mentions that the stupa in the lha.khang byang.ma of what was to become the west wing, built by lCe.btsun to store the gold-tipped arrow, was in the Nepalese style. A mere guess would be that the stupa was renovated by the Nepalese during the time they were in Zhwa.lu for the purpose of building a stupa on the hill.
85. MyCh, 162-163; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.17a,48a (Tucci, 1949, 658,661); ZLNT, 356; ZGLG, 16.
86. MyCh, 130; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a? (the folio number is not clearly specified in Tucci's translation), in Tucci, 1949, 658; ZLNT, 357; ZGLG, 16.
87. MyCh, 162; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.17a,f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 658,661; ZLNT, 357; ZGLG, 16. MyCh, 129, informs us that Khyung.po Grags.seng, Khyung.po Grags.se and Khyung.po Chos.brtson were one and the same person.
88. The most explicit in stressing this point is ZLNT, 356.
89. Roerich, 1979, 71, 325,328. MyCh, 128, asserts his participation in the council, but as pointed out by Tucci (1932-1941, IV, 1, 55), the text misplaces the council in stating that it was held in Myang.
90. MyCh, 130. Roerich, 1979, 71, mentions clearly that they established their school after returning from Tho.ling, while ZLNT, 356-357, which claims to base its information on the same book, the Blue Annals [Deb.ther sngon.po], omits this important detail. It seems that ZLNT contains some anachronisms. When discussing Khyung.po Grags.seng, the text recalls that he intended to prevent at any cost the spread of the teachings of the great rNying.ma.pa master Zur.chung.pa, though without success. ZLNT, 358-359, has taken this episode from the Blue Annals (Roerich, 1979, 119-120), and says that the quarrel between these two figures occurred after Khyung.po Grags.seng became abbot of Zhwa.lu (i.e. after 1076). This is hardly realistic, since Zur.chung.pa passed away in the wood-tiger year 1074 (see Roerich, 1979, 124; Pema Tshering, 1978, 533).
91. Roerich, 1979, 379.
92. MyCh, 166; ZLNT, 359; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.27a,48b, in Tucci, 1949, 659,661.

93. ZLNT, 359, contains an idiosyncrasy regarding rNgog bLo.ldan Shes.rab and 'Bum.phrag gsum.pa in stating that they met in Central Tibet in the earth-ox year 1109: this is most unlikely, as it is the year of rNgog lo.tsa.ba's death.
94. ZLNT, 359; ZGLG, 31.
95. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.27a,48b, in Tucci, 1949, 659,661; ZLNT, 359-360.
96. ZLNT, 360. In the opinion of Thar.chen Chos.kyi rgyal.po, all the Zhwa.lu abbots were considered manifestations of Thugs.rje chen.po sPyan.ras.zigs (see ZLNT, 366). This claim could be due to the fact that lCe.btsun, when questioned by Atisha, proclaimed himself a devotee of Thugs.rje chen.po, and was thus considered a manifestation of the deity. See also ZYK, 3.26; MyCh, 161; ZLNT, 356.
97. ZLNT, 359.
98. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.47b-48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661. On the lineage of Zhwa.lu's early secular rulers, see MyCh, 164; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.21a ff., in Tucci, 1949, 658; ZGLG, 18.
99. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.25b, in Tucci, 1949, 659.
100. For the date of Sa.skya pan.di.ta's ordination by Kha.che pan.chen, see inter alia TTsSN, 146; Sum.pa mkhan.po, Re'u.mig, in Das, 1889, 51; TTsKT, 181.
101. MyCh, 165; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.24a, in Tucci, 1949, 658; SKDR, 286; ZGLG, 16. With the exception of SKDR, these sources set the price payed by the Sa.skya.pa to settle the marriage at sixty horses. A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes kept thirty horses for the Zhwa.lu.pa, and gave the remaining thirty to his neighbours the Chu.mig.pa in exchange for the fief of Shab dGe.liding, to the east of Zhwa.lu. ZGLG, 19, adds that Shab dGe.liding later became Sa.skya.pa. SKDR, 286, confuses the father of bKha'.gro 'bum (A.myes Sangs.rgyas ye.shes) with one of his sons, sku.zhang sNga.sgra.
102. On Phyag.na rdo.rje, see SKDR, 286-287; DTMP, 48; DTMPsM, 183; The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama, in Tucci, 1949, 627; KGBM, 1209-1210. Among secondary sources, see Wylie, 1984; Peteck, 1983, 181,185-186; Wylie, 1977, 114,122-123; A. MacDonald, 1963, 142-143, n.173.
103. SKDR, 203. On the impossibility of 1263 as the date of the return of Phyag.na rdo.rje and Phags.pa, see Wylie, 1984, 395, n.15.
104. SKDR, 286.
105. MyCh, 165; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.23a, in Tucci, 1949, 658. This was a time of turmoil: the Zhwa.lu.pa's relations with their other neighbours, the 'A.zhwa.pa, also became strained. Both sides of the Zhwa.lu lands brought trouble, with the 'A.zhwa.pa in the east and the Chu.mig.pa in the west.
106. UTNK, 409. The twin chapels originally built by lCe.btsun as the gSer.khang sanctum were also called btsan.khang (a temple area of special devotion). This appellation is given in MyCh, 164, and in other sources when they discuss the location of the rTa.mgrin statue.
107. BTSB, 339; Tucci, 1949, 673. On the conferring of the fief of sMon.'gro, see MyCh, 165; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.26a, in Tucci, 1949, 659. sMon.'gro was located in Myang.bar, not too far from Zhwa.lu, in the 'Dul.'byung valley in the territory originally held by the 'A.tsho division ruled by the 'A.zhwa.pa.
108. On Bu.ston Seng.ge 'od and his attendance at the Chu.mig council, see MyCh, 165-166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.27a,48b, in Tucci, 1949, 659,661; ZLNT, 360. For details of the Chu.mig council itself, see SKDR, 259ff.
109. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661. As is inferred by his appellation, Grags.pa brtsun.'grus was an adherent of the 'dul.ba teachings and a strict follower of lCe.btsun Shes.rab 'byung.gnas' tradition (see ZLNT, 360). The text adds that, in general, Zhwa.lu abbots had to abide by lCe.btsun's initiation, otherwise they could not ascend the see.
110. Tucci, 1949, 670-672. Tucci was fortunate in having access to these documents before Zhwa.lu suffered damage.
111. The edicts and the other imperial orders published by Tucci, permit a sound double check of the dates and periods of rule of the various Zhwa.lu sku.zhang, since they are issued by the ruling Ti.shri (the Sa.skya.pa imperial spiritual teachers, functioning as viceroys of Tibet at the Yüan court). The reigns of the individual Ti.shri being known, it is possible to pinpoint the dates given in the edicts, though they only offer the animal element for each year. On Ye.shes rin.chen, see Inaba, 1963, 111, 120, n.104; for a list of Ti.shri, see Tucci, 1949, 15.
112. Inaba, 1963, 112, 120-121, n.118.
113. Tucci, 1949, 670.
114. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.26b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19.
115. UTNK, 409-410. See also BTNT, f.14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 91; MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.26b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19. These images are no longer extant, and nothing useful remains to help

identify their style. The presence of a torana coupled with the fact that Newar art was popular at Sa.skya at that time could lead one to imagine that they were made in the Newar idiom.

116. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661.

117. For a biography of Grags.pa gzhon.nu, see ZLNT, 362-366. He was born in fire-snake 1257, becoming abbot of Tshogs when he was thirty-eight years old (in 1294). He was given the throne of Zhwa.lu soon after. The latter date represents another idiosyncrasy in this text, since it describes his arrival at Zhwa.lu as taking place in a wood-tiger year (which would be 1314) when Grags.pa gzhon.nu was thirty-eight. However, as it is known that he was that age in 1294, the start of his stay at Zhwa.lu should be corrected accordingly. The text affirms that he passed away in the wood-rabbit year 1315, which would render an arrival in Zhwa.lu in 1314 impossible, because he was abbot there for far longer than a single year. It is worth noting that in his youth, Grags.pa gzhon.nu received teachings from Jo.nang mkhan.chen bDe.ba dpal. ZLNT therefore provides further proof of the links between the Zhwa.lu, Sa.skya and Jo.nang traditions both before and after Dol.po.pa Shes.rab rgyal.mtshan revolutionized the Jo.nang.pa teachings, which were often considered heretical thereafter. This matter is discussed in Ruegg, 1963, 76,81,91.

118. Inaba, 1963, 111,120, n.107.

119. MyCh, 167; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.28b, in Tucci, 1949, 659, state that rDo.rje dbang.phyug was sku.zhang for three years, which is confirmed by Zha.lu Document III, in Tucci, 1949, 670.

120. MyCh, 166; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661.

121. ZLNT, 360-361.

122. MyCh, 167-168; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.27b,28b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19.

123. ZYK, 26,36; BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89-90; MyCh, 168-169; GBYTs, 370-371; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.30b-31b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19-21.

124. MyCh, 168; GBYTs, 370-371; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.29a-30a, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 20.

125. DTMP, 30; DTMPM, 179; HCh, 87; Sum.pa mkhan.po, Re'u.mig, in Das, 58.

126. BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89; MyCh, 168-169; GBYTs, 370-371; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.30b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19-21.

127. On this encouragement, see ZGLG, 20; this same page also mentions Ol.ja.du financing the enterprise, stating that the emperor gave him one hundred *bre* of gold (one *bre* is roughly equal to six handfuls) and five hundred *bre* of silver. GBYTs, 370-371, indicates that the emperor gave fifty-eight *bre* of silver, together with many other gifts.

128. Schuh, 1977, 126-127. The document is dated in a bird year, the only such year falling during Ol.ja.du's reign being fire-bird 1297 (Schuh, 1977, 125). The edict gives orders to respect the Tibetan lamas, and menaces heavy penalties for law breakers. The whole tone of the edict is not dissimilar to that adopted by Ral.pa.can in the 9th century to protect the monks (Ch. 1).

129. bDag.nyid chen.po bZang.po dpal was born in the water-dog year 1262. He was exiled to sMan.rise (south China) in water-horse 1282, following obscure charges of disrupting the Sa.skya.pa rights of succession. He was sent back to Sa.skya in earth-dog 1298 on Grags.pa 'od.zer's intercession, with the proviso that he take no active part in secular affairs. He was rehabilitated in fire-horse 1306, and appointed abbot of Sa.skya. When he was fifty-two years old, in 1313, he took monastic vows and died in wood-rat 1324. He is discussed in SKDR, 288-295; The Chronicles of the Fifth Dalai Lama, in Tucci, 1949, 627; Tucci, 1949, 684, n.78; Wylie, 1983, 581-582; A. MacDonald, 1963, 144, n.179; Petech, 1983, 192.

130. Jin.gim was Se.chen rgyal.po's son, designated by the emperor to succeed him, but he died an untimely death. See, inter alia, DTMP, 30; HCh, 87. On 'Phags.pa writing a treatise for Jin.gim see, inter alia, Franke, 1981, 307.

131. GBYTs, 370.

132. DTMP, 30; HCh, 87; Hambis and Pelliot, 1945, 129.

133. MyCh, 168; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.28b, in Tucci, 1949, 659. His cousin rDo.rje 'bum, another daughter of mGon.po dpal, became the wife of the Tshal.pa ruler sMon.lam rdo.rje and was the mother of the great Tshal.pa Kun.dga' rdo.rje, author of the Deb.ther dmar.po. See The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.28a, in Tucci, 1949, 659.

134. Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, I, 71; and Ruegg, 1966, 17, assert that Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan received Bu.ston rin.po.che's cooperation in expanding the gSer.khang. This has to be entirely dismissed in the light of the known facts about the period of Grags.pa gzhon.nu's abbotship. Moreover, all sources affirm that Bu.ston rin.po.che arrived at Zhwa.lu after Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan had completed his gSer.khang renovations. See BTNT, ff.14a-b,15a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89-91,93; MyCh, 168; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.28b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZLNT, 364-365.

135. On this interregnum, see *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661; a more accurate account is given in ZLNT, 366.
136. ZLNT, 366.
137. BTNT, f.15a, in Ruegg, 1966, 92-93; ZGLG, 23-24.
138. This fact seem to confirm Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's connections with Yüan China. The dream's premonitory significance was told to Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan some one and a half years before Bu.ston rin.po.che's arrival at Zhwa.lu in 1320 (ZGLG, 23-24). Hence, allowing some time for the envoy to go to China, the resolution to invite Bu.ston rin.po.che to Zhwa.lu must have been made around 1318.
139. UTNK, 406.
140. ZLNT, 366-367. Tucci (1949, 701, n.683) claims that the old lineage of Zhwa.lu abbots ended with 'Dul.'dsin.pa Grags.pa brtson 'grus, thereby omitting the following mkhan.po, Grags.pa gzhon.nu. Moreover, the former abbot did not live during the time of Kha.che pan.chen, as Tucci maintains.
141. *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, f.34a, in Tucci, 1949, 660; see also BTNT, f.17b, in Ruegg, 1966, 97. Ri.phug gtsug.lag.khang (now totally destroyed) housed an image of Dus.kyi 'khor.lo [Kalachakra] in the 'du.khang which was the yi.dam of Bu.ston rin.po.che, the preeminent exponent of the Dus.kyi 'khor.lo tradition. Other religious icons made by Bu.ston rin.po.che which had been found in the temple included the images of rNam.par snang.mdzad, gSang.ba 'dus.pa, Shakyamuni, a rDor.dbyings mandala and the murals of the Mahasiddhas (BTNT, f.21b, in Ruegg, 1966, 117).
- I wish to note here an object of particular devotion which Bu.ston rin.po.che brought to Zhwa.lu Ri.phug (UTNK, 414). This was the 'dbang.bum' [empowerment vase] used during numberless rituals of initiation to esoteric practices by the great Indian siddha Virupa. The vase was handed down through a lineage of great masters: Virupa gave it to Nag.po.pa [Krishnapada], it then went to Damarupa, Avadhuti and Ghayadhara, who brought it to Tibet, then to 'Brog.mi lo.tsa.ba, Se.ston Kun.rig, Sa.chen Kun.dga' snying.po, 'Kon.ston bSod.nams rgyal.mtshan, Sa.skya bla.ma bSod.nams rgyal.mtshan. The latter gave it to Bu.ston rin.po.che in return for Dus.kyi 'khor.lo teachings. See ZGLG, 34.
142. Inaba, 1963, 110, 118, n.78.
143. Tucci, 1949, 671-672.
144. BTNT, f.21a, in Ruegg, 1966, 114; MyCh, 173-174; *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, f.48b, in Tucci, 1949, 661; ZGLG, 20.
145. TGKCh, and Ruegg, 1966, 30-35. F.4a of the dkar.chag (=Ruegg, 31-32) notes that Kun.dga' don.grub was Zhwa.lu sku.zhang, while f.119b (=Ruegg, 33) mentions the period during which the catalogue was prepared.
146. BTNT, ff.21a-b, in Ruegg, 1966, 115-116; MyCh, 175; *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, f.38b, in Tucci, 1949, 660; UTNK, 411.
147. BTNT, f.20b, in Ruegg, 1966, 112.
148. Tucci, 1949, 672.
149. TGKCh, f.119b; & Ruegg, 1966, 33.
150. ZYK, 4,18; BTNT, f.21a, in Ruegg, 1966, 114-115; MyCh, 173; *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, ff.38a-b, in Tucci, 1949, 660.
151. MyCh, 173-174; *The Chronicles of Zha.lu*, ff.28b-29a, in Tucci, 1949, 659. BTNT, f.21a, in Ruegg, 1966, 114, notes only Kun.dga' don.grub and Ye.shes kun.dga'.
152. ZYK, 4.
153. On Khu.lug's invitation to Chos.sku 'od.zer, see HCh, 87; on Tho.gon The.mur see, inter alia, DTMP, 31; HCh, 89-90. On Chos.sku 'od.zer's translation of Buddhist texts into Mongolian at the Yüan capital, see also Cleaves, 1954. The evidence provided by Chos.sku 'od.zer's invitation contradicts Wylie's statement (1983, 582) that the Sa.skya.pa supremacy came to an end with the summoning of Rang.byung rdo.rje to court for the coronation of Tho.gon The.mur in 1333. If this evidence is to be believed, and I personally would doubt it as the appointment of Sa.skya Ti.shri continued, the end of Sa.skya.pa supremacy would have taken place in Chos.sku 'od.zer's time.
154. ZGLG, 31.
155. BTNT, f.23a, in Ruegg, 1966, 121-122.
156. Tucci, 1949, 672.
157. KPNT, 155-158; Wylie, 1984. The mandatory terms of the invitation have been discussed by Mr. Richardson (1958,145-146), and Tho.gon The.mur's letter published by him (1959, 8-9).
158. bSod.nams.lde/Punyamalla is always recorded in the genealogies of the Ya.rtse kings by almost all the chos.'byung dating after the 14th century. See, for example, *Yar.klungs Jo.bo chos.'byung, Deb.ther*

dmar.po, *Deb.ther sngon.po*, *Deb.ther dmar.po gsar.ma*, *rGyal.rabs gsal.ba'i me.long*, *mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston*, *Pad.ma dkar.po*. Among secondary sources, see Tucci, 1956, 70-71,114; Petech, in *CAJ*, 1980, 95-97,109.

159. KKCh, f.17a.

160. For the first record of the exchange of letters between Bu.ston rin.po.che and bSod.nams lde, see BTNT, f.20b, in Ruegg, 1966, 114; for a mention of subsequent exchanges of letters between the two, see BTNT, f.23a, in Ruegg, 1966, 121.

161. BTSB, 322-333.

162. ZYG, 4,18,26,36.

163. ZGLG, 20. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.39a, in Tucci, 1949, 660, say that Ye.shes kun.dga' was born of dPon.mo dKar.'bum.

164. The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.39a, in Tucci, 1949, 660.

165. BTSB, 341; Tucci, 1949, 674.

166. Tucci, 1949, 706, n.1020.

167. BTSB, 339-340; Tucci, 1949, 673-674.

168. PTSR, 353. The passage is part of a political resumé of various local lords from the perspective of Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan. From a clue contained on 345, it seems that the resumé was written around 1361, enough time had passed since Ye.shes kun.dga' became sku.zhang for Byang.chub rgyal.mtshan to know the character of the rule of Zhwa.lu's new lord.

169. MyCh, 178-179.

170. See, inter alia, Wylie, 1977,117-127; Petech, 1983, 183-188; Szerb, 1980; Franke, 1981, 305-311; Rossabi, 1988, 40-41,155-160,171; Morse, 1977, 77-82.

171. Lévi, 1905-1908, vol. III, 187; Petech, 1984, 100, (also Petech, 1958, 99); H. Karmay, 1975, 21; Lo Bue, 1985, 264.

172. MyCh, 141.

173. Petech, 1984, 101, n.2; also Petech, 1958, 100-101, n.1 for an assessment of Aniko's arrival in Sa.skya in 1261.

174. Petech, 1984, 100; Petech, 1958, 99, considers the structure built by Aniko to have been a stupa; in Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.III, 187, it is described as a golden pagoda.

175. According to SKDR, 203, the gSer.thog was built when 'Phags.pa sent substantial funds in gold and silver to Sha.kya bzang.po when the former was twenty-eight years old (in 1262). It seems that an initial grant was made by Se.chen rgyal.po to 'Phags.pa in 1260, and a second in 1262, to finish the edifice. On the dBu.rtse rnying.ma, see Ferrari, 1958, 148, n. 484. Identification of the gSer.thog as a pagoda comes as no surprise, since it may well have been built by Newar artists.

176. Yüan Annals, Ch. 203, in Lévi, vol. III, 1908, 188; Pelliot, 1923, 195.

177. Dardess, 1972-73.

178. Pelliot, 1963, vol.II, 843-845; Shatzman Steinhardt, 1983; Hok-Lam Chan, 1967, 133-134; Wylie, 1977, 127. The building dates for T'ai-tu are wrongly given in Sum.pa mkhan.po, Re'u.mig, in Das, 1889, 55-56; see also Hambis, 1971, 152. Work began in 1267, and the main palace was finished in 1274. Shatzman Steinhardt offers evidence that building work was protracted during the following decades.

179. On the building of this capital, which Se.chen rgyal.po used as a base for his campaigns against Sung China, see Pelliot, 1959, vol.I, 256-257; Wylie, 1977, 120; Shatzman Steinhardt, 1983, 151; Hok-Lam Chan, 133-134.

180. That Se.chen rgyal.po did not become fully Sinicized, and did not fully trust Chinese loyalty (particularly after the rebellion of Li.tan), see Rossabi, 1988, 62-67.

181. Rossabi, 1988, 171.

182. Petech, 1984, 101; also 1958, 100. Petech corrects the date given by Lévi (1905-1908, vol.III, 188) as 1279, to 1278.

183. H. Karmay, 1975, 23.

184. SKDR, 283-284. On the date 1279 for Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan's death, and therefore the time limit for the building of the monks' residence at court, see also Inaba, 1963, 117, n.63; and Wylie, 1977, 130.

185. SKDR, 287. Dharmapalarakshita is usually accredited with appointment to Ti.shri in the water-sheep year 1283. See, for example, Petech, in *AOH*, 1980, 199, n.27.

186. Yüan Annals, Ch. 203, in Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.III, 188.

187. On Asengko and Ashula, see Petech, 1984, 101, n.3; also Petech, 1958, 101, n.1. On Liu Yüan, see Pelliot, 1923, 195-196; where he quotes from the biography of the Chinese artist (a master of the dry laquer, clay and casting techniques) extracted from the Yüan Annals, chapter 203. His fluency in the dry

laquer image was, in my view, inherited from the Chinese tradition, since the technique is seldom encountered in Newar art of any period.

188. Cleaves, 1954, 15-16.

189. H. Karmay, 1975, 33, n.103.

190. Edwards, 1984, 8-11: examples of Newar-style rock carvings of a Kubera and a Vajrapani, dating to 1292, are shown on pls. 38,39,40,41. For an example of Yüan-style rock carvings, dating to 1282, see the Vairochana, Avalokiteshvara and Samantabhadra triad depicted in pl.9. See also H. Karmay, 1975, 24.

191. On Yang Lien-chen-chia, see Franke, 1981, 321-325; Petech, in *AOH*, 1980, 201.

192. On the Hang-chow block prints, see H. Karmay, 1975, 46-53. On the block-prints dating 1301, see *ibid.*, 48, pl.26. For other examples in the Newar idiom of the Yüan court, see Pal, *Light of Asia*, 1984, catalogue no.146. For an example of block-prints in the Chinese style, see H. Karmay, 1975, pl.27 (dated between 1306 and 1315).

193. Franke, 1981, 324.

194. Ojha, 1986. See especially pl.18, where the book cover at the bottom has a central Buddha which seems to be a prototype of some of the works of art found at Zhwa.lu. On the circumstances of the manuscripts' discovery and their contents, see Sankrityayana, 1937.

195. See Alsop, 1984, 209-211, fig.2, for the bronze. The thang.kas I refer to are well known, and have been published in various sources, including Pal, 1978, figs.68,70; fig.68 is also published in colour in Pal, 1985, 60.

196. MyCh, 168. BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 90; and ZGLG, 20; both mention them as coming from shar.rGya (east China).

197. See, for example, GBYTs, 274, where Se.chen rgyal.po is accredited with the introduction of the 'rGya.Hor khrims' [Yüan rule] in Tibet. KPGT II, 957, defines Ta'i-tu as the palace of the rGya.Hor kingdom. The implication that 'rGya.Hor' refers to the Yüan dynasty is therefore quite obvious.

198. UTKN, 410. The area referred to is the great skor.lam, which is unanimously credited to Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan.

199. ZYK, 26,36; BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89-90; MyCh, 168-169; GBYTs, 370-371; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.30b-31b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19-21.

200. On the contents of the bSe.sgo.ma chapel, see in particular UTKN, 406; also BTNT, f.14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 91; MyCh, 168-169; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.30b-31b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 19-21. 'bSe.sgo.ma' is misspelled in both UTKN [Seng.sgo.ma], and ZGLG [gSer.sgo.ma].

201. UTKN, 410.

202. BTNT, f.14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 91; MyCh, 168-169; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.30b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 21. On Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan as a manifestation of rNam.thos.sras, see BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 89; MyCh, 168; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.38a, in Tucci, 1949, 660; ZGLG, 19.

203. On the contents of the Yum.chen.mo chapel, see in particular UTKN, 410-411; also BTNT, f.14b, in Ruegg, 1966, 91; MyCh, 169; ZGLG, 21.

204. BTNT, f.14a, in Ruegg, 1966, 90; MyCh, 168; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.30b, in Tucci, 1949, 659; ZGLG, 20-21.

205. Evidence of sculptures at Zhwa.lu prior to the destruction of the gSer.khang statues is very lean. A picture has been published by Wang Yi, 1960, 61, pl.30, depicting the statue of a monk. Another can be found in Tucci, 1949, 178, fig.21, depicting a clay image which has seemingly been influenced by Chinese style; it is claimed that it belonged to the mgon.khang. No assessment can be made on such meagre evidence.

206. On a small part of the same skor.lam, a Chinese landscape painting is placed among scenes in the Newar idiom of the Yüan court, thereby interrupting the continuity of their narrative flow. This landscape painting is interesting in itself, given the rarity with which this genre appears in Tibetan temples. The painting does not fit the context of the scene that follows it on the right. Its margin ends abruptly, and it is in striking contrast with the subject of the next scene. Moreover, the continuity of rows of inscriptions (religious in content) which run below all the murals, is broken when the section below the landscape painting is reached—the material and colour of the background are different, as well as the calligraphy. Therefore, this landscape painting, while of a definitely high quality, has to be recognized as a later restoration. The wall in question faces the north and as is so often the case, its murals are in the worst condition, thus encouraging restoration.

207. UTKN, 410.

208. BTNT, ff.21a-b, in Ruegg, 1966, 115-116; MyCh, 175.

209. In the biographies of the third Karma.pa that I have consulted (in Deb.ther dmar.po, Deb.ther sngon.po, mKhas.pa'i.dga'.ston and Karma.pa.sku.'phreng.rim.byon.gyi.rnam.thar), as well secondary sources such as Richardson, 1958, I have found no mention of his staying at Zhwa.lu. A possible explanation for this gap in the literature is that all his biographies concentrate mainly on the circumstances of his summons to court by Tho.gon The.mur in 1333, and on his activities in China and east Tibet.

210. MyCh, 136.

211. KPGT II, 955.

212. Compare, for example, the Zhwa.lu trees with those painted on a Newar mandala dating to 1367, over fifty years later (Pal, *Nepal. Where the Gods are Young*, 1975, 58-59, pl.43: especially the detail). The mandala contains palm trees strictly conceived according to earlier Indian tradition, protruding from secondary images, and completely lacking in the flamboyance of their gSer.khang counterparts. Also noteworthy is the musicians' parade in the mandala, which is similar in conception to at least one scene on the walls of the great skor.lam.

213. Shatzman Steinhardt, 1987, figs.3,4a,4b,5,6.

214. On the presence of Tibetan artists at the Mongol court in general, see Richardson, 1975, 162.

215. The Pala king Dharmapala is recorded in Nepalese sources as having conquered the Kathmandu valley in about 800; see Petch, 1984, 30.

216. Liu Lizhong, ed., 1988, pls.129-131, shows the Zhwa.lu roofs in their present condition, with the sculptures formerly on the topmost roof-ridge of the south and north pavillions, today no longer extant.

217. ZYK, 4,19,36.

218. ZYK, 4,18,26,36; MyCh, 175-176; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, ff.38a-b, in Tucci, 1949, 660.

219. On the contents of the gNas.rten chapel, see in particular UTKN, 411; also BTNT, ff.21a-b, in Ruegg, 1966, 115-116; MyCh, 175.

220. BTNT, f.21b, in Ruegg, 1966, 115-116; MyCh, 175. These narrative scenes are never confused in the sources with the hundred acts of the Buddha, painted on the great skor.lam's walls on the ground floor, since the former are mentioned as being in the chapel containing the statues of Shakyamuni dedicated to Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan, together with the statues of the Arhats, and not in the skor.lam.

221. ZYK, 26.

222. Roerich, 1979, 338; Tucci, *Tibetan Wood Covers*, 1947, 63-64; Ruegg, 1966, 21-25. The first comprehensive bsTan.'gyur collection was made during the reign of the Yuan emperor Bu.yan.tu (r.1312-1320) by dBus.pa bLo.gsal at sNar.thang, with the help of lo.tsa.ba bSod.nams 'od.zer and Byang.chub 'bum. Bu.ston rin.po.che made the final redaction of the collection by adding a great number of missing titles and classifying what remained to be classified.

223. The picture published by Wang Yi, 1960, 61, pl.30, may show these statues.

224. BTNT, f.21a, in Ruegg, 1966, 114; MyCh, 174; The Chronicles of Zha.lu, f.35b, in Tucci, 1949, 660. For a detailed list of these mandalas, see UTKN, 411-412; and ZYK, 1-47, in particular. ZYK, 33, contains the information that Bu.ston rin.po.che personally drew the sketches for the 'Jam.dpal cycle of mandalas.

225. ZYK, 23,33.

226. GBYTs, 359. The date is derived from the fact that 'Phags.pa died in 1280, and Kun.dga' bzang.po was assassinated in 1281; GBYTs spells the name of the building 'Thig.khang'. The mandalas can still be seen today: although they have been completely repainted at a later date, the ancient configuration remains clear.

227. SKDR, 288, on the mandalas ordered by Shar.pa 'Jam.dbyangs Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan; *ibid.*, 291, on the projects begun by Ang.len. Shar.pa 'Jam.dbyangs Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan, who was Ti.shri in 1303-1304, is the 'Rin.chen rgyal.mtshan' of Zha.lu Document III, issued in favour of sku.zhang rDo.rje dbang.phyug.

Riwoché Stupa: The *Magnum Opus* of Thangtong gyalpo

Thang.stong rgyal.po [Thangtong gyalpo]¹ embodies, as well as few other masters, the Tibetan tradition of the *smyon.pa*,² the ‘madman’ whose activities, code of behaviour, mystical and magical experiences exceed words and transcend common understanding. *sMyon.pa*, more than ascetics, need human consensus in order to enhance their unconventional teachings, wherein by breaking the rules one enters the path of liberation. Thang.stong rgyal.po was a *mahasiddha* [grub.thob chen.po] who spent most of his life among his people accomplishing innumerable concrete undertakings, rather than retiring to meditate in caves. He was a scientist, the father of Tibetan opera, the creator of his own highly personal doctrinal system, but above all he was *lCags.zam.pa*, the ‘iron bridge builder’. He is credited, rightly or wrongly, with the construction of practically all the iron suspension bridges in Tibet. However, the construction of bridges did not exhaust his prodigious building capacities; he was also involved in the foundation of various holy edifices.

Thang.stong rgyal.po worked, therefore, at many projects, but to one in particular dedicated special attention. While he is justly famous for his multi-faceted activities, this project—his masterpiece—is almost unknown. No other episode in his *mam.thar* [biography] by ‘Gyur.med bde.chen’³ is dealt with at such length and with such an abundance of detail than the fascinating circumstances under which Thang.stong rgyal.po was able to accomplish his master work: the great *stupa* at dPal Ri.bo.che [Riwoché] [pl.76], located on the northern bank of the gTsang.po in a solitary, beautiful area to the west of Byang Ngam.ring¹ [pl.75].

The hill at Cung gDong.zhur was named dPal Ri.bo.che by Thang.stong rgyal.po when he was in Ngam.ring ‘Bum.thang’.⁵ In the dragon year 1448, he arrived at the horse tenures of the local lord of La.stod Byang Ngam.ring. Thang.stong rgyal.po said to him:

“If you abolish the taxes for two years on land, water, hay, labour, buildings and compulsory military service, I will introduce religious services at dPal Ri.bo.che.”⁶

The local lord accepted the proposal, but Thang.stong rgyal.po included a further condition,

“I will not start unless craftsmen and workers volunteer for the construction.”

Soon after, he went to Lho Shel.dkar and met *Ta’i.si.tu* Lha.btsan sKyabs.dpon, the lord of La.stod Lho, and was invited to establish, with the latter’s support, an institute which could attract the people of La.stod Lho to the Buddhist dharma. Thang.stong rgyal.po suggested,

“Let us not do it here, let us do it in a place where the people of Lho, Byang, mNga’, these three territories, will gather. There is an iron bridge that I have previously been building at gDong.zhur: let us hold dharma works there.”⁷

The lord of La.stod Lho accepted his proposal and offered craftsmen, wood and workers from his fief [khri.skor].

“He went to dPal Ri.bo.che and many workers of Byang Khri.zhabs [the La.stod Byang prince] arrived in order to lay the foundation of the *mchod.rten bkra.shis sgo.mangs* [sic]⁸ in the earth-female-snake year 1449. The master and his disciples worked as well with earth and stones. Due to the effort of all, many stones and much earth was put together. When the *mchod.rten* was completed up to the *bum.pa* [bell], it collapsed three times. Then they planned to expand the *mchod.rten* foundations to make it more magnificent in appearance. At every layer of the foundation’s walls grains were always found.⁹ The monks and workers were discouraged. Grub.thob chen.po said, ‘We are part of this impermanence. This is a sign for the community. What we are doing is for the benefit of dharma and sentient beings. If we do not succeed in this

life, we will succeed in the next. It may be finished before my death. If it is not done, then there will be natural disasters such as storms, poverty, crop failures and excessive rain. The elements will fight each other; strife and unknown diseases will occur, causing death. To avoid such misfortunes, willingly or unwillingly, you people must be patient and work hard, because this mchod.rten is connected with the happiness of humanity and its building will cause deliverance to Sukhavati heaven.' After saying these words, the people felt encouraged and placed great trust in him in order to finish the work."¹⁰

"Grub.thob chen.po worked during daytime and went back to his hermitage at night. While he was returning there one evening, some foolish men waited for him on his path, and were talking about casting him down the hill. At that time many people had gathered with weapons. Grub.thob chen.po told them, 'You should all work to carry stones'. As he was saying this, he was stabbed with a spear. Having inflicted many wounds on him, those rogues thought that his body must have been split into pieces by that time. But this was not the case; Grub.thob chen.po took away their spears and bent them on his knee. He said, 'If I had to die, it would have happened very long ago'. When digging for stones, Gra.pa 'Brom.ras hit a rock against a huge stone, and the rock accidentally struck Grub.thob chen.po on his head. 'Brom.ras cried, 'I must have killed my lama'. But, on the contrary, the lama replied, 'I am well; nothing has happened to me'. They did not find any stones to dig out for three days after that, and the building of the walls could not continue. Grub.thob chen.po wedged an iron peg into a cliff and pushed it down towards the ground. At once the whole hill collapsed, and he was buried under the rocks for three full days. All the workers thought that he must have died, and that they were therefore released from the work: they were happy, while his disciples were desperate. They said, 'We cannot finish the mchod.rten, let's at least try to find his body'. They prayed and went to the spot with tools to dig his body out. As they got closer, Grub.thob chen.po emerged from the mountain of stones, looking more magnificent than ever, and sat down on it..."¹¹

"The entrance to dPal Ri.bo.che is a large door on the main road leading to the place. The people who were charged an entry tax at the spot could not understand the reason for it. Some avoided using the road; others, the most aggressive, fought against such a tax. Others criticized. Since the work was at a standstill because of the quarrels, certain workers thought that they were freed from the labour. At that time, Grub.thob chen.po prayed for all the contributors, important or humble, rich or poor, to instead be free from samsara and delivered on the path of liberation. He did many good things for the people of stod and smad [the upper and lower territories].

In those days the monks from Ngam.ring chos.sde [monastery] and the tax-men of dPal Ri.bo.che were fighting. Over a thousand dge.bshes from the chos.sde surrounded dPal Ri.bo.che. All the forty monks of dPal Ri.bo.che approached Grub.thob chen.po and said, 'If we do not fight against the ser.dmag [warrior-monks],¹² they will take away everything that we have'. Grub.thob chen.po answered, 'This is a critical moment, and we must have patience. We are Buddhist, and it is not good to be angry at any sangha. If you fight, our link will be cut off for present and future lives'. As the dPal Ri.bo.che monks remained quiet, the monks from the chos.sde were about to destroy the iron bridge and the mchod.rten, when Grub.thob chen.po transformed himself into many fierce warriors with weapons. When the monks of the chos.sde saw them they said, 'Cags.zam.pa has a strong army, we had better flee', and they did so.

When the construction of the bum.pa [bell of the mchod.rten] was in progress, there was no mud, yet still the walls had miraculously grown higher. Different grains were spread on the surface of the walls. The workers reported this to Grub.thob chen.po, who said, 'I proposed building this mchod.rten at Ngam.ring in the dragon year. I have therefore asked for help from lha, 'dre and men. dPon.po Byang.pa [lord of La.stod Byang] promised to do anything I need. Yon.bdag Lho.pa [lord of La.stod Lho] promised to provide wood for the construction, as well as gold and grain. sMan.khab skyabs.pa promised to build the chapels. The Four Guardian Kings promised to erect the bum.dhir.¹³ Those tangible lha and 'dre promised to do everything we need. To accomplish such a task, man alone is not enough. I will tell you what happened. The high walls that grew by themselves were built during the night and are the work of the Four Guardian Kings. All the grains that you have found spread around are the rab.gnas [consecration, blessing] of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas."¹⁴

“Then Grub.thob chen.po advised sPrul.pa'i Khro.rgyal bka'.bcu.pa Nam.mkha' legs.bzang. ‘If you can finish the inside and outside walls of the mchod.rten as soon as possible, it will secure very great benefit to prevent the diseases that will come to Tibet in the future. So would you put more effort into it?’. He replied, ‘It is very difficult to collect all the various kinds of sacred earth from sBa.skya gsum.ston’. While Grub.thob chen.po asked the question, ‘Where is sBa.skya gsum.ston gter.ma?’ a full thang.rgyal¹⁵ fell from the sky in front of him. As the disciples were rolling down the bulky bag, tsam.pa poured out and transformed into sBa.skya sacred earth.

When the plaster work inside and outside the mchod.rten chen.po was completed, one hundred and eighteen bris.'dur.ba¹⁶ gathered there from the three territories Lho, Byang and mNga', and plenty of powdered paint was ground, but there was need of gold and tshal.¹⁷ Grub.thob chen.po told seven monks to go high up in the valley of Nya.mkhar to dig tshal. They did not know about tshal or where to find it and said, ‘Suppose we find a place like that—it will be protected by its gzhi.bdag [local spirit], so we are not keen to go’. Grub.thob chen.po replied, ‘You can find as much tshal as you want on a rock face in the shape of a tortoise, which is bounded by two streams and looks like a frying pan’. Then he handed over a message for the local spirit and said, ‘The gzhi.bdag will assist you’.¹⁸

“In this way the monks succeeded in obtaining plenty of gold and tshal, which they brought to rje bla.ma [= Thang.stong rgyal.pol]. An artist who, in his profound faith, had seen Grub.thob chen.po sitting in the middle of a rainbow being entertained by beautiful ladies, offered to carry out the painting work. This artist was a regular disciple of Grub.thob chen.po, and he always made circumambulations, prostrations and offerings... In the bang.rim¹⁹ of the mchod.rten there are the images of the rGyud.sde.bzhi; above it in the two storeys which comprise the bum.pa, the bla.ma sku.bzhi²⁰ are located. All these are painted images and the complex looks like Zangs.gling sgo.mangs [sic].²¹

When the monks were installing the srog.shing²² of the mchod.rten, rJe.btsun.ma Chos.kyi sgröl.ma, the daughter of a Tibetan king, arrived there. She received many teachings from Grub.thob chen.po. He said, ‘As we are installing the srog.shing, you slob.dpon.ma and your retinue may pray’. And he added to the workers, ‘Pull up Ma.nam bka'.ma²³ and position it’. Then the monks of lCags.zam.pa installed the huge srog.shing all together, lifting it up with the help of ropes without difficulty and in a very short time. At that time the preliminary ritual was held. During the concluding ritual, a sound was heard in the sky, as if the wood called de.'ur chil.pa was emitting it, and Ma.nam bka'.ma dissolved into the huge srog.shing...²⁴

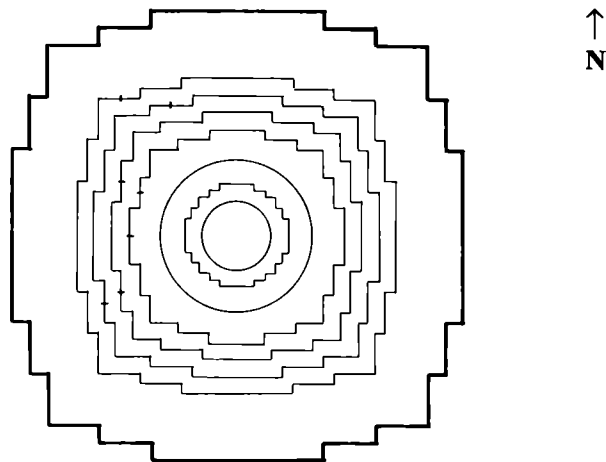
“Grub.thob chen.po completed the construction of the mchod.rten with a golden umbrella when he was ninety-six years old in the fire-male-rat year 1456. Then he gave empowerments to his spiritual son Nyi.ma bzang.po, who had originated from the three times of Grub.thob chen.po's rdo.rje, and consecrated the great mchod.rten. At that time, the fortunate beings who attended the ceremony said, ‘The great mchod.rten has been consecrated by innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, dPal Sha.ba.ri dbang.phyug and the eighty-four mahasiddhas, Indra, the king of the gods, Shiva and Vishnu, all those who support dharma, including the sons and the daughters of the deities with different implements’. They were seen floating above the great mchod.rten, while the monks of lCags.zam.pa saw Grub.thob chen.po throwing grains out of the universal treasure, which was his retreat. A rain of flowers and a fragrance of incense spread over the area. His successor bsTan.'dzin nyi.ma bzang.po was enthroned. At the time of his elevation, gifts came from the emperor of China.”²⁵

The structure of dPal Ri.bo.che

As noted, dPal Ri.bo.che is a monumental *stupa* of the type known as *bkra.shis sgo.mang* or *sku.'bum* [pl.76]. The *stupa* has, in common with all Tibetan monuments, suffered major damage, but its structure is still discernable, in spite of a very recent renovation. It is eight storeys high, nine including the ground floor base, which contains a huge perimeter *skor.lam* [processional path] with the entrance on the north, running around the whole edifice and following its many corners. Particularly unique to this mchod.rten is the fact that there are no chapels on the ground floor, which is exclusively intended for processional purposes. The next four storeys, which constitute the *bang.rim*, are composed of the

rows of chapels that typify a *mchod.rten bkra.shis sgo.mang*. The chapels are five per side on each floor, and are structurally conceived on the same angular pattern as set by the base. Next is the *bum.pa*. This is particularly large, and contains two floors consisting of a circular *skor.lam* in both. In the lower of these two floors, the inner wall of the *skor.lam* has four niches set facing the four directions which once housed statues; the upper floor has been almost completely renovated. The storey above the *bum.pa* contains four small chapels opening to the cardinal points. The topmost chapel concludes the edifice. It is circular and completely bare, the roof having been lost. A boundary wall completely encircles the *mchod.rten*, which again follows the angular pattern of the construction of the ground floor base. The wall has many niches with traces of ancient paintings.

The Stupa of Riwoché



Structures similar to *dPal Ri.bo.che* were not rare in Tibet, some of them having survived up to the recent past; therefore they are better known to western scholarship,²⁶ though mostly in ruins today. Few of the surviving *mchod.rten* of this type are structurally close to *dPal Ri.bo.che*. The great *mchod.rten* of *Jo.nang Thong.grol chen.mo*²⁷ [pl.82 & fig.16], situated at the border between *g.Yas.ru* and *Ru.lag* in a gorge above *Phun.tshogs.gling*,²⁸ and of *rGyang.bum.mo.che*²⁹ [pl.83 & fig.17], not far from *Grom.pa rGyang* and *Lha.rtse*,³⁰ in an immense, rich plain,³¹ more than other *sku.bum-s*, are architecturally related to *dPal Ri.bo.che*: in particular *rGyang* appears very similar to *Ri.bo.che*. The most striking point of similarity is the *bum.pa*, which houses internal circular *skor.lam-s* in all the three *sku.bum*. But while at *Jo.nang* stupa the *bum.pa* does not reach the dimensions of that of *dPal Ri.bo.che*, it does at *rGyang* stupa, though without the colossal, disproportionate monumentality of that of *Byams.pa.gling*.³²

Another point of architectural similarity between the three *mchod.rten* is constituted by the particular spacial organization of the *bang.rim*, where the upper storeys do not progressively decrease in size to the extent that they do in, for example, the *rGyal.rtse sku.bum*.³³ As a consequence, the size of the chapels in the upper floors of the *bang.rim* does not differ greatly from that of chapels on the lower floors, in contrast to the case at *rGyal.rtse*. Another factor which links *dPal Ri.bo.che* to *Jo.nang* alone is that the central chapels on all the sides of a floor are single-storeyed. Thus every floor has the same number of chapels, while at *rGyang* and *rGyal.rtse* two-storeyed central chapels preclude the possibility of the presence of a chapel in the same position on the floor above, thereby leading to a different number of chapels on alternate floors.

The unusual *gTam.chos dgon.pa*,³⁴ which is more commonly known as *rTa.mchog.sgang*³⁵ in Bhutan also has some structural features connecting it to the *sku.bum-s* mentioned above. Though it is neither a *mchod.rten* nor a *lha.khang*, but something of both, it nevertheless has a *bum.pa* which is conceived with the same round, double-storeyed *skor.lam* and the same four niches in its inner wall, oriented to face the cardinal points.

The art style at dPal Ri.bo.che

The analogies between dPal Ri.bo.che, rGyang.bum.mo.che and Jo.nang Thong.sgrol do not end with their structural conception. All three sku.'bum seem to be connected, though in different degrees, to the activities of Thang.stong rgyal.po. In his *nam.thar*,³⁶ on remembering his previous incarnations, Thang.stong rgyal.po says that in his last life he had been Dol.po.pa Shes.rab rgyal.mtshan,³⁷ the founder of the Jo.nang sku.'bum. It will soon be shown why this karmic link is more than a groundless statement. In his early life, he was a witness, or possibly assisted in the initial phases of the construction of rGyang.bum.mo.che³⁸ by slob.dpon chen.po bSod.nams bkra.shis,³⁹ a member of the Lha.khang bla.brang branch of Sa.skya.pa. Even the strangely conceived rTa.mchog.sgang dgon.pa is attributed to lCags.zam.pa.

At this point, the style of the works of art still preserved in the dPal Ri.bo.che sku.'bum should be examined, since they have to be attributed to Thang.stong rgyal.po himself. It can then be determined whether the artistic evidence confirms the link with the Jo.nang and rGyang *stupas*. No sculptural traces are extant at dPal Ri.bo.che, though in any case there must have been few statues in the sku.'bum, since the passage of the *nam.thar* quoted above mentions that there were only paintings in the bang.rim chapels. The sculptures in the bum.pa—four in the lower storey niches and probably another four in those of the upper storey—have disappeared.

No paintings remain above the bang.rim, apart for some fragments on the inner and outer walls of the lower skor.lam. Virtually all of the ancient roofs of the bang.rim chapels have collapsed, and the present roofs are products of the recent renovation. As a result, the upper portions of the murals have been lost in many cases, though fortunately the bottom portions have almost all been saved by the debris from the roofs.

The most striking characteristic of the bang.rim murals are the great number of *mandalas* depicted, though today they are highly fragmentary [pl.77]. Their style recalls roughly contemporary Sa.skya.pa *mandalas*, though the Ri.bo.che examples appear slightly more provincial. When the final layer of gloss coating is still present, the Ri.bo.che *mandalas* have the same deep tonalities of reds, blues and greens found in the Sa.skya.pa style, otherwise they have the soft, pastel, powderish colours that are generally the hallmark of the dPal Ri.bo.che murals in their present condition.

In a great number of chapels, painted niches are placed in the rear wall [pl.78]. A Buddha is often depicted on the rear wall of the niche, while on the small side walls Bodhisattvas and secondary images are included. They are all flowing and impressionistic in concept with little care for details, rather favouring a naïve taste for a fast single brush stroke, which gives the style a fresh imaginativeness. This is particularly evident in certain details such as trees and clouds, where the iconographic rules are not as rigorous as they would be in the case of Buddhas, for example. They are reduced to fantastic, free shapes or coloured spots, being conceived as pure, abstract decorations [pl.80].

The images are outlined by thick, heavy black lines [pl.80], more often in the case of small subjects and minor details such as the above-mentioned trees and clouds, than of main deities. The style, though fresh and highly distinctive, betrays a certain degree of anti-classicism and provinciality. Where it does seem to be more dependent on Sa.skya.pa models is in the depiction of the common main images, and particularly of such sectarian subjects as high lamas and monks. It appears that the artist of dPal Ri.bo.che followed, in the case of the religious figures of high rank, an official orthodoxy of portrayal.

The images of seated Shakyamuni often encountered in the chapels have egg-shaped faces with quite flatly applied colour, also narrow eyes; small lips curved into a smile; diminutive, circular *ushnishas*; large, rounded shoulders; flat, single-coloured *toranas*, with a double halo included, usually in a different tone [pl.81]. The monks, commonly standing by Shakyamuni's side in the small niches, are almost exclusively depicted in profile, with stocky bodies with flared lower garments. In the few cases where Bodhisattvas are portrayed, their most striking characteristic is the crown, which is placed very high on the skull due to their distinctive protruding foreheads. Rosettes are added to their temples. In the ground floor skor.lam, as customary in a processional corridor, the Buddhas of the Golden Age are depicted in infinite multiplicity. Similar features belonging to the style eventually

adopted at dPal Ri.bo.che can be detected both at rGyang and Jo.nang, again with the help of Prof. Tucci's documentation,⁴⁰ since from what I personally could observe, rGyang today is nothing more than an imposing but hollow structure, and Jo.nang⁴¹ retains very few traces of art. Though the same style is shared by the three sku.bum, the different degrees of the same artistic elements testify to an evolution of this Tibetan idiom. One could detect at rGyang and Jo.nang the same naïve, quick treatment based on a few flowing lines and bold fields of colour. The thick, black outline to the ornamental details and minor images that is a typical feature of dPal Ri.bo.che is also present at rGyang [fig.19] and Jo.nang [fig.18]. But one definite characteristic of rGyang and Jo.nang works of art is not to be found at dPal Ri.bo.che: the narrative method of dividing scenes into square frames to portray episodes individually [figs.20, 21]. The fact that the majority of the paintings at dPal Ri.bo.che depict *mandalas* must, of course, exclude a narrative method, but where a narrative is painted, it is seldom in frames.

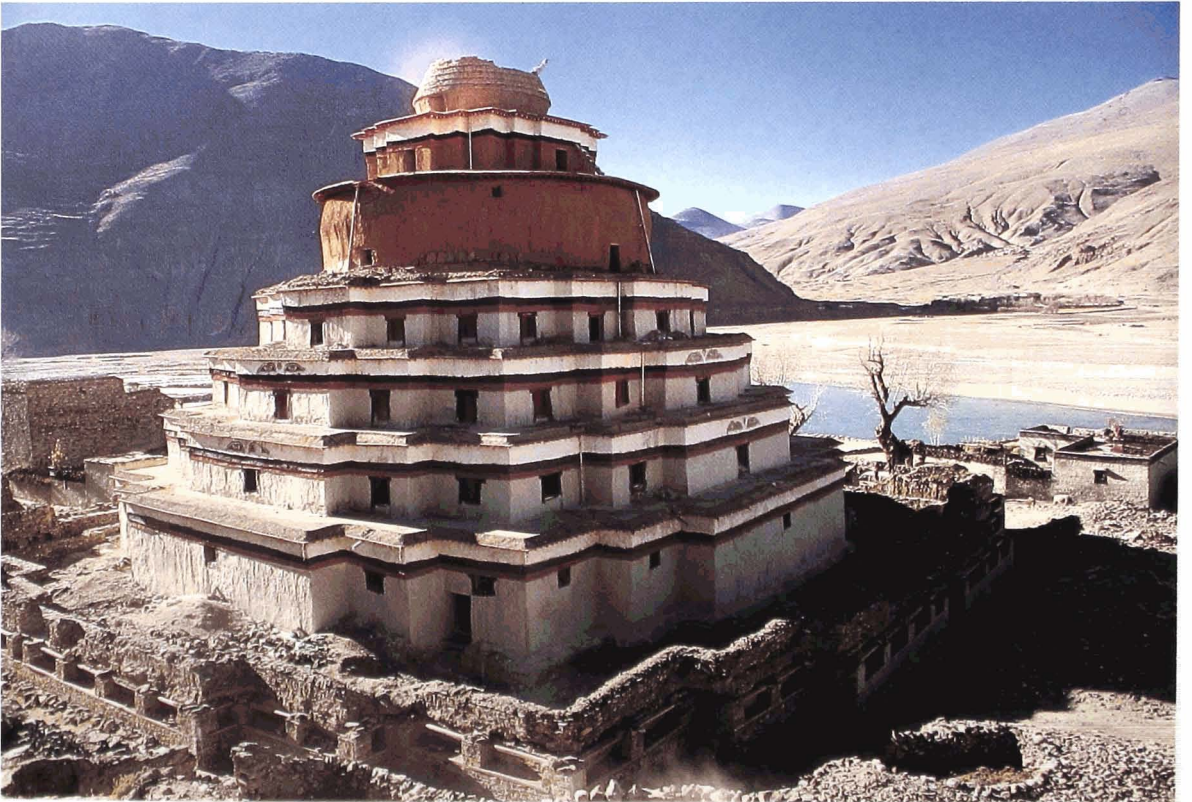
Illustrating episodes through the use of frames is an ancient practice, and it makes rGyang stylistically earlier than Ri.bo.che: how far it can be firmly traced in Tibetan art will be discussed below. If rGyang is distinguished from dPal Ri.bo.che on such stylistic criteria, certain Jo.nang artistic characteristics in turn place it earlier than rGyang. For instance, the arrangement of the secondary images in groups surrounding the main image in a semi-circle dates back far to Indian models [fig.22], if a starting point for this notion is sought. Moreover, while the majority of Jo.nang images are depicted in a manner typical of the style found also at dPal Ri.bo.che (in particular with regard to the presence of stocky, well-built monks, and elongated Bodhisattvas with bulging foreheads and similar crowns), bringing an artistic unity to such features, there are still other images like the seated Bodhisattvas, that betray a stylistic provenance which recalls earlier works of art. The construction of the heads and of the bodies betrays post-Pala/Newar characteristics which can be found in the art of 14th century Tibet [fig.23].

In fact, the building dates of dPal Ri.bo.che, rGyang.bum.mo.che and Jo.nang Thong.sgrol confirm the evolutionary trend of their art. Jo.nang, as mentioned before, was built by Dol.po.pa Shes.rab rgyal.mtsan, who died in iron-ox 1361. In all likelihood, he laid its foundation in iron-horse 1330⁴². The Stupa was completed long before 1354, when Dol.po.pa left the abbotship of Jo.nang to his disciple Phyogs.las nam.rgyal. rGyang also has no precise date of construction, but the fact that bSod.nams bkra.shis (1351-1417) built it while Thang.stong rgyal.po⁴³ was in attendance, probably places rGyang's construction in the first fifteen years of the 15th century. It is interesting to note that for an uncertain date after this episode, though surely not long after, his *rnam.thar*⁴⁴ records Thang.stong rgyal.po as having circumambulated rGyang mchod.rten. Finally, for dPal Ri.bo.che specific dates are given in the *rnam.thar*: the earth-snake year 1449 for its foundation, and the fire-rat year 1456 for its completion. Therefore, the style encompasses a century or so of Tibetan art in a steady temporal pattern, Jo.nang being the earliest example, followed by rGyang, and dPal Ri.bo.che.

Though Thang.stong rgyal.po was not, of course, the founder of the style, in spite of his claim that he had been Dol.po.pa in his last life, he was surely one of its most eminent exponents. His statement claiming a karmic link to Dol.po.pa, his involvement in the construction of rGyang, his actual building of Ri.bo.che all testify, in my view, to the artistic and architectural unity of these monuments.

The source of the style

The walls of the skor.lam on the ground and middle floors of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang⁴⁵ preserve in splendid condition⁴⁶ an ample documentation of the mature, classical expression of the style which evolved progressively in the sku.bum of Jo.nang, rGyang and Ri.bo.che. In general terms, the Zhwa.lu murals are painted with an inventiveness, a richness of tone and detail, and a consummate skill which is lacking in the art of the three mchod.rten. Still, the features that were transmitted initially to Jo.nang and thence to rGyang and Ri.bo.che are manifest in the works. I refer in particular to both the dividing of narrative scenes into square frames and the pattern of arranging the Bodhisattvas and secondary images around the main image [pl.61], which are present at Jo.nang though absent from Ri.bo.che. The physiognomies of the main deities, in particular those of Buddhas [pl.69], and of the



Plates 75 & 76 Ri.bo.che stupa on the north bank of the Tsangpo river in La.stod Byang, built by Thang.stong rgyal.po between 1449 and 1456.



Plate 77 Detail of a mandala from a shrine on the first storey above the ground floor, 16th chapel.



Plate 78 The shrine of the 16th chapel on the third storey above the ground floor. Altars in the Ri.bo.che stupa did not have statues as main images but painted deities.

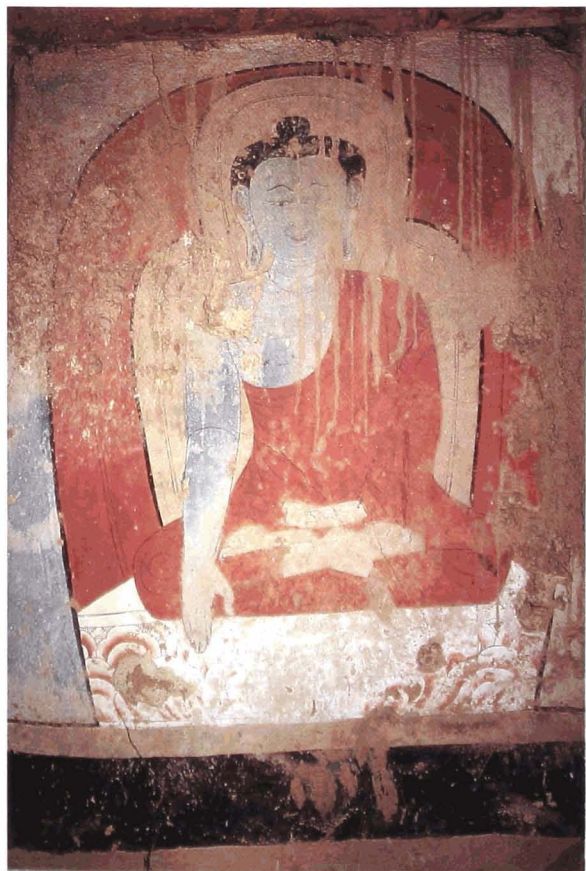
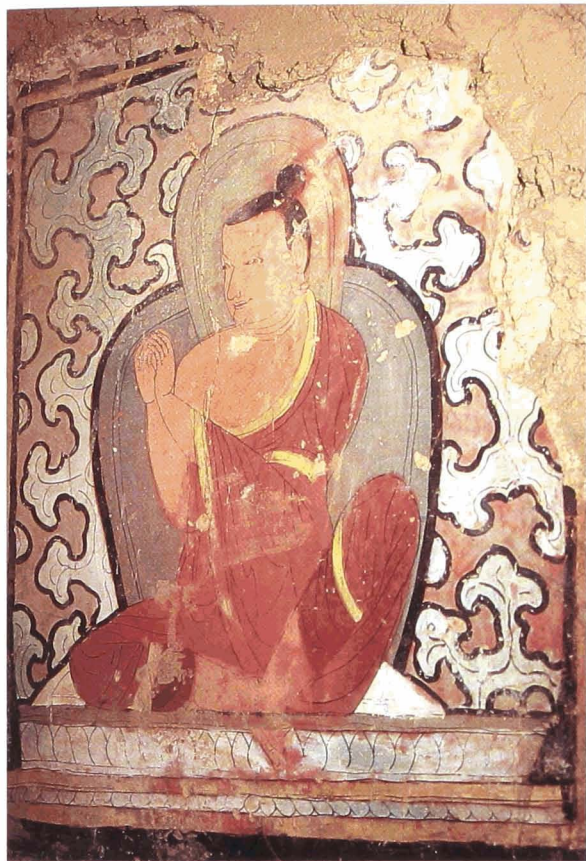


Plate 79 A monk attending a Buddha from the shrine of the 14th chapel on the first storey above the ground floor.

Plate 80 Nobleman, in traditional attire, bringing offerings to the gods of the stupa. First storey above the ground floor, 13th chapel.

Plate 81 Akshobhya from the 3rd chapel, dedicated to him, on the first storey above the ground floor.



Plate 82 Jo.nang stupa, built c.1330 by Dol.po.pa Shes.rab rgyal.mtshan in a gorge above Phun.tshogs gling.



Plate 84 Shakyamuni with attendants from a chapel on Jo.nang's second floor, east wing.



Plate 83 rGyang stupa built by bSod.nams bkra.shi around the beginning of the 15th century on the plain of Lha.rtse.



Plate 85 Detail of a mural, from the chapel on the south-west corner hitherto concealed under the rubble of the monument. Jo.nang stupa, third floor.

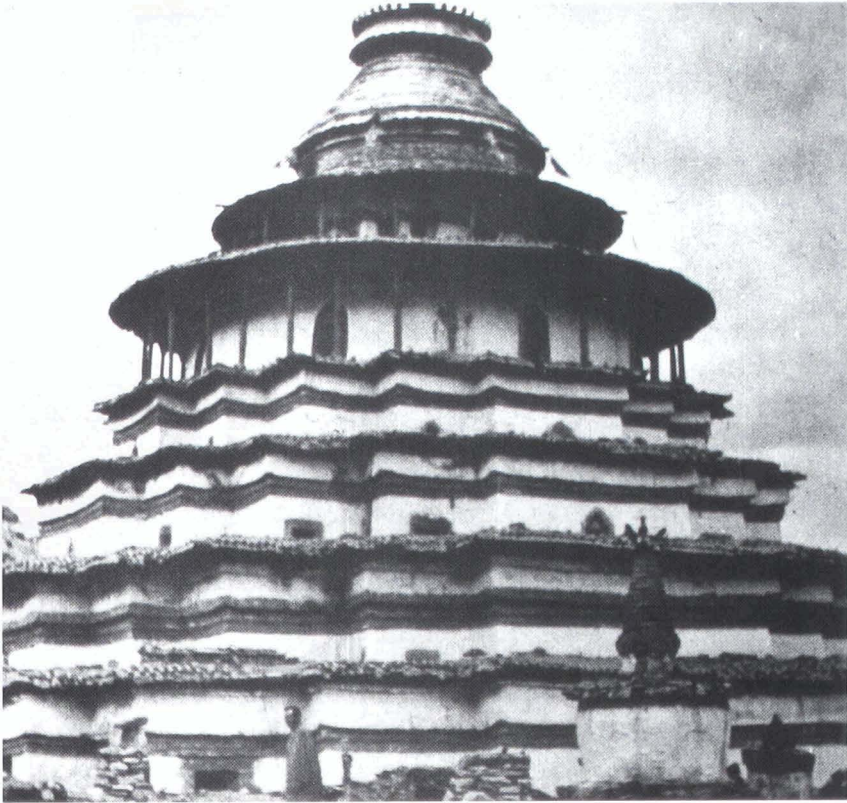


fig.16 1940's photograph of the Jo.nang stupa when it was still intact.,
(Courtesy of IsMEO)



fig.17 1940's photograph of rGyang stupa before decay. (Courtesy of IsMEO)



fig.18 A monk from Jo.nang stupa. First floor. (Courtesy of IsMEO)



fig.19 Arhat from rGyang stupa. Fourth floor, 6th chapel. (Courtesy of IsMEO)



fig.20 Scenes from the life of the Buddha. Jo.nang stupa, first floor. (Courtesy of IsMEO)

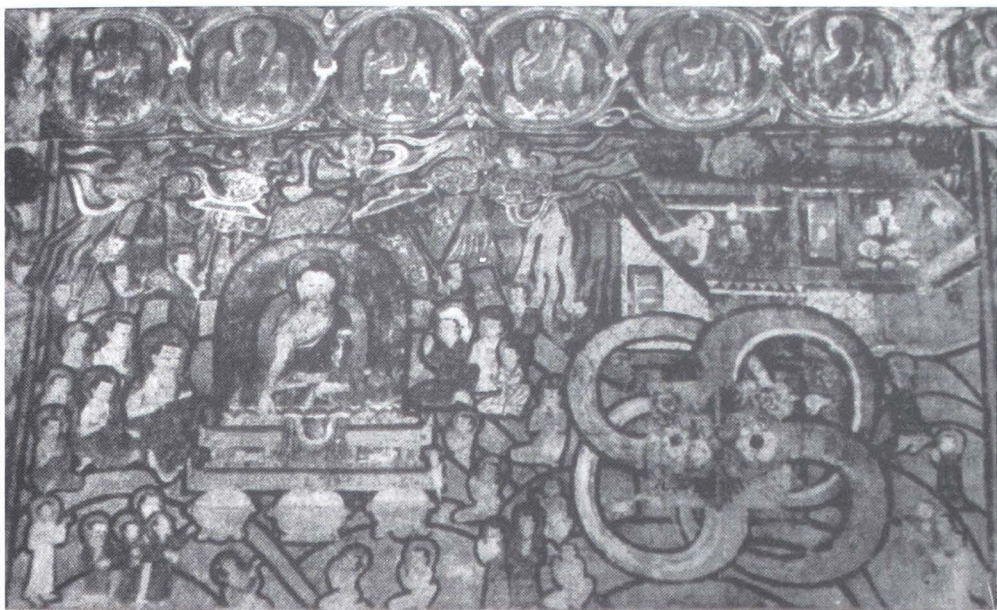


fig.21 An episode from the hundred deeds of the Buddha. rGyang stupa, third storey, fourth chapel. (Courtesy of IsMEO)



fig.22 Flanking Bodhisattvas from Jo.nang stupa. Third floor. (Courtesy of IsMEO).



fig.23 A monk and Bodhisattvas. Jo.nang stupa, third storey, ninth chapel. (Courtesy of IsMEO).

lesser figures such as the monks have been maintained in the style whose starting point was at Zhwa.lu, though they evolved through time to reach their final expression at Ri.bo.che.

This is all the more evident at Jo.nang sku.'bum—the closest in style to Zhwa.lu—in the images of the seated Bodhisattvas and the secondary figures around the main deities, notably in regard to their anatomical structure. In contrast, features such as the thick black outlines are seldom found at Zhwa.lu. When they do appear it is behind trees, and almost never around clouds, and with a marked discretion and restraint [pl.64]. At Zhwa.lu, the limited use of these black contours is conceived rather differently: they are intended only as backgrounds to highlight certain details, such as trees. At all three sku.'bum, they later grew increasingly dramatic, thick and obtrusive, suggesting that later painters may have mistaken them for outlines.

A number of sources are in agreement in stating that these painted walls were part of a complete restructuring of Zhwa.lu gSer.khang undertaken by the great s'ku.zhang Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan⁴⁷ soon after he was given powers over the Zhwa.lu *khri.skor* by the Yüan emperor Ol.ja.du [Themur].⁴⁸ As extensively discussed in Chapter 4, Zhwa.lu gSer.khang was renovated soon after 1306. The works at Zhwa.lu were completed, the sources say,⁴⁹ before the time that Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan extended his invitation to Bu.ston rin.po.che, who came to Zhwa.lu in iron-monkey 1320. The sources stress another point:⁵⁰ Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan invited artists from Mongol China to carry out the whole renovation. Some western authors choose to distinguish between the Chinese and the Mongols, but I find such distinctions spurious, as China was ruled by the Yüan dynasty at this time.

However, the style of art adopted at the gSer.khang indicates that the school of art of the artists who worked on it was neither Chinese nor Mongol. The style of the images' features and the choice of the colours are definitely Newar, while such details as the clouds and the representation of certain specific divinities (including the cycle of the Four Guardian Kings), as well as some architectural depictions, are all manifestly Chinese. This combination of the Newar style with certain Chinese elements began to occur in China during the second half of the 13th century, when the Sa.skya.pa sent Newar artists, amongst them the famous Aniko, to the Yüan court.⁵¹ The Zhwa.lu murals testify that the art which gave shape to them came from the deep influence left at the Yüan court by the Newar school. They also constitute the very starting point of the style which developed locally into the art of Jo.nang and rGyang, and which eventually found conclusive expression at dPal Ri.bo.che: as Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan's invitation of the masters of the Sino-Newar school from Mongol China during the beginning of the 14th century confirms. At Jo.nang, the gSer.khang murals were taken as a model⁵² by a hand that was Tibetan [pls. 84, 85]. At rGyang the style became more distinctive and autonomous, but at the same time, a little provincial. At dPal Ri.bo.che the style proceeded towards an independent, fluid and imaginative synthesis which still retains Zhwa.lu characteristics.

Who were the Tibetan artists who propagated the Zhwa.lu foreign style and transformed it according to local taste and tendency? Who were Thang.stong rgyal.po's artists? Because of his great mobility,⁵³ his building activities encompassed almost every corner of the Tibetan cultural domain, which could make the problem of identifying the artistic provenance of the group of master craftsmen/disciples who faithfully followed him difficult. He could have selected and trained them from any of the areas where he constructed iron bridges or holy edifices. According to his *mam.thar*, a devoted painter/disciple offered to execute the murals, but other than some of his spiritual achievements, little more is said about him.⁵⁴ That Thang.stong rgyal.po was a native of La.stod,⁵⁵ the very same area where dPal Ri.bo.che is located, does not seem to help at all. Even his practice of summoning compulsory labour with the help of the lord of each area in which he worked seems to shed no further light. But the concentration of archaeological evidence emerging from dPal Ri.bo.che and the other sku.'bum-s in a well-defined, limited and culturally homogeneous area, seems to credit the hypothesis of a local school on the gTsang border. Considering that such a school developed a steady artistic trend over a precise period of time, the hypothesis seems to be reinforced. The involvement of bSod.nams bkra.shis with such a local school of art in the building of rGyang mchod.rten proves that it was well-established and attested to in the territory: even the cosmopolitan Sa.skya.pa (though in decline) chose to rely on it.

The question is peripherally touched upon in Thang.stong rgyal.po's *mam.thar*, which states that the La.stod Lho lord sent craftsmen to Ri.bo.che to take part in the work at the mchod.rten,⁵⁶ and that

various kinds of craftsmen from Lho, Byang, and mNga' gathered there.⁵⁷ In Tibetan literature, only La.stod is commonly divided into Lho and Byang.⁵⁸ This identification is further proven by that same passage where, in the dialogue with the La.stod Lho lord Thang.stong rgyal.po proposes to build the mchod.rten not specifically in La.stod Lho, but in a place where the people from all the three territories of Lho, Byang and mNga' would be able to go for dharma.⁵⁹ Since this passage identifies Lho as La.stod Lho, it is evident that Byang is La.stod Byang and, by reason of contiguity, mNga' stands for mNga'.ris smad, or Gung.thang. That mNga' cannot be taken for mNga'.ris skor.gsum is proven on stylistic grounds in that art in 15th century mNga'.ris skor.gsum is profoundly different: on grounds of proximity in that mNga'.ris skor.gsum is too far from dPal Ri.bo.che for it to be easily accessible to its inhabitants; and on textual grounds in that mNga'.ris stod is always identified as mNga'.ris skor.gsum in the *Thang.stong rgyal.po nam.thar*.⁶⁰

The school that was responsible for the three mchod.rten can be called, for the sake of clarity, the La.stod school of art, bearing in mind its territorial extent in the light of the archaeological evidence there. The relevance of finding such a well-defined school in an area on the gTsang border is strengthened, in my view, by the fact that the great monuments of rGyal.rtse were built in gTsang itself during the period covering the construction of the various mchod.rten considered in this chapter: rGyal.rtse rdzong was constructed in iron-horse 1390, and rGyal.rtse sku.'bum founded in fire-sheep 1427.⁶¹ This means that before (Jo.nang, built c.1330), during (rGyang, built in the early years of the 15th century) and after (dPal Ri.bo.che, built 1449-1456) the time when the rGyal.rtse temples were built, the La.stod style was prospering.

It is well-known that the rGyal.rtse sku.'bum has inscriptions⁶² certifying that the artists responsible for its works of art came from places not far from rGyal.rtse itself, such as gNas.rnying, sNar.thang, Lha.rtse and sNye.mo. Therefore, two separate but virtually contemporary schools of art, both born and active in gTsang and nearby La.stod, worked in the territory at least from the second half of the 14th century to the mid-15th century.

Final confirmation that an independent school of art existed in La.stod during this period, when the monuments of rGyal.rtse were built in a close, yet different style, can be found in an episode from the biography of dGe.'dun.grub (1391-1474), the First Dalai Lama.⁶³ The narrative seems reliable, since the author of the *nam.thar* was a disciple of dGe.'dun.grub, and was directly involved in the episode.⁶⁴ The First Dalai Lama, having gone to Ngam.ring, capital of La.stod Byang, tried to summon the supreme artist of the La.stod Byang school, who was called bKra.shis rin.chen, but met with a refusal from Thang.stong rgyal.po in person, because the artist was busy working with him. These events fall in the earth-snake year 1461, and prove that Thang.stong rgyal.po was still engaged in building activities in the area. In the absence of precise dates for the construction of the Ri.bo.che dgon.pa, it is fair to assume that he was still completing the construction of this local monastery. From the *Thang.stong rgyal.po nam.thar* it is known that this occurred after Ri.bo.che sku.'bum had been finished.⁶⁵ It is worth noting that bKra.shis rin.chen was esteemed no less than the famed Newar artists. The Dalai Lama harboured a doubt as to whether to summon Thang.stong rgyal.po's protégé, or a Newar artist. He chose to invite bKra.shis rin.chen because a prophecy had advised him in favour of the Tibetan. After Thang.stong rgyal.po's refusal, he opted for a Newar master.⁶⁶

The La.stod style of Jo.nang and rGyang which reached its zenith at dPal Ri.bo.che does not, therefore, represent an incubation phase of the rGyal.rtse style, as has been maintained,⁶⁷ but rather an alternative to it, particularly if the fact that Ri.bo.che was built later than rGyal.rtse sku.'bum is taken into account. On the one hand we find the style of rGyal.rtse more cosmopolitan and open to contacts with Ming China after the lessons of Newar art had been creatively assimilated beforehand; and on the other that of dPal Ri.bo.che, born from the Newar school at the Yüan court, which evolved over a period of some decades initially into a distinctive local interpretation.

In my view, this is a rare case in the medieval history of Tibet, which preserves archaeological and textual evidence on different yet contemporary Tibetan schools of art that found mutually distinct and independent expression in contiguous territories.

Notes

1. Thang.stong rgyal.po's full name was Thang.stong rgyal.po bsTson.'grus bzang.po, see TTsKT, 228. His biography states that he was born in the iron-ox year 1361, and died in wood-snake 1485; however, because of the Tibetan system of calculation and irregularities of the Tibetan calendar, it states that he lived for 128 years. Tucci (1949, 163) proposes the dates 1385-1481; R.A. Stein (1959, 238) follows the same set of dates. See also Gyatso, 1980, 115, n.2.

2. A curious example of traces left by two famous 'madmen' of Tibet can be found in the khyams.ra of the Lhasa gtsug.lag.khang: the spacious courtyard in front of the Jo.khang entrance, where assemblies were held. It is claimed that the two stones embedded in the wood of a pillar on the east wing were thrown by gTsang.smyon and dBus.smyon.

3. TGNT, written by Lo.chen 'Gyur.me bde.chen (b.1540). The date the rnam.thar appeared is considered by Tucci (1949, 163) to have been the earth-rat year 1588, while Stein gives it as earth-bird 1609 (1959, 220). The same rnam.thar is not very commonly found in Tibetan manuscript form: a copy is preserved at Tibet House, New Delhi.

4. I visited dPal Ri.bo.che during Autumn, 1988. The site is on the northern bank of the Ra.ga gTsang.po, some eighty kilometres west of Ngam.ring. A rough road leads to dPal Ri.bo.che from the ancient capital of La.stod Byang, and the spot can also be reached on a path that crosses the mountains from Zang.zang in the north. My stay there took place under very fortunate circumstances, since I had the good fortune to meet by chance some pilgrims with whom I had previously travelled to Kailash. They were so kind as to make arrangements for me to see all the floors of the Ri.bo.che stupa, which is normally open only on the ground and first floors.

5. TGNT, 268.

6. Ibid., 269.

7. Ibid.

8. A 'mchod.rten bkra.shis sgo.mang' [stupa with many doors] can be both a 'nang.rten', or a 'phyi.rten' [internal or external receptacle]. The external receptacles evolved into the monumental complex structures that are so unique to Tibetan architecture. To trace the history and the development of the mchod.rten bkra.shis sgo.mang goes well beyond the scope of this note. Suffice to say that at an early stage in medieval Tibet, the structure was already popular and similar mchod.rten were built in the monasteries serving as the seats of the various newly established Tibetan sects. The tradition continued for centuries.

9. A bad omen.

10. TGNT, 271.

11. Ibid., 273-274.

12. The ser.dmag were trained in the major monasteries and were responsible for the internal discipline in the dgon.pa. They were also used in warfare when political circumstances required, as in the case of the war between the dGe.lugs.pa and La.dwags (see Petch, 1947, 169ff.), when the Mongol monk-general dGa.ldan Tshe.dbang dpal.bzang.po, the chief of the bKra.shis.lhun.po ser.dmag, was sent by the Fifth Dalai Lama against the king of La.dwags, bDe.legs rnam.rgyal, and eventually created the possibility, if not through his military action then through subsequent diplomacy, of taking the provinces of Gu.ge sPu.rangs under Lhasa's control.

13. 'Bum.dhir' is the same as bum.pa: the bell, or more literally, the 'vase' of a mchod.rten.

14. TGNT, 271-276.

15. A leather bag for holding tsam.pa flour, sometimes large.

16. Craftsmen responsible for the grinding of the vegetal and mineral colours; not artists, but assistants.

17. Tshal is a shade of red: brilliant vermilion.

18. TGNT, 279-280.

19. The 'bang.rim' is the stepped part of the mchod.rten bkra.shis sgo.mang, where the storeys of chapels are located. It is just below the bum.pa.

20. Lit. 'the four bodies of the bla.ma'. With the mchod.rten in its present state of disruption, I am unable to say exactly what this expression refers to.

21. Lit. 'the copper island with many doors'. As with the note above, in the absence of concrete elements to which to relate the reference, I am in no position to elucidate this.

22. Lit. 'the life tree': the mchod.rten's axis, the most sacred consecrational implement of a stupa.

23. The deity intended to take possession of and protect the Ri.bo.che mchod.rten.
24. TGNT, 281-282.
25. *Ibid.*, 284-285.
26. The best-known to western scholars are Khro.phu (see Tucci, 1949, 179), sNar.thang (*ibid.*, 186-189, pls.41-52), Tshal Gung.thang (see Ferrari, 1958, 105-106, n.105, pl.11). Jo.nang, rGyang.bum.mo.che, rGyal.rtse, Byams.pa.gling: on the last four great mchod.rten 'with many doors', see below, and also Chan, (forthcoming), 1991.
27. On Jo.nang sku.'bum, see UTKN, 463-469; Tucci, 1949, 189-196; PTsL, 241-242; Roerich, 1979, 776; Ferrari, 1958, 155-156, n.562-584; Tucci, 1973, 119-183, pls.78-79, where the Jo.nang sku.'bum is wrongly recorded as the rGyang sku.'bum. A Sa.skyapa monastery pre-existed the foundation of the great stupa. Kun.spangs Thugs.rje brtson.'grub, a disciple of lama 'Phags.pa, founded it during the second half of the 13th century. On Kun.spang.pa, see Roerich, 1979, 771-772; and Ruegg, 1963, 80,90-91.
28. On Phun.tshogs.gling, see PTsL, *passim*; UTKN, 469-477; Tucci, 1949, 196-201; Ferrari, 1958, 155, n.60; Tucci, 1973, 194, pls.192-196.
29. On rGyang bum.mo.che, see SKDR, 435-436; UTKN, 459; TGNT, 33,75; Ferrari, 1958, 154-155, n.556; Tucci, 1973, 119,181-183, pls.123,182,183,185. For a photograph of rGyang.bum.mo.che before its destruction, see Tucci, 1967, pl. facing 71.
30. For a treatment of the Ru.gnon problem, see Aris, 1979, 20-32. On Grom.pa rGyang, see UTKN, 459-461; Ferrari, 1958, 66, 154, n.553. On Lha.rtse, see UTKN, 453-459; and Ferrari, 1958, 65,153, n.560-561.
31. During my visit to rGyang in September 1985, I was able to discover that the stupa survives only as a shell formed by its broken external walls, having been completely hollowed out.
32. On Byams.pa.gling, founded by Thu.mi lhun.grub bkra'.shis in the water-dragon year 1472, see UTKN, 172-175; Ferrari, 1958, 55,133, n.322-323; Tucci, 1983, 148.
33. On rGyal.rtse sku.'bum, see RKNT, *passim*; Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1,2,3 *passim*; Ferrari, 1958, 41, 141, n.412, 142, n.414. I visited the place in September, October and November 1985, in June 1986, and in September and October 1986.
34. Olschak, 1979, 120ff.
35. Aris, 1979, 186ff.
36. TGNT, 10-11.
37. For references to Dol.po.pa, see Roerich, 1979, 775ff.; PTsL, 240-242; Tucci, 1949, 190; Ferrari, 1958, 66-67,155, n.563, 156, n.564. Dol.po.pa Shes.rab rgyal.mtshan is the codifier of the revolutionary religious thought that characterized the Jo.nang.pa after he became the leading exponent of the sect. In his youth he studied at Sa.skyapa and followed Sa.skyapa principles. After going to Jo.nang, Shes.rab rgyal.mtshan formulated his new ideas, which represented an apostasy of Sa.skyapa mainstream thought. He was abbot of the Jo.nang from fire-tiger 1326 to wood-horse 1354, when he left the see to his disciple Bo.dong Phyogs.las nram.rgyal, one of the greatest Tibetan polygraphs of all times. See also Ruegg, 1963.
38. TGNT, 33.
39. On bSod.nams bkra'.shis (1351-1417), see SKDR, 436; BG, 181-182; Tucci, 1949, 632. His connections with La.stod Byang are due to his marriage with a Byang.pa lady called Ma.gcig Nam.pa. See also Tucci, 1949, 179.
40. On Jo.nang mchod.rten, see Tucci, 1949, 189-196, pls.53-61. On rGyang.bum.mo.che, see *ibid.*,179-185, pls.25-40.
41. At the time of my visit to Jo.nang (or Jo.mo.nang) in September 1985, the stupa was a large mass of debris piled onto the ruins of the structure, among which I was able to find my way to a chapel in which portions of a mural remained intact. After 1985, the Chinese began systematic renovations at Jo.nang.
42. TTSSN, 178.
43. The Thang.stong rgyal.po nram.thar does not help in dating his participation in the construction of rGyang mchod.rten. It occurred at an imprecise date during the earlier part of his life.
44. TGNT, 75.
45. On the Zhwa.lu murals, see The Chronicles of Zha.lu in Tucci, 1949, 656ff.; MyCh, 160ff.; ZGLG, *passim*.
46. I was able to personally inspect Zhwa.lu dgon.pa in September 1985, July 1986, September 1986, October 1986, and November 1988. (A major renovation programme was initiated in Spring 1986.)
47. On Grags.pa rgyal.mtshan and his rebuilding activities at Zhwa.lu, see The Chronicles of Zha.lu in Tucci, 1949, 659; MyCh, 168; ZGLG, 19; and Bu.ston rin.po.che nram.thar, translated by Ruegg, 1966.
48. The Chronicles of Zha.lu in Tucci, 1949, 660; MyCh, 168. Ol.ja.du's regnal years are usually given as 1294-1307. Among the many sources on Ol.ja.du, see Hambis and Pelliot, 1945, 129-130. For

Tibetan references see, inter alia, The Life of Sum-pa Khan-po [Sum.pa mkhan.po Re'u.mig] in Das, 1889; DTMP(G), f.11b.

49. See Ruegg, 1966, 92-93.

50. See MyCh, 168; Ruegg, 1966, 90.

51. On Aniko, see Lévi, 1905-1908, vol.III, 185-189; Petech, 1958, 99-101; H. Karmay, 1975, 21,33, n.99. After working at Sa.skya, Aniko was sent to the Yüan court in iron-monkey 1263. By the time of his death in fire-horse 1306, his school was well established at court.

52. Though controversial, Dol.po.pa's relations with Zhwa.lu (in particular with Bu.ston rin.po.che who, with Dol.po.pa himself, was the greatest Kalachakra expert of the time) and Sa.skya on matters pertaining to religious doctrines were conducive also in artistic terms, as the evidence at Jo.nang stupa proves. The Jo.nang style is indebted to that of Zhwa.lu, the latter being an extant example of the idiom born in Yüan China as the result of the impetus given by the Sa.skya.pa, when they sent Newar artists to work at the Yüan court in the later part of the 13th century. It is feasible that a combination of cultural and religious factors gave way to the early formulation of the local La.stod style at Jo.nang.

53. Among the many places he travelled to, Thang.stong rgyal.po is recorded as having sojourned at, or gone on pilgrimage to Gung.thang, Lhasa, rKong.po, 'On.shod, 'Phan.yul, Tod.lung, rGya.gar, Ti.se, mDo.Khams, bSam.yas, sNye.mo, rGyal.rtse, Sa.skya, Zhwa.lu, mNga'.ris skor.gsum, La.dwags, sMar.khams. See TGNT, passim.

54. TGNT, 281.

55. See Gyatso, 1980, 115, n.1, where his birthplace is given as 'O.ba Lha.rtse.

56. TGNT, 269.

57. Ibid., 280.

58. The division of La.stod into 'Lho' and 'Byang' can be found in the list of the *Kbri'.skor* (the thirteen territories), into which dBus.gTsang was divided at the time of Mongol domination over Tibet. See, inter alia, Tucci, 1971, 185; Tucci, 1949, 680, n.52. In the Fifth Dalai Lama's Chronicles, a section is dedicated to the history of La.stod Byang, abbreviated there as 'Byang' (see Tucci, 1949, 631-632). In the same section, La.stod Lho is referred to simply as 'Lho'.

59. TGNT, 270.

60. TGNT refers to the territory as mNga'.ris skor.gsum to avoid confusion with mNga'.ris Gung.thang; see, for example, 309-310.

61. On rGyal.rtse, see Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1,2,3 passim; MyCh, 49ff.; RKNT, passim.

62. On the rGyal.rtse Inscriptions see Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 2. For a resumé of the artists involved in the decoration of the monuments and the names of the places from which they came, see Tucci, 1932-1941, IV, 1, 19-20,36.

63. GNT, 266-268.

64. In the colophon (300) of GNT, the author is named as Sha.kya dge.slong Ye.shes rtse.mo. He wrote the biography in wood-tiger 1494. From the passage quoted in note 63 above, it is evident that the author accompanied dGe'.dun.grub on his trip to summon the Tibetan artist from Byang for the statue of Byams.pa which the Dalai Lama intended to erect at bKra.shis lhun.po, in the new chapel to be dedicated to that deity (see *ibid.*, 267).

65. See TGNT, 287-294. While the the *nam.thar* gives the foundation and completion dates for the Ri.bo.che stupa, no indication appears regarding the period during which the monastery of Ri.bo.che (now no longer extant) was built. TGNT, 287, notes that the monastery was started just after completion of the stupa.

66. GNT, 268, tells about the difficulty of finding a suitable substitute for bKra.shis rin.chen, after Thang.stong rgyal.po's refusal. The construction of the Byams.pa chapel was started in the meantime, and craftsmen from gNas.rnying and later from 'Brong.rtse were summoned to prepare the copper sheets to be used for the great statue. Eventually, dGe'.dun.grub was able to find Bi.shwu Kar.ma, evidently a Newar artist from his name, who was previously active at dGa'.ldan.

67. Tucci, 1949, 184-185.

"Naturally this is the case of reminiscences, affinities, echoes which show in the Tibetan artists a knowledge, perhaps remote, of those styles but also an immaturity as to means of expression, or at least an inadequate absorption of ideals which, often against their will, seemed almost to force themselves upon them. Such characters predominate in this period and are to be found in both mural paintings and in those of the canvas but they have already vanished, or became less frequent, when the Chos.rgyal built the sKu'.bum of Gyantse."

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The Author

After post graduate studies, **Roberto Vitali** spent 20 years researching into Tibetan civilization with the help of Tibetan teachers, and has frequently travelled to remote regions of that country to document the story of Tibet's art. Tibetan studies *in situ* have become, for Vitali, rather more a way of life than a profession.

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