

Studies on the History and Literature
of Tibet and the Himalaya

HENK BLEZER, ROBERTO VITALI, DAVID TEMPLEMAN, FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD, ELLIOT SPERLING,
BIANCA HORLEMANN, SAUL MULLARD, ALICE TRAVERS, ISRUN ENGELHARDT

Edited by ROBERTO VITALI

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CONTENTS

HENK BLEZER

The Discourse on the Origins of the Teachers of Past, Present and Future *Dus gsum ston pa 'byung khungs kyi mdo* 1

ROBERTO VITALI

Grub chen U rgyan pa and the Mongols of China 31

DAVID TEMPLEMAN

The 17th cent. gTsang Rulers And Their Strategies of Legitimation 65

FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD

'Flow of the River Gangā': the gSan-yig of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma and its Literary Sources 79

ELLIOT SPERLING

Reincarnation and the Golden Urn in the 19th Century: The Recognition of the 8th Panchen Lama 97

BIANCA HORLEMANN

Tibetan Nomadic Trade, the Chinese 'xiejia' System and the Sino-Tibetan Border Market in sTong 'khor/ Dan' gaer in 19th/20th Century A mdo 109

SAUL MULLARD

Tibetan and Sikkimese Relations: Preliminary Remarks on the Gam pa disputes and the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement of 1867 143

ALICE TRAVERS

The careers of Ganden Phodrang officials (1895–1959): patrimonial aspects of public service? 157

ISRUN ENGELHARDT

Tharchin's One Man War with Mao 183

THE DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINS
OF THE TEACHERS OF PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
*DUS GSUM STON PA 'BYUNG KHUNGS KYI MDO*¹

HENK BLEZER
(LIAS, Leiden University)

THE EARLIEST HAGIOGRAPHIES OF GSHEN RAB MI BO

We have not yet been able to date satisfactorily the earliest so-called hagiographies of sTon pa gShen rab mi bo, the founder of Bon. The *mDo 'dus* is the shorter version, in one volume. Samten Karmay (1975:176f) presumes that parts of the *mDo 'dus* may date back to the 10th c. AD or before (this paper will support that date). Many follow Karmay's estimates, but not everyone agrees. Dan Martin (2001:45), for instance, puts it in the 11th c. AD. Another early source is the *gZer myig*, usually considered the middle-length version and published in two volumes. According to Karmay (1975:177) the *gZer myig* is to be dated around the 11th c. AD or earlier. We will not discuss a later and longer version, the *gZi brjid*, which usually comes in twelve volumes. It is a treasure texts or *gter ma*, attributed to Blo ldan snying po (b.1360 AD).

The *mDo 'dus* is a crucial source for our understanding of Bon, as it emerges *in history* at the turn of the first millennium AD. The 'location' of origin and other important issues in nascent organised Bon are closely entwined with early narratives on the founder. Establishing reliable dates for the *mDo 'dus* is therefore very important. For instance, an early date, in the 10th c. AD, might make it one of the earliest self-consciously Bon sources, while a slightly later date, in the late 11th c. AD, might give precedence to other sources. Considering the scarcity of genuinely early sources, such a difference in dating may affect our ideas about early organised Bon significantly.

1 This is a lightly reworked part of a published article (Blezer 2010). It is the fruit of labour in Ph.D supervision of Kalsang Norbu Gurung. Many of the ideas were developed in conjunction, by systematic attempts to mutually challenge our theses. His excellent forthcoming publication on the subject therefore complements this one.

BRIEF RETROSPECT OF DUNHUANG SOURCES (CF. BLEZER 2008)

A reflection of an early layer of narratives, the earliest that we presently have,² has been preserved in Dunhuang, Eastern Turkestan. Dunhuang gShen rab(s) narratives show a simple paradigm of crisis management; notably narratives about death and ritual service, and about illness and healing. This story paradigm is also common to the wider stock of Dunhuang narratives that relates of activities of *gshen* and *bon (po)* ritual specialists. A similar gShen rab story paradigm also appears in the *Klu 'bum* collections, which may partly be contemporaneous with Dunhuang sources, but perhaps also with the *mDo 'dus*.³ Dunhuang references to a gShen rab(s) character may be off-centre⁴ reflections of wider narrative tradition, which formed the point of origin of later *sTon pa* gShen rab mi bo legends.⁵

In forthcoming publication of the *Three Pillars of Bon* research programme (see bibliography), I will argue that based on available sources we can establish that a quantum leap into self-consciously Bon narratives most likely took place at the turn of the first millennium AD. This is the period of the early Buddhist *phyi dar*, in which nascent bonpos were challenged to show to their world a suitable founder of Bon that could outshine the historical Buddha of successfully emerging Buddhist sects. From that point onward, stories not only gained narrative weight and complexity, but also started acquiring a distinct identity vector. The narratives evolved and were incorporated into the type of teaching hagiography and identity discourse that we find reflected in extant recensions of the *mDo 'dus* and in a more elaborate and developed manner in the *gZer myig* (and *gZi brjid*); see Blezer (2008). A workable starting hypothesis is that the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig* live from a similar matrix of, earlier oral and written traditions of narratives regarding a gShen rab figure (early *phyi dar* and before), the earliest written confirmation of which we receive from Dunhuang sources.

THE PROBLEM OF DATING IN A NUTSHELL

Unfortunately, the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig* have not yet been securely dated: textual transmission, especially of the *mDo 'dus*, is too problematic: data in the colophons are sparse and later (historical) sources are not very consistent. In a contribution to the *Emerging Bon* panel at the eleventh seminar of the *International Association for Tibetan Studies* in Bonn, Kalsang Norbu, who collaborated on the *Three Pillars of*

2 These are to be dated before the early 11th c. AD, in any case, but probably mostly to the 9th–10th c. AD.

3 Going by traditional narratives of discovery, *Klu 'bum* rituals and narratives might even start to coagulate and to be compiled as early as in the beginning of the 10th c. AD (913 AD)?

4 North-eastern Buddhist Dunhuang as opposed to a presumed South-western heartland of Bon (cf. Blezer).

5 See Stein 1988, cf. Karmay 1975 and Spanien/MacDonald 1978–79.

Bon project,⁶ made a major stride toward dating the *mDo 'dus* and tentatively dates it in the late 11th c. AD (1081 or 1070). Yet, starting from his assumptions, it proves difficult to cover all the evidence in one straightforward theory. In order to account *also* for the contradicting data, we may need to make extra assumptions and start from a different set of working hypotheses. But alas, textual evidence is far from compelling: lack of articulated feedback from surviving colophons and later references renders it very difficult to choose between competing theories.

What follows is an attempt to recommend a choice purely on methodological grounds. I shall not restate or reproduce in detail the arguments of Kalsang Norbu Gurung and refer the reader to his well-documented and carefully executed study (forthcoming in the proceedings of the 2006 Bonn IATS seminar). We developed our articles in close dialogue. Here I shall merely supplement or discuss his findings, wherever that seems illuminating or necessary.

MDO 'DUS, MDO GZER MYIG AND 'BYUNG KHUNGS KYI MDO

In extant sources, both the *gZer myig* and *mDo 'dus* are in various ways associated with a *Dus gsum* [enlightened one] *'byung khungs kyi mdo* or “Discourse on the Origins of the ... of Past, Present and Future”. Varying indications appear for “enlightened one”: *gshen rab* (gShen rab mi bo); *sangs rgyas* (Awakened One); *ston pa* (Teacher); *bde gshegs* (Sugata, in Shar rdza).⁷ Most frequently we here of course find *gshen rab*. Note that the names do not necessarily always explicitly refer to bonpo figures.

Alas, that *mdo* has not survived with that title or in its earliest form. The *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* is said to be part of a collection of *Four Great Sūtra-s* or *mDo chen po bzhi*. Only three of the four *sūtra-s* are still extant in the Bon *bKa' 'gyur* and we do not know whether they presently still are in their original form.⁸ The *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* is usually said to be the first discourse of these four great discourses or *mDo chen po bzhi*. For instance, according to the colophon of the *sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo*, one of the *mDo chen po bzhi*, the *Dus gsum ston pa 'byung khungs kyi mdo*, is the first.

6 This project is funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), at CNWS/LIAS, Leiden University, 2005–10.

7 Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan, *Legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod* (1985), p.216.6 and 288.18f.

8 To wit, the *sNod rten 'byung ba 'jig rten chags 'jig mdo*, *Bla med gong [go] 'phang sgrub pa thabs kyi mdo*, and *Khams sum sems can skye 'chi mdo*; detailed discussion of these sources in Kalsang Norbu (IATS 2006).

EARLY SOURCES: THE 'BYUNG KHUNGS KYI MDO IS THE MDO GZER MYIG

Early sources tend to identify the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo as the gZer myig. The earliest references to a 'Byung khungs kyi mdo appear in the colophon to one of those four discourses, the sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo:

*dus gsum ston pa 'byung khung mdo las snga rabs 'das dang ldan pa [=chpt.1]
nas slad kyi (ston pa ji ltar 'byon pa'i) bar le'u [=chpt.18] ni bco brgyad yod
par ston⁹*

In this quote, the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo, indeed like the gZer myig, is said to have eighteen chapters and it correctly identifies the first and last titles of present editions of the gZer myig. The sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo therefore suggests that the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo is the gZer myig (in whatever form it then had), **period**.¹⁰ The colophon of the gZer myig also explicitly connects the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo to the gZer myig.¹¹

9 Colophon sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo, bKa' 'gyur III edition, Vol.32, f.112v6ff. (Appendix Ia) and cf. : Colophon Bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs kyi mdo and gTor bzlog, see end of the Bla med go 'phang bsgrub thabs mdo 'jug gi gtor bzlog sogs kyi mdo skor, bKa' 'gyur III edition, Vol.33, fol.126r2ff. (Appendix Ib)

10 But see later discussion about the order and number of chapters in the gZer myig and mDo 'dus,

11 The gZer m[y]ig (Tsering Thar, Beijing 1998 (1991)), p.810.12 (Appendix II).

See also the 'Francke' gZer myig from the Waddell Collection. It is kept at the *Orientalabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz*; shelf numbers: *Wadd 1* and *Wadd 1a* (see also: Dieter Schuh, *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, Vol.XI.8, pp.89-90: numbers 35 and 36). There is no colophon at the end of *Wadd 1a*. Toward the end of that volume, on the penultimate folio (f.288v), there is an interesting miniature depicting the performance of a ritual, with two officiating bonpo priests to the left of a temple like structure and two devoted female figures (hands in devotion or offering) to the right. Samten Karmay will publish on these images and the identity of that ritual soon. What immediately follows, is a *dkar chag*-like page. Immediately preceding we find the sober ending of chapter 18. But there is a three-folio-page-long colophon at the end of *Wadd 1*, which we (and the cataloguers) presume is volume one of this set (it ends with chapter 9). But I am not completely sure yet, whether these two Waddell volumes 1 & 1a originally really belonged together; even though it does look like they do. The sizes of the *dpe cha* are slightly different and I also noticed some other unusual things (with the chapter headings and their descriptions).

In any case the colophon of *Wadd 1*, ff.274r-275r, leaves no doubt about the authors opinion on identity of the *Dus gsum gshen rabs byung khungs kyi mdo*, f.274v, l.1: *ston pa mu cho ldem drug g<y>is kyang bon sgo bzhi mdzod dang lnga'i don bstan pa'o//di la yang mdo' rnam pa bzhi ste/ dus gsum gshen rabs byung khungs kyi mdo dang / 'khams gsum sems can skye shi'i mdo dang / snod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig g<y>i mdo dang / bla myed go 'phang bsgrub thabs kyi mdo dang bzhi la/ 'di ni dus gsu[m] gshen rabs byung khungs kyi mdo'o.*

LATER SOURCES: THE 'BYUNG KHUNGS KYI MDO IS THE *mDo 'dus*

At the very late end of the spectrum we find various *dKar chag* (catalogues) and *brGyud rim* (lines of transmission), which identify the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo as the *mDo 'dus*. See for instance the *dKar chag* by:

- Rig 'dzin Kun grol grags pa (b.1701 AD); see Appendix IIIa;
- mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan 'dzin (b.1813 AD) is very explicit: p.3: '*dir kha gcig gis mdo bzhi'i nang tshan byung khungs kyi mdo gzer mig la ngos 'dzin pa ni mi 'thad de mdo bzhi'i ni dbus gter li shus rtag gzigs nas bskur bar bshad pa'i phyir ro// /*; see Appendix IIIb.
- Bla ming g-Yung drung tshul khirms dbang grags (b.1868 AD); see Appendix IIIc;

But one could also refer to Khod spungs pa's *brGyud rim* (1929).¹²

The *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang chen mo* (here abbreviated to *Kha byang*) also clearly associates the 'Byung khungs kyi mdo with Drang rje btsun pa gSer mig, who traditionally is believed to be the *gter ston* of the *gZer myig*. The *Kha byang* is said to have been discovered in 1310 AD, by Khod po Blo gros thogs med, aka dBra rigs Gyer thogs med (b.1280/92 AD?).

The passage on Drang rje btsun pa gser mig's discoveries in the *Kha byang*, however, begs to differ on important details and provides a most intriguing deviating classification. While the passage might be read such as to suggest that a '*dus gsum gshen rabs du 'byung khungs mdo* consists of six parts and here means the *gZer myig* (this is how Kalsang Norbu reads it), that identification in fact is an inference based on later understandings. Reading the datum from its own context, would rather suggest that the '*dus gsum gshen rabs du 'byung khungs mdo* consists of the six titles listed, which here include the other three *mDo chen po bzhi*. Moreover, the intriguing title *mDo phran nyi shu rtsa cig mdo 'dus* also appears as one of them (see Kalsang Norbu for possible identifications).¹³

12 The *sKu gsum ston pa'i gsung rab bka' 'gyur rin po che'i lung rgyun ji snyed pa phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i bzhugs byang brgyud rim bcas pa dri med shel gyi phreng ba*, also known as *brgyud rim* or *sngags rim*, written by Khod spungs dBra ston Ngag dbang skal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, who may be identical to Su la rGyal mtshan, in 1929, *bKa' 'gyur I/II* edition, Vol.103 (henceforth Khod spungs pa's *brGyud rim*): p.83: *bsam yas la a tsar mi gnyis kyis gter byon mdo bzhi la/ dang po mdzad mdo bsdus pa mdo 'dus zhes grags pa/ dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khung mdo le'u nyer bzhi/ gnyis pa khams gsum sems can skye 'chi mdo le'u bco lnga pa/ gsum pa snod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig mdo le'u bcu gcig/ bzhi pa bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs mdo le'u nyer gcig/ rin chen gter zlog chen po'i lha bdud 'chi bdag bdud zlog gi mdo le'u gsum pa /*. Information on the *gZi brjid* appears on p.67ff. and the *gZer myig* on pp.80ff.

13 See *bKa' brten 'III'* edition, Vol.142.8, pp.491.5ff.: *yang dmu tsa gyer med gyis sprul pa/ drang rje btsun pa gser mig gis/ khri tang dur khrod kyis gter sgo 'byed ste/ de'i nang nas bon gyis rtsis byang ci yod ston pa ni/ phyir mdor rgyud dum pa bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis yod ste/ dus gsum gshen rab du 'byung khungs mdo la dum pa drug-*

However, alternatively, one might also argue that the first five chapters of the *mDo 'dus* are later additions: mainly preludes of a cosmological nature, and that it thus consists of nineteen chapters, or eighteen, if one leaves another late-looking one out (e.g., chapter 16: *mDzod gnas le'u*). The eighteen-chapter *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* and sGa ston's elusive *'mDo rgyud'* thus might also refer to an earlier version of the *mDo 'dus*, in eighteen chapters.

ORIGIN NARRATIVES: *CA TI MA* AND *DRANG NGA MA: CA TI MA*

The narratives of discovery for the *mDo chen po bzhi* at some point were called *Ca ti ma*, which derives from Sanskrit *caitya* (*stūpa*; phonetically Tib.: *ca ti*): it signifies the red *mchod rten* at bSam yas where the *gter ma* or treasure is said to have been found by two *a tsa ra*.

Kalsang Norbu notes that this name appears only relatively late in our sources. The first known occurrence is recorded in sGa ston Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan's *gTer gyi kha sbyang*. sGa ston Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan is probably to be dated roughly to the 12/1300s.¹⁴

DRANG NGA MA

The discovery narratives for the *gZer myig* at some point were styled *Drang nga ma*, a name that derives from the family name (*Drang nga*) of the discoverer of the treasure text. Judging by appearances, the name *Drang nga ma* has been around somewhat longer. Karmay (1998:169) refers to the biography of the treasure discoverer (*gter ston*) *gZhod ston dNgos grub grags pa*, who made his discoveries at the end of the 11th c. AD (e.g. 1088). In the *gZhod ston gyi rnam thar* (*SHB*, p.323) it is said that *gZhod ston* studied *bka' drang nga ma'i bon*.

ARE WE LOOKING AT ONE CLUSTER OF DIVERSIFIED ORIGIN NARRATIVES?

We should note that the *Ca ti ma* and *Drang nga ma* narratives are remarkably similar (see Kalsang Norbu's translations, forthcoming in the Bonn PIATS). We should furthermore compare *Ca ti ma* narratives to those of the discovery of the *Klu 'bum*, which is also said to have been revealed at bSam yas, this time not by two but three

1. */kham s gsum sems can skye shi 'bros ded mdo rgyud dang /*

2. *snod bcud 'byung pa chags 'jigs mdo rgyud dang / [492]*

3. *bla med go 'phang bsgrub thabs mdo rgyud dang /*

4. *mdo phran nyi shu rtsa cig mdo 'dus dang /*

5. *drin len bsab pa'i bon mdo dang /*

6. *gsas mkhar sdig sbyong bar ti kha'i mdo dang /*

de rnam kho bos kha yig btab nas yod//; cf. pp.487.6ff.

14 See Martin (2001).

ācārya-s (*a tsa ra mi gsum*).¹⁵ We may be dealing with one cluster of related but diversified origin narratives of stories on a 'gShen rab'. The *Ca ti ma* narratives of the earliest colophons suggest that the hagiography or a hypothetical fount of narratives goes back to the early 10th c. AD. Later historical sources imply the late 11th c. AD. This wide margin of uncertainty I am concerned to narrow down.

THE MOST LIKELY TIME OF SEPARATION OF A *Ca ti ma*
AND *Drang nga ma* NARRATIVE

Kalsang Norbu shows that the final separation of the *gZer myig* from the *mDo chen po bzhi* has been accomplished by sPa bsTan rgyal dpal bzang po (14th–15th c. AD?) in his *bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron ma*, when he first explicitly distinguished a *gZer myig Drang nga ma* narrative of discovery from a *Ca ti ma* one for the *mDo chen po bzhi*. But, already some time before, sGa ston Tshul khri ms rgyal mtshan (13/14th c. AD?)¹⁶, in his *gTer gyi kha sbyang*,¹⁷ distinguished a *Drang nga ma* narrative of discovery from a *Ca ti ma* one for the *mDo chen po bzhi*. For the *Drang nga ma*, he mentions discovery of a *mDo rgyud le'u bco brgyad pa*, by someone called *Drang btsun* (2005:43), but he does not specify the *gZer myig*. It was indeed sPa bsTan rgyal dpal bzang po who made that bit explicit in his *bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron ma*. For the rest, in his narratives of discovery, sPa ston mostly follows sGa ston Tshul khri ms rgyal mtshan in his *gTer gyi kha sbyang* very closely.

The late accounts in sGa ston Tshul khri ms rgyal mtshan's *gTer gyi kha sbyang* and in sPa bsTan rgyal dpal bzang po's *bsTan pa'i rnam bshad* assume that the (re)discoverers Tre rgyal ra tsa and Sad gu rin chen grags pa, caretakers of bSam yas temple, are contemporary with later figures that are also mentioned in these stories: Tir gyi U ston (a student of Zhu yas legs po, 1002–1081), Sum pa gTo ston (a student of Gur zhog lHa ri gnyen po, 1024–1091) and rGya Khri rje Phur ba 'bar (undated).

15 Khod spungs pa's *brGyud rim*, p.216: ... *klu 'bum skor la / bsam yas nas a tsar mi gsum gyis gter las thon pa'i klu 'bum la / gtsang ma'i klu 'bum dkar chen le'u mang du yod pa pod gcig / gtsang ma'i klu 'bum nag khra zhes pa le'u sum cu nas le'u [217] lnga bcu nga gnyis bar yod pa pod gcig / klu 'bum khra bo'i stod dum le'u re bdun nas brgyad cu bar yod pa / smad dum le'u so lnga nas le'u drug cu re brgyad bar yod pa bcas klu 'bum pod bzhi'i brgyud rim ni / rnam mkhyen ston pa gshen rab kyis / mtshan ldan drang srong rgyal ba la brgyud / des tshangs pa gtsug phud / klu grub ye shes snying po / gnyan bon thang thang khrol ba / gtod bon pa ti gsung snyan / sa bdag gi bon po gser thub rgyal ba dang bzhi la brgyud / des gdung brgyud bcu gsum / mkhas pa mi bzhi / de'i ring la bstan pa gter du gshegs / phyis su bsam yas lha khang nas a tsar mi gsum gyis gter du drangs te las can skyes bu rnames la [218] brgyud de dar / ...*

16 Cf. Kalsang Norbu (PIATS 2006), who rather convincingly argues for a date in the 13th c. AD.

17 *gTer gyi kha sbyang* by sGa ston Tshul khri ms rgyal mtshan (a recent Kathmandu computer typeset edition without extensive colophon; a manuscript in 45 folios is extant in the LTWA, Acc.no.17765), p.49.4 (App. IV).

Kalsang Norbu convincingly argues that if we follow the *gTer gyi kha byang* and dependents, the date of the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* of the *mDo chen po bzhi* has to be pushed up to 1081 or 1070 AD;¹⁸ and thus perhaps likewise the date of the *mDo 'dus*—but that is of course by no means certain.

Karmay (1988:169f.) shows that quotes that probably are from the *gZer myig* already appear in Me ston Shes rab 'od zer's (1058–1132 AD) work. In a very informative note, Karmay discusses early *gZer myig* quotes in the *'Dul ba kun las btus pa'i gzhung*, one of five works from the *bKa' brten sde lnga*, which mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan 'dzin attributes to Me ston Shes rab 'od zer. The Yar 'brog pa Me ston does not in fact mention the *gZer myig* by name but quotes the text as “spoken by the teacher”. A late date for the *mDo chen po bzhi*—and thus, perhaps, for the *mDo 'dus*—would then put the *mDo 'dus* roughly in the same time or possibly even after ‘the’ *gZer myig* or *Drang nga ma* discovery.

Karmay also found numerous quotes in works by A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1198–1236 AD), again quoted from an unnamed *mdo* or *sūtra*. Karmay speculates whether those *gZer myig* chapters that neither Me ston nor A zha quote from, to wit chapters x and xii, and chapter xi, which A zha only quotes once, might perhaps be later additions. This could point to an older, leaner, ritualistic *gZer myig* core. Karmay rightly notes that it are precisely these three missing chapters that have parallels in the *lHa 'dre* and *bTsun mo bKa' thang* (Blondeau 1971:34–39) of the Old (rNying ma) Sect and that moreover are narrative in character. In my opinion, these are very important considerations that ought to be followed up.

In that same long note, Karmay also shows that sGa ston Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan already mentions the name *gZer myig* in his *bsTan pa bon gyi klad don*. sGa ston there in fact appears surprisingly critical of the text.¹⁹ Kalsang Norbu moreover found earlier quotes, by name, of both the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig*, in the biography (12th c. AD) of Tshul khriims dpal chen (1052–1106 AD), by his student 'Od gsal rgyal mtshan (11th–12th c. AD), and in another work, possibly also 12th c. AD, the *Byang chub sgrubs thabs kyi bon tshigs su bcad pa sum brgya nyi shu pa'i rnam bshad gzhan phan snying po*, which is attributed to gShen ston Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1088–1163 AD);²⁰ see Kalsang Norbu (*ib.*) for citations in later sources.

18 Cf. Dondrup Lhagyal (2002), who argues for 1021 AD.

19 See the *bsTan pa bon gyi klad don kyi rang 'grel*, f.3r.: *de yang mdo ni cung zad shes rab zhan pa gcig gi sdeb par mngon te/* (MS belonging to the Menri Abbot). See further discussion by Kalsang Norbu in PIATS 2006.

20 See the *Byang chub sgrubs thabs kyi bon tshigs su bcad pa sum brgya nyi shu pa'i rnam bshad gzhan phan snying po* (Sarnath: Yung-drung Bon Students' Committee 2002), p.51; but this attribution seems problematic, what we have, may in fact be a much later text, composed by a student of sGa ston. See Kalsang Norbu *ibidem*.

BUT THE EARLIEST VERSIONS OF THE *CA TI MA* NARRATIVE
'KNOW' SIGNIFICANTLY LESS

But a late 11th c. AD date will only hold if we choose to accept the entourage as it appears in late versions of the *Ca ti ma* narrative. In the earliest colophon of one of the *mDo chen po bzhi*, the *Bla med go phang*, f.126r, the discovery at the red *mchod rten* (*tsa ti dmar po*), at the site of the throne and cemetery (*khri thang dur khrod gyi tsar*), of Samye temple (*bsam yas gling gyi*), is euqally attributed to *tre rgya gar ra tsa*. Discoveries at the site of the throne and cemetery by *Tre rgya gar ra tsa* and *Sad ku rin chen* are mentioned in colophons to other chapters. *But*, those later figures do not appear here, except for the undated *dBu'i mChod ston Phur ba 'bar*. The latter, incidentally, receives the *mdo* here as a *dngos grub* (perhaps some special revelation?) and not necessarily as a fee for treatment (but that may also be implied). Significantly, in *sGa ston's* story, *Phur ba 'bar* moreover appears an unknown outsider.²¹

MORE CRACKS APPEARING

For his Bonn IATS paper, Kalsang Norbu decided on a parsimonious model of transmission, but also one that remains inconclusive: either the *mDo 'dus*, the *gZer myig*, or perhaps both (cf. alternative hypothesis below) are the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*'; it is simply not sure yet.

But, apart from the apparent confusion regarding the identity of the first of the *mDo chen po bzhi*, some other cracks are visible in this simple model of transmission and identification as well. I will identify four main fault lines:

1. The possibility of a delay in transmission.
2. Additional data from the colophon of the *gZer myig*.
3. Additional data from the [*Dran pa 'i*] *bsGrags byang [chen mo]*.
4. An alternative hypothesis: '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' as a larger collection of texts.

1. A DELAY IN TRANSMISSION

Considering the many uncertainties in the discovery narratives, we cannot afford to overlook that both the *Ca ti ma* and the *Drang nga ma* narratives appear to have preserved traces of a gradual revelation or some kind of delay in transmission. In *sGa ston Tshul khri ms' Cat ti ma* narrative we read that the *mDo chen po bzhi* were (re)concealed for 49 years after first discovery. Eventually they ended up with a 'discoverer', the doctor *Phur ba 'bar*, who did not discover them at all, but received them as a fee for medical services, and thus is only formally credited with the discovery (cf. in the discovery narrative of the *gZer myig* the role of *Mar pa Stag la*

21 See *Bla med go phang*, f.126r (Appendix Ib).

dbang). In the *Drang nga ma* narrative the texts are said to have been passed down through the Khri srong royal family for a while before they fell into the hands of Drang nga dPal gyi yon tan etc. (cf. the story by Shar rdza in his *Legs bshad mdzod*, ed. Beijing 1985). While one has to be very careful not to take traditional narratives on face value, to my knowledge it is also ill-advised to dismiss such narrative elements as entirely groundless. This narrative turn may be a flashing warning sign, indicating that the earliest possible date of discovery has to be taken more seriously and that both texts were believed or even remembered to have developed over an extended period of time.

2. COLOPHON OF THE *gZER MYIG* (AND OTHER SIMILAR REFERENCES)

Considering the consistent discrepancies between the earliest and later sources in their identification of the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' as the *gZer myig* or *mDo 'dus*, we should also pay attention to the fact that in one colophon to the *gZer myig* (see Appendix II), the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' is characterised as one of the *mDo sde chen po (bzhi)*: as a major section of literature rather than a single text.²² Also note that the *gZer myig* is styled '*dus pa rin po che'i rgyud*' here, a phrase also frequently used in titles of the *mDo 'dus*.²³ It is said to have been included in or drawn from (*gtogs*) the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' section (*sde*).

Obviously, if the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' really was a whole section, more than one text could have been drawn from it. It is not at all unlikely that all of those might somehow have been remembered by the name of the original collection. The *Kha byang* (14th c. AD), in a somewhat confused-looking passage (or not?), refers to the six parts of the '*dus gsum gshen rabs du 'byung khungs mdo*'.²⁴ This also seems to

22 See also the later characterisation in the *Yang rtse klong chen gyi 'grel ba nyi zer sgron ma* by sTag tsha bla ma rGyal mtshan (15th c. AD), included in *Bla med rdzogs pa chen po yongs rtse klong chen gyi 'grel ba*, published by the TBMC, on p.90.6ff.: *gnyis pa mdo sde bzhi ste/ snod bcud 'byung ba chag 'jig gis mdo' / dus gsum gshen rab byung khung gis mdo' / khams gsum sems can skye 'chi'i mdo' / bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs gyis mdo' 'o/ de la 'byung ba chag 'jig mdo'i nang nas/ phyi snod nang bcud thams cad mi rtag pa'i mtshan nyid shas cher ston/ dus gsum gshen rab byung khung gi nang nas/ sangs rgyas kyis mtshan dpe dang sku tshé'i ishād dang 'dul zhing dang mdzad pa'i 'phrin las la sog ston pa'o/ khams gsum sems can skye 'chi'i mdo' nang nas/ las mtha' kar nag dang skye rgas na 'chi bzhi'i mtshan nyid shas cher ston[/] [91] bla med gong 'phang sgrub thab gyis mdo' nang nas/ dge sdig gis yang blang dang gzhan phan gyis spyod pa gtso cher ston pa'o/. NB, *gnyis pa* refers to p.90.4, where a division into four: *gzung*, *mdo*, *shes rab*, and *sngag[s]* is listed; the second is: *mdo'i 'bum*.*

23 *mDo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud thams cad mkhyen pa'i bka' tshad ma* (Dolanji & bKa' 'gyur 'III' ed.); '*dus pa rin po che'i rgyud sangs rgyas rnam thar* (mKhar rdzes list, Karmay 1998:206); *g-Yung drung lha yi bon mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud* (in Lhagyal, in Blezer 2002); *lHa'i bon mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud* (copy dBal khyung MS, Karmay 1985-mission); *Dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khungs kyi mdo* (KGKC & NTKC).

24 See above at n.13.

underline the notion that it is a whole section of *mdo* rather than a single text. Cf. also the reference to more elaborate content of the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo* in the [*Dran pa 'i*] *bsGrags byang [chen mo]*, discussed in the next item.

3. EVIDENCE IN THE (OR A) '*BSGRAGS BYANG*'

Somewhat confusing evidence emerges from a stray reference in the '*bsGrags byang*',²⁵ a text of uncertain date that traditionally (v. *Kha byang*, p.493.1f) has been attributed to mTha' bzhi ('phrul gsas) Ye shes blo 'gros (10th–11th c. AD?), but may have to be dated later, but probably no later than the 12th c. AD.²⁶

25 The short title [*Dran pa 'i*] *bsGrags byang [chen mo]* here refers to the *Bon chos dar nub kyi lo rgyus bsgrags pa rin chen gling grags zhes bya ba rmongs pa blo 'i gsal byed*, Dolanji edition by Khedup Gyatso (see also *g-Yung drung bon gyi sgra bsgrags pa rin po che 'i gling grags*, in *bKa brten 'III'*, Vol.72). N.B. the issue of the exact identity of the "*bsGrags byang*" mentioned in sources still needs to be looked into and is not settled here.

26 There have been several proposals for dating this text. Most follow an attribution in the *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*, p.493.1f, where a *bsGrag byang rin po che 'i rgyud sde* is said to have been discovered by a mTha' bzhi 'phrul gsas, supposedly mTha' bzhi Ye shes blo 'gros (10th–11th c. AD?). The '*Dul ba gling grags* has been attributed to the 12th c. AD rMa Shes rab seng ge (*bKa brten 'III'*, Vol.72, p.189.1). dGe bsod 'tshams pa in his '*Dul brgyud* (p.19) associates names mentioned toward the end (*SHB.136*) with fourteenth-century figures. Traditionally, a lot points to first composition in the 12th c. AD or earlier and possibly later redactions (in the rMa family).

Namgyal Nyima disagrees and attributes the '*Dul ba gling grags* (*Bon sgo* 9 (1996), p.17) and *bsGrags byang* (1997) to Khod po Blo gros thogs med, aka dBra rigs Gyer thogs med (b.1280/92 AD?). That is the *gter ston* who also discovered the *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*. His life story and discoveries (several in the early 14th c. AD) were added to the same *Kha byang*, (p.498.4). A *Srid pa rgyud kyi sgrag byang chen mo* is mentioned among them. Kalsang Norbu suggests that "*sgrag byang*" in the title may well have caused the confusion. Anne-Marie Blondeau (1990:41f), following Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan's *Legs bshad mdzod* (Karmay 1972:338), proposes to read the *kha byang* version of the title as a complementary discovery (*yan lag gi gter*) to the *sgrag byang* one. She speculates that both, plausibly, are generic designations for types of *gter ma* literature.

But Kalsang Norbu himself, be it for different reasons, also argues that what here is called the *bsGrags byang* is a 14th c. AD text. He assumes it is even later than the *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*. The reason for this is that in the *bKa' brten 'III'* version of the *bsGrags byang* appears a reference to the *Kha byang* (Vol.72, *g-Yung drung bon gyi sgra bsgrags pa rin po che 'i gling grags*, p.105.4f.). The context is yet another account of the offspring and succession of Khri Srong lde'u btsan. As is usual for these accounts, it deviates from other sources. Khri Srong lde'u btsan and Tshe spong za sTong dkar (ma; *Kha byang* 437.5: rMa rgyal stod skar ma) are said to have had three sons, *che ba*: Khri Mu khri btsan po, '*bring po*: Mu ne btsan po, and *chung ba*: Mu dug/drug (rug) btsan po. The *Kha byang* (p.437.5f) begs to differ on the order and names. The 'junior' queen Pho yongs za remained childless (is that the 'Brom za dkar mo of the *Kha byang*?). According to the *rGyal rabs gsal ba 'i me long*, Pho yongs za later also had a relationship with Mu ne btsan po (Sørensen 1994:405). She was (later, *ibid.*) considered an incarnation of the old Queen Kong jo, i.e., Khri Srong lde'u btsan's mother. The *bsGrags byang*

This part of the argument needs more attention than this article allows. Kalsang Norbu noticed that the *mDo chen po bzhi* feature groups of deities and passages that also appear in the *gZer myig* and its presumed dependent, the *Klong rgyas*,²⁷ but that

then dwells at some length on problems regarding ‘Mu rug’ btsan po, who apparently was exiled after murdering a nephew or grandson of minister [Zhang] rGyal tsha (tshan/mtshan) lha snang, of the powerful mNa’ (sNa) nam clan. Elsewhere the victim is known as the latter’s son ‘U rings. The murderous ‘Mu rug’ btsan po may well have been deranged and considered unfit for rule (cf. Haarh 1969:339). The exile of her beloved son seems to have caused resentment in the ‘senior’ queen (the available *bsGrags byang* editions disagree about who is junior and senior, occasionally also in one text). There may also have been bad relations between the queens. The differences in readings between the two *bsGrags byang* editions available to me are significant (I presently lack access to the Oslo MS and the three other editions known to me). Upon mentioning that the middle son, Mu ne btsan po, was installed on the throne and after three years of (very) prosperous rule passed away, the *bKa’ brten* text adds—apparently based on the *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*—that he passed away ‘by accident’ or by sword: *srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang nas: gri ru ’grongs/ ces pa ...*

In the *Kha byang* a passage discussing comparable events appears, starting p.437. On p.439.4 we can indeed read that Mu ne btsan po is killed by his impetuous and irritable younger brother Mu rug btsan po, who apparently cut him into pieces by sword (*gri ru ’grongs*). I am not convinced that the note on the mode of demise pertains to the *bsGrags byang* itself. The text otherwise is extremely concise, it does not usually share this type of detail, does not quote any other sources in this passage, does not refer to the *Kha byang* anywhere else, and the passage moreover is absent Khedup Gyatso’s text (p.173, 1.4). It looks like someone remembered the longer, colourful and partly deviating story in the *Kha byang*, and added a note regarding that. I strongly suspect this unique occurrence to be a *mchan* copied into the main text. Note that the handwriting in that section of the *bKa’ brten* edition apparently was so unclear that it had to be traced before allowing it to be reproduced in facsimile. Moreover, following Blondeau (1990) and Martin (e-mail), I presume that the *bsGrags byang* and *Gling grags* type of historical literature has been in custody of the rMa family for quite some time, similarly the *Kha byang*, and these, collectively, seem to have grown and changed in that family environment. There also seem to be close links between Gyer thogs med and the rMa lineage (Blondeau 1990:51 ff). dPal ldan tshul khrims (ibid.:43) also connects *phyi nang gsang bon gyi bsgrags byang* with a rMa teacher: lCam me, son of Srid ’dzin (b.1092 AD).

In conclusion, we may have to extend the date of rMa Shes rab seng ge (12th c. AD)—in view of mTha’ bzhi ’phrul gsas and earlier rMa teachers and *gter ston* perhaps as an upper limit—to other *Gling grags* texts also. The former is the only attribution that appears natively in a colophon. Weight and nature of the evidence recommend a connection to the rMa family above various more tenuous speculations, exercised by several learned Tibetans, such as, dBra rigs Gyer thogs med, rNam rgyal Nyi ma Brag dkar and Gu rung sKal bzang Nor bu.

27 Chapter 14, but also 5 (*klong chen po lnga’i lha gshen brgya*), 6 (*’das pa ma ’byon pa dang da ltar byung ba’i lha mo sum brgya*), 9 (*bder gshegs thugs rje can rnams mtshan* (total 1000 names are listed): *shar, byang, nub, lho phyogs kyi bde bar gshegs pa brgya; steng phyogs kyi bde bar gshegs pa brgya; byang shar, byang nub, lho nub, lho shar gyi phyogs kyi bde bar gshegs pa brgya; ’og phyogs kyi bde bar gshegs pa brgya*) and 13, see Karmay (1998:169f, n.2); all the deities are invoked there in the context of cleansing sin. Cf. particularly the listing of chapter 9 to that in the *gShen rab kyi phrin las bco brgyad kyi don bstan pa’i mdo g-yung drung klong rgyas cho ga, bKa brten ‘III’*, Vol.265.10; pp.269–353, esp. pp.275ff.

are absent from the *mDo 'dus*. *Klong rgyas* ritual has been around for a while. Karmay (1998.169f) shows that, according to his biography, Me ston Shes rab 'od zer (1058–1132) used some kind of *Klong rgyas* ritual in funerary rites for Me nyag sTag la me 'bar.²⁸ The *bsGrags byang*, for further information on the 1000/1002 deities that also appear in the *Klong rgyas* refers to the *Dus gsum gshen rab 'byung khungs kyi mdo*.²⁹ That would indeed suggest that not the *mDo 'dus*, but something more like the *gZer myig* would relate to the other *mDo chen po bzhi* and be intended by the *bsGrags byang*. But the fact remains that the *bsGrags byang* does not mention the *gZer myig* by name, but only the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*. At the end of chapter nine of the *gZer myig* the deities are indeed listed *in full*, exactly as they appear in the *Klong rgyas*. Does this imply that only the name *gZer myig* did not yet exist in an early time, but that the text was already extant in some form, under the name *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*? And in what form exactly did it exist? Much will depend on a more secure dating of the *bsGrags byang*. If dated later than traditionally assumed, the *bsGrags byang* may simply pollute the argument by introducing late perceptions of the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* section of the *mDo chen po bzhi*. Dating the *bsGrags byang* and cognates has to await publication by Kværne and Martin.

The *bsGrags byang*-reference strongly suggests that the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* was at that point understood to mean something like the *gZer myig* and certainly not anything like the *mDo 'dus*, but is not compelling as to its identity. It merely refers to content that is exclusively extant in the *gZer myig* and related, *Drang ga ma*-derived, *Klong rgyas* literature. The *bsGrags byang*-passage allows or even encourages the notion that an extensive early collection of hagiographical origin narratives existed in its day, whenever that may have been.

28 See *SHB*, text 16, p.353; compiled by his disciple *gShen ston Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan* (see above, n.20).

29 *bsGrags byang*, pp.21.3ff: *de ni gnyis pa 'dren ston sangs rgyas ji ltar byon- de yang sangs rgyas rabs bdun pa rim kyis [gyis] mdzad ces pas/ da lta'i bskal ba 'di sgron me'i bskal ba [pa] yin no/ ming ni bskal ba [pa] bzang po zhes bya 'o/ de ltar bskal ba [pa] bzang po 'di la/ lha'i rgyal po rtogs ldan zhes bya ba dang / btsun [22] mo nam mkha' yid kyi bu mo [yid kyi me tog mo] zhes bya ba gnyis/ chags pa med pa 'i thugs rjes rol pa la/ sras mchod [mched] dgu brgya dang dgu bcu rtsa brgyad bltams/ yab yum gnyis te stong yod/ 'khor zhu ba po dang sdud pa po gnyis te/ sangs rgyas stong rtsa gnyis byung ngo / yab yum de gnyis kun bzang yab yum gyi thugs kyi sprul pa 'o/ stong rtsa gnyis po 'i yab yum yul dang dus dang rigs dang 'khor dang gdul bya 'i zhing dang tshe tshad dang bsod nams 'phel 'grib dang 'phrin las sku gdung dang / sprul pa bstan pa dar rgyas rnam ji ltar byung ba ni/ ji ltar **dus gsum gshen rab byung khungs mdo** las zhib cing rgyas so/ (emendation according to *bKa brten 'III'*, Vol.72, p.13.6–14.4; counter my general impression, the passage appears clearer in that version).*

4. ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS, *mDo SDE CHEN PO*, AND
A 'NEW' PROPOSAL FOR DATING

Let us now consider an alternative working hypothesis: the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* is a different and more extensive source, from which the *gZer myig* and perhaps also the *mDo 'dus* were drawn. Such a hierarchy may explain the confusion in extant sources regarding varying identifications of the *gZer myig* and *mDo 'dus* with the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*. It is entirely possible that an early developing collection of narratives, as a whole, was loosely referred to by the descriptive nomer *Dus gsum* [Founder] *'byung khungs kyi mdo*. The old *mDo* collection under that name in any case seems lost. We only have the *gZer myig*, probably an expanded text drawn from it—and a brief version, the *mDo 'dus*.

Taking the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* as the source of both the *gZer myig* and *mDo 'dus*, rather than identifying it with one or the other (or both), allows us to take more seriously the possibility of surviving memory traces of early tenth-century beginnings, with the discovery of hagiography in a *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* fount of narratives. The traditional date of 961 AD for the *fire bird year* (mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan 'dzin's *bsTan rtsis*; Kværne 1971:228) and even 901 would then become entirely plausible.

If we look at the identification in Shar rdza's *Legs bshad rin po che 'i mdzod*³⁰ of the three great *ācārya*-s that discovered the *Klu 'bum* in 913 AD: *a tsa ra dKon mchog grags pa*, *Nya mo mgon po*, and *Sad kun ratna (gsum)*, the name of the last of these figures appears confusingly similar to the second *ācārya* in the *Ca ti ma* discovery, there called *Sad gu rin chen* (Tibetan for Skt. *ratna*) *grags pa* (for some name variants, see Kalsang Norbu's PIATS 2006 article). Thus there even is a fair chance that we may have to prefer 901 (cf. 913 of the *Klu 'bum*) rather than the traditional date of 961 AD.

This can have far-reaching consequences for the content of the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* and its relation to the *gZer myig* and *mDo 'dus*. The narrative paradigms of the earlier *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*, time-wise, will thus come much closer to those of the *Klu 'bum* and also to certain non-Buddhist ritualistic Dunhuang sources; how close exactly is difficult to say at this point. Depending on the starting hypotheses, the dates for the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* and the *mDo 'dus* in these two divergent analyses are pulled apart from perhaps as early as 901 till 1070 or 1081 AD. Another important insight yielded by this alternative hypothesis is that the nomer *Dus gsum* [founder] *'byung khungs kyi mdo*, with its usual variation of *sangs rgyas (buddha)*, *ston pa* (teacher), (*bde gshegs*) and *gshen rab* as “enlightened one”, may in the first variants well preserve memories of influences from Buddha (and Padmasambhava?) legends, and may thus reveal an early point of entry and exchange with translated Buddhist narratives.

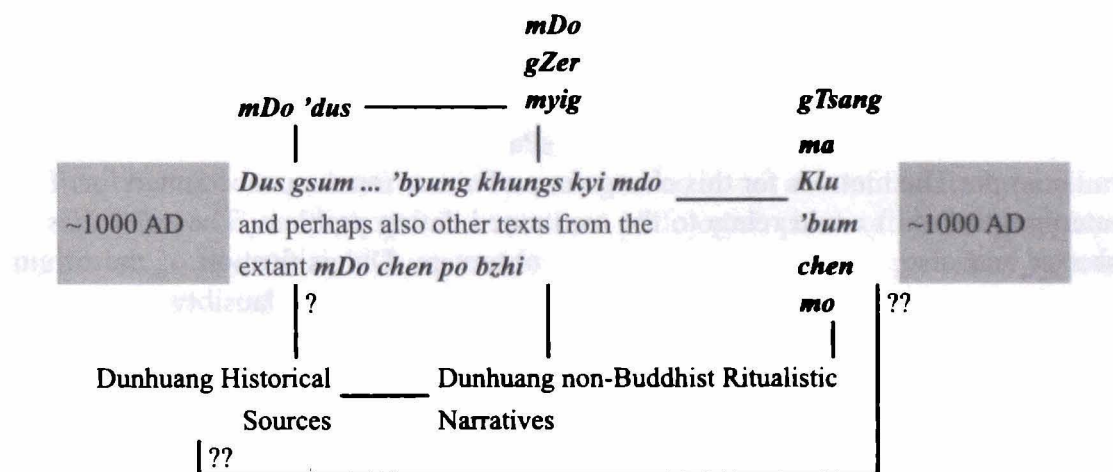
30 *Legs bshad rin po che 'i mdzod* (1985), p.240.4f; cf. Karmay (1972), pp.281.20f and 118ff.

SCHEMATIC TABLE

Below find a tentative schematic arrangement of the main early sources pertinent to early gShen rab narratives, based on the said alternative working hypothesis. The main sources are grouped in relative positions around a broadly conceived 'turn' of the first millennium AD.

- ritualistic narratives (here separated from Dunhuang historical sources);
- the *Klu 'bum* (arranged provisionally by way of working hypothesis);
- the *mDo chen po bzhi* (including the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*') and the closely related *mDo 'dus* & *gZer myig*.

The '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' is tentatively arranged at some distance from the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig*, approximately on a par with the *Klu 'bum*. The latter probably has a long history of formation, which may extend from the Dunhuang period into the beginning of the formation of the *mDo 'dus*. More texts could have been included, but that would not have served clarity.



CONCLUSIONS

FIRE BIRD YEAR, 1081 OR 1070 (1021 + 49) AD?

If we assume that later, more elaborate and clearer accounts by sGa ston Tshul khrim rgyal mtshan (12/1300s?) and sPa bsTan rgyal dpal bzang po (13/1400s) are reliable, we will also have to take their references to eleventh-century figures seriously. If you then do your math properly, a late date of 1081 or 1070 for the *mDo chen po bzhi* and the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*' will emerge. If, and only if, we accept that the first section of the *mDo chen po bzhi* is the *mDo 'dus*, the same date will also emerge for the *mDo 'dus*, which then comes confusingly close to early traces of the *gZer myig*, from Me ston Shes rab 'od zer's time (late 11th to early 12th c. AD), or might possibly even be

later. Kalsang Norbu in his Bonn IATS paper decided on an elegantly parsimonious model of transmission, but also one that remains inconclusive: the *mDo 'dus*, *gZer myig*, or perhaps both (cf. present thesis) are the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*.

OR IS IT THE *GZER MYIG*, AFTER ALL ...?

If we feel inclined to follow this elegantly parsimonious line of reasoning, we should perhaps state a clearer preference. For does not the earliest evidence univocally favour identifying the *gZer myig*, perhaps in an early redaction, with the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*? Also note that chapter 1 of the *gZer myig* (*sNga rabs 'das pa*) corresponds to chapter 6 of the *mDo 'dus* (*Dus gsum ston pa ci ltar byung ba*). The *gZer myig*, as the title promises, tackles the *Dus gsum ston pa 'byung khungs* topic head on. Overall, identification with the *mDo 'dus* looks tenuous; based on the extant evidence, that possibility, provisionally, ought to be abandoned; unless we should rearrange the *mDo 'dus* chapters as outlined above, where we discussed that option.

We should note, however, that the identification of a (proto-)*gZer myig* with the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* creates serious dating problems for the *mDo 'dus*, because in that case both the *Drang nga ma* and the *Ca ti ma* narratives would point to a *gZer myig*-like text. Thanks to Kalsang Norbu's research we can now trace the transition of contradictory identifications with the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* from the *gZer myig* to the *mDo 'dus* to the influential *sGa* and *sPa* teachers, in the middle of the second millennium. The motives for this change in preference remain unaccounted for. The interpretative shift could relate to the mentioned dating problem. The *mDo 'dus* is shorter and also must look older to most observers. Diversification of the origin narratives allows accommodating the orphaned *mDo 'dus* plausibly early in a transmission history. Such a scenario appears even more acceptable if we consider the similarities in name of the *mDo 'dus* and *mDo gzer myig*: (*mDo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud* (see note 23 above), which suggest that they were basically believed to refer to the same or a very similar entity. In this light, we should also consider the possibility that was argued above: an earlier *mDo 'dus* may equally have had eighteen chapters. This may further explain extant confusion about the identity of an eighteen-chapter *'Byung khungs kyi mdo*.

'OCKHAM'S RAZOR' & CHATTON'S ANTI-RAZOR

The explanatory power of the simple and parsimonious model, however elegant, clearly is not completely satisfactory. What I therefore have been mainly concerned to point out is that among the surviving data disconcertingly numerous traces survive that are not satisfactorily covered by a simple model of transmission. There seem to be persistent recollections of earlier origins (colophon *gZer myig*, etc.) and delays in transmission (point 1), which resist the simpler theoretical model, or of broader content, which at least *suggests* other possibilities.

If we doubt the reliability of late and more complete narratives of the sGa and sPa teachers and question those names that the earliest colophons lack, or even remove those from the picture altogether, as later additions, then the evidence for dating the *mDo chen po bzhi* and '*Byung khungs kyi mdo* (and perhaps some kind of a precursor of the *gZer myig* or, less likely, the *mDo 'dus*) to 1081 or 1070 erodes quickly.

Several of the above points (to wit, points 2–3) reveal inner alignment. That alignment moreover appears scattered over various sources and seems to be without purposeful design. They strongly or gently recommend hypostasising a more extensive collection ('*Byung khungs kyi mdo*), as an extra layer in transmission. The delay in transmission also at least supports and perhaps even suggests adopting an earlier layer in transmission. Indeed, the newest dating efforts show cracks and must appear less than compelling.

BASIC DOUBT & BASIC TRUST

Then again, the early colophons do not look completely reliable either; when exactly were they added to some of the *mDo chen po bzhi* or the *gZer myig*? Are they of the same date as the first redaction of the texts? Are those three texts that presently are classified as *mDo chen po bzhi* (close to) the original *mDo chen po bzhi*, for should not they too rather represent large *sūtra* collections, *mDo sde chen po*, as we also presumed for the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo*? Does it make sense to be very sceptical about consistent data in late historical narratives and invest a lot of faith in fragile and contradictory early colophons? For a trained philologist, pending further evidence, methodologically, the right thing to do is indeed to work from the presumed bottom up and be sceptical about later, polished narrative constructs. But then, what about the consistent early pointers to the '*Byung khungs kyi mdo* being a *gZer myig*?

A DIFFUSE CLUSTER OF NARRATIVES?

In any case, there is resonance between the *Klu 'bum* and *mDo chen po bzhi* (and *gZer myig* and *mDo 'dus*) in terms of:

- Content (gShen rab stories),
- Traditional dating (10/11th c. AD),
- And narratives of discovery (bSam yas, the *a tsa ra*, etc.); and furthermore:
- The suggestion of gradual revelation of the *mDo chen po bzhi* and *gZer myig*;
- A considerable conceptual gap between Dunhuang-type narratives and *mDo 'dus*- and *gZer myig*-type narratives;
- And similarities in name of the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig*.

All this points to an early fount of stories regarding a gShen rab figure, which developed over time and was wider and more continuous with Dunhuang narratives than the presently extant *mDo 'dus* and *gZer myig* editions. In fact, given the possibility

of an early tenth-century date, the *Klu 'bum* might well be the closest extant cognate for what that hypothetical early *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* may have looked like in terms of content, with the notable distinction that the *Klu 'bum gShen rab* narratives obviously focus on *nāga*-s or *klu*.

The discussion therefore should not focus exclusively on whether the *'Byung khungs kyi mdo* is the *gZer myig* or the *mDo 'dus*, or which texts the confusingly similar origin narratives actually pertain to. We should also try to understand the texture of this cluster of narratives on *The Origins of the Buddha(, Teacher, or gShen rab) of the Three Times* and appreciate the struggle of early and later authors to capture, in a satisfactory way, this fluid and developing fount of stories in time, somehow.

ABBREVIATIONS

- bsGrags byang** : *Bon chos dar nub kyi lo rgyus bsgrags pa rin chen gling grags zhes bya ba rmongs pa blo'i gsal byed* attributed to mTha' bzhi Ye shes blo 'gros (10th–11th c. AD?); TBMC edition by Khedup Gyatso. N. B. this edition corresponds to *g-Yung drung bon gyi sgra bsgrags pa rin po che'i gling grags*, in *bKa brten* 'III', Vol.72, but not to the text with similar title in *bKa' brten* 'III', Vol.215, and not to the first part of (pp.1–140) in *Three Sources for a History of Bon*).
- brGyud rim** : *sKu gsum ston pa'i gsung rab bka' 'gyur rin po che'i lung rgyun ji snyed pa phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i bzhugs byang brgyud rim bcas pa dri med shel gyi phreng ba*, also known as *brgyud rim* or *sngangs rim*, written by Khod spungs pa dBra ston Ngag dbang skal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, who may be identical with Su la rGyal mtshan, in 1929, *bKa' 'gyur* I/II edition, Vol.103
- KGKC** : *g-Yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur dkar chag*, by Kun grol grags pa, Rig 'dzin. This work, in 13 chapters, was completed in 1751. It is a catalogue of a manuscript Kanjur made under the patronage of the Khro chen King Kun dga' nor bu. Edition by Tsering Thar, Beijing 1993.
- Kha byang** : *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang chen mo*, *bKa' brten* 'III', Vol.142.8 and Dolanji 1977.
- LTWA** : (*Library of Tibetan Works and Archives*) in Dharmasala.
- NTKC** : *bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur gyi sde tshan sgrig tshul bstan pa'i me ro spar ba'i g-yab bon gyi pad mo rgyas byed nyi 'od ces bya ba'i dbu phyogs*, by Nyi ma bstan 'dzin (b.1813 AD), published by Lokesh Chandra & Tenzin Namdak in *Indo-Asian Studies*, Śatapīṭaka Series, Vol.37, Pt.2, Delhi 1965; see Kværne (1971).

- TBMC :** *Tibetan Bon Monastic Centre*, sMan ri Monastery, main seat of Bon traditions in Dolanji, H.P. India.
- SHB :** *Sources for a History of Bon*, TBMC Dolanji 1972
- YTKC:** *rGyal ba 'i bka' dang bka' rten rmad 'byung dgos 'dod bzhin gter gyi bang mdzod la dkar chags blo 'i tha ram 'grol byed 'phrul gyi lde mig go*, Palace of National Minorities, Beijing, 1995. This work was composed in the years 1876–1880 by g-Yung drung tshul khriims dbang drag.

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APPENDIX IA

Colophon sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo, bKa' 'gyur III edition, Vol.32:

[f.112v6] snya li shug [shu] stag ring gis/ bod dang zhang zhung bru sha'i yul dang / stag gzigs gi yul du bon rin po che 'tshol nas bod kyi yul du bstan [f.113r] pa spel bar dgongs nas/ glang po che rta mchog grang ser khyer nas chas so/ bod dang zhang zhung dang stag gzig gis bar nas lam 'phrang shin tu rtsub pa dang / mi thar pa'i lam 'gags ni chu srid ma bu dgu 'drol ba dang / bdud khyab pas gshen ri la me bskyel ba'i sol ba'i ri la nyi ma bdun song bas/ rkang mgyog gi sgrub pa ldan pas mchod par rtag gzig gi yul du thon/ grub pa bsnjem pa'i bon po ni/ kha nas gser dzo 'phro ba/ lags [lag?] nas thog 'phong bas/ lha srin bran du 'khor ['khol] ba mchog thun mong gi grub rtags du mar dang ldan pa rnams la/ gser la sogs pa'i rin po che phul nas/ rgyu 'bras kyi bon la sogs thams cad zhus nas/ bod du yongs bsam nas/ bya rgod dang / bya glag khrung khrung dang / kang ka bzhi la[s] bkal nas 'ong pas/ kang ka la bka' [bkal] pa'i bon ni/ rgya nag gi yul du 'phur te song ngo / rgya nag gi bon po legs rmong po tang rmang po'i phyag tu babs so/ phyis [f.113v] ma gsum po la bkal ba'i bon ni/ bod du thon nas de [da?] lta zhang zhung gis spyod pa'i bon rnams so/ li shu stag ring la spyod pa'i dbang med rje la phul/ lo tsa ba stag ring gis ye shes yi ge thams cad bon du bsgyur nas btsad po khri srong lde la [!] btsan la phul

to/ btsan pos zhus pa bon thams cad la rtsis byang dang yang byang re gdab par zhus byas pas/ li shus gsungs pa'i bon thams cad la rtsis byang brgyad re dang bcas nas 'dug/ de'i nang nas mdo chen po bzhi dang / gshen rab kyis gsungs pa'i bon rnam kyis nang nas kyang snying po ni 'di lta ste/ **dus gsum ston pa 'byung khung mdo [a]** las snga rabs 'das dang ldan pa nas slad kyis bar le'u ni bco brgyad yod par ston/ **snod rten 'byung ba 'jig rten chags 'jig mdo [b]** las/ 'jig rten chags dang mnyam par bzhugs/ bar du bcu gcig yod par ston/ **bla med gong [go] 'phang sgrub pa thabs kyis mdo [c]** las/ snga rabs 'das dang [f.114r] 'jig rten bzhugs/ bar du nyi shu rtsa drug go/ **kham sum sems can skye 'chi mdo [d]** las/ phun sum tshogs nas zlog/ gtor bar du drug cu yod par ston/ zhes rgyal po la phul nas/ bsam yas khri thar [thang] dur khrod mchod rten dmar po la sbas so/ bsam yas kyis lde mig thams cad spung bza' dmar po rgyal gyis 'dzin to/ zhib tu le'u dang / rtsis 'byung chen mo'i nang nas gsal lo/ shad thams cad gnyis brtsegs yin no/ 'bru re chad pa 'dra ba yongs shog ser nang nas yang de 'dra yin no/ dpe btsan du byas pa yin no/ gshen rab kyis zhal nas gsungs pa'i snod rten 'byung ba'i chags 'jig gi mdo rdzogs so/ /.

APPENDIX 1B

Colophon *Bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs kyis mdo* and *gTor bzlog*, see end of the *Bla med go 'phang bsgrub thabs mdo 'jug gi gtor bzlog sogs kyis mdo skor, bKa' 'gyur III* edition, Vol.33, (fol.126r2):

stag gzigs gi yul 'ol mo lung ring na/ rang byung gi mchod rten gyis rtsa ba nas/ snya li shu stag ring gis 'ongs nas/ lo tsā ba stag ring gi[s] bod skad du sgyur nas/ btsad po khri s[r]ong lde'u btsan la phul nas/ bsam yas gling gi khri thang dur khrod kyis tsar tsa ti dmar por sbas pa'o// lcags mo bya'i lo la gter shog brtol nas/ tre rgya gar ra tsas bton pa lags so// de nas dbu'i mchod ston phur pa 'bar la/ dngos grub tu babs pa lags so// de la lto ba jo sras gshen rab rgyal gyis/ gter shog dngos la gtugs nas bris so// 'bru re chad pa 'dra ba kun/ shog ser rang la de bzhin snang ba'o// bkra shis dge'o//.

APPENDIX II

The *gZer m[y]ig* (Tsering Thar edition, Beijing 1998 (1991)), p.810.12: 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud gzer mig gi le'u bco brgyad pa 'di ni/ ston pa'i zhal nas gsungs pa'i bon sgo bzhi mdzod dang lnga'i nang nas/ gtsang ma mtho thog spyir rgyug tu gtogs so/ bzhi bzhugs pa de gang zhe na/ dus gsum gshen rab byung khungs kyis mdo dang gcig- kham sum sems can skye 'chi'i mdo dang gnyis/ snod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig gi mdo dang gsum/ bla med go phang bsgrub thabs kyis mdo dang bzhi'o/ 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud 'di ni/ mdo sde³¹ chen po bzhi'i nang nas dus gsum gshen rab byung khungs kyis mdor gtogs so/ /de la yang snga rabs 'das [811] pa dang / slad kyis

31 'sDe', so far, I have only found in this edition.

'byon pa rnams ni/ zur tsam sgra 'phangs nas bstan pa 'o/ /da lta'i ston pa gshen rab mi bo ci ltar byon zhing 'das pa'i lo rgyus zhib par 'di'i nang du bstan pa 'o/ /'das dang ma byon pa gnyis ka'i gtan tshigs ni/ dus gsum gshen rab byung khungs kyi mdo'i nang na zhib bo/ 'dus pa 'di ni mdo'i nang nas btus kyin bkol pa 'o/ bon 'di dang po gshen rab nyid kyis zhal nas gsungs/ gshen rab mya ngan mya ngan las 'das nas/ gdung 'tshob mu cho ldem drug gis/ bka' la brten nas rig pas mang por phyas/ mu cho 'das nas mkhas pa rim par byung / ta zig la mkhas pa dmu tsha tra pe dang / khri thog par tsam dang / 'gu hi li sbar ya gsum byung ngo / de las rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa thob pa'i lo tsā ba gsum gyis bsgyur te/ rgya gar la mkhas pa lha bdag sngags dro dang / rgya nag la mkhas pa legs tang rmang po dang / phroms la mkhas pa gter thog lce 'byams dang de gsum gyis bsgyur ba la/ bod la mkhas pa lde gyim tsha rma chung dang / me nyag la mkhas pa lce tsha gar bu dang / sum pa la mkhas pa mu spungs gsal tang dang / zhang zhung la mkhas pa sha ri dbu chen dang / de rnams kyis zhus shing bsgyur ba mang zhing bod du bstan pa dar ba la/ bar du chos kyi 'phrag dog gis nub pas/ drang rje'i btsun pa gser mig gis / gling gi lho phugs kyi khri dang dur khrod kyi nang nas rnyed pas 'phel pa 'o/ /mar pa stag la dbang la dngos grub tu babs pa lags so/ /slad kyi ston pa ci ltar 'byon pa'i le'u ste bco brgyad pa 'o / bkra shis dpal 'bar 'dzam gling rgyan gyur cig- sngon tshogs stobs smin khro chen mi dbang gis/ /'gro kun mngon mtho nges legs bsgrub phyir du/ /gshen rab mchog gi mdzad pa mtha' klas bcud/ /gzer mig le'u bco brgyad par 'di bskrun/ /'di la gyur pa'i las byed mchog dman 'bring / sgo gsum 'bad rtsol bskyed dang yi rang bcas/ /rang gzhan kun gyi rnam dkar ma lus pa/ /gcig tu bsdoms nas byang chub chen por bsngo / manga lam// //.

APPENDIX IIIA

Kun grol grags pa (b.1701 AD) discusses the *mDo 'dus* in his KGKC (*g-Yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur dkar chag* (see bibliography) also named *Zab dang rgya che g-yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur gyi dkar chag nyi ma 'bum gyi 'od zer*) on pp.102.19f: *bsam yas mchod rten dmar po nas pang ku rin chen dang dre rgya ra tsa ste bande mi gnyis kyi dngos grub tu rnyed pa'i mdo bzhi yod pa'i nang nas / dus gsum gshen rab [103] byung khyungs kyi mdo 'dus pa rin chen la/ dang po gleng phun gsum tshogs pa'i mdo'i le'u/ ... [listed are the twenty-four chapters of the *mDo 'dus*] ... ston pa mya ngan 'das pa'i le'u dang nyer bzhi yod/.*

The *gZi brjid* is discussed at pp.97.5ff: *ja ldang chen dmu tsha gyer med kyis sprul sku blo ldan snying po'i snyan du brgyud pa'i 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud dri ma med pa gzi brjid rab tu 'bar ba'i mdo las/ ston pa 'od gsal lha las babs pa'i le'u ... [listed are the 61 chapters of the *gZi brjid*] ... [p.99.21f] sangs rgyas kyi mtshan dpe yon tan ji lta bur[100] brjod pa'i le'u/ bstan pa bon gyi gtad gnyer mdzad pa'i le'u ste drug cu rtsa gcig yod do//.*

The *gZer myig* is discussed at p.101: *ra gter ston chen po drangs rje btsun pa gser mig gis bsam yas gling gi lho phug khri thang dur khrod kyi nang nas rnyed pa'i mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud gzer mig le'u bco brgyad pa'i 'byung khyungs ni/ dang po ston pa nyid kyi zhal nas gsungs pa'i sgo bzhi mdzod lnga'i nang mtho thog spyi rgyug tu gtogs/ de yang dang po snga rabs 'das pa'i lo rgyus kyi le'u/ ...* [listed are the eighteen chapters of the *gZer myig*] ... *slad kyi ston pa 'byon pa'i le'u dang bco brgyad yod/.*

APPENDIX IIIb

mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan 'dzin (b.1813 AD) also discusses these texts in his NTKC (*bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur gyi sde tshan sgrig tshul bstan pa'i me ro spar ba'i g-yab bon gyi pad mo rgyas byed nyi 'od ces bya ba'i dbu phyogs*; see bibliography), p.3.17: *de 'og tu khyad par ston pa 'di nyid kyi byon tshul ston pa'i mdzad mdo rgyas pa sprul sku blo ldan snying po la/ stang chen dmu tsha gyer med kyis snyan du brgyud pa mdo bzhi yod pa'i nang tshan dri med gzi brjid bstan pa'i mdo [A] la/ dum pa nyi ma'i grangs ldan la le'i drug cu re gcig bzhugs pa'o/ mdzad mdo 'bring po gter ston drang rje btsun pas bsam yas khri thang dur khrod nas rnyed pa'i gzer mig ces pa'i mdo dum pa gnyis la le'u bco brgyad yod pa dang / mdzad mdo bsdus pa bsam yas mchod rten dmar po nas a tsar a mi gnyis kyis rnyed pa'i mdo bzhi'i nang tshan/ dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khungs kyi mdo 'am [a] mdo 'dus su grags pa le'u nyer bzhi pa dang </ de'i og tu rgyal ba gnyis pa blo ldan rin po che'i snyan brgyud mdo bzhi'i nang tshan/ sangs rgyas khri dang bdun stong gi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa dus msug [gsum] mi nub mtshan gyi mdo [B] la le'u bcu bdun bzhugs pa dang / de'i 'og tu blo ldan rin po che'i snyan brgyud mdo bzhi'i nang tshan snod rten chags gnas 'jig stong gsal ba- lhun po brtsegs pa rgyud kyi mdo [C] la le'u yod pa- khag kyi dpal 'bar sum brgya drug cu bzhes pa dang - gas mkhar sum brgya ga curdru [ga curdru = drug cur] [4] mnga' gsol ba'i rnam thar gsal ba bkra shis dpal 'bar khab kyi mdo [D] la le'u yod pa dang >/ dbus gter a tsa ra mi gnyis kyi rnyed pa'i mdo bzhi'i nang tshan dus sum sangs rgyas byung khungs kyi mdo [a] gong du song pa'i 'phro khams gsum sems can skye 'chi'i mdo [b] le'u bdun dang / snod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig gi mdo [c] le'u bcu gcig pa dang / bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs kyi mdo [d1] dang / rin chen gter zlog mdo [d2] bsdom le'u sum bcu so gcig pa bzhugs/ mchan/ 'dir kha gcig gis mdo bzhi'i nang tshan byung khungs kyi mdo gzer mig la ngos 'dzin pa ni mi 'thad de mdo bzhi'i ni dbus gter li shus rtag gzigs nas bskur bar bshad pa'i phyir ro// /.*

Note that mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan 'dzin (b.1813 AD) in his NTKC seems to mix into the discussion of the *mDo chen po bzhi* that of another collection of four texts, the *sNyan brgyud mdo bzhi*. Perhaps this insertion is triggered by the discussion of Blo ldan snying po's *snyan rgyud* earlier on (at the *gZi brjid*), by the mention of the *mDo chen po bzhi* (cf. *snyan brgyud mdo bzhi*) and by the *sNnod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig gi mdo* (cf. *sNnod rten chags gnas 'jig stong gsal ba*). The *sNyan brgyud*

mdo bzhi apparently are: the *dri med gzi brjid bstan pa'i mdo*; *dus gsum mi nub mtshan gyi mdo*; *snod rten chags gnas 'jig stong gsal ba lhun po brtsegs pa rgyud kyi mdo*; and the *bkra shis dpal 'bar khab kyi mdo*. The second is listed between the *gZi brjid* and *gZer myig* in the KGKC, on pp.100f. and after both in the YTKC (*rGyal ba'i bka' dang bka' rten rmad 'byung dgos 'dod bzhin gter gyi bang mdzod la dkar chags blo'i tha ram 'grol byed 'phrul gyi lde mig*), on pp.27ff. Cf. Khod spungs pa's *brGyud rim* (see below) p.70: ... *bla med theg chen yang gsang tshul/ dang po mdo la rnam pa bzhi/ dri med gzi brjid bstan pa'i mdo/ dus gsum mi nub mtshan gyi mdo/ lhun po brtsegs pa rgyan gyi mdo/ bkra shis dpal 'bar khab kyi mdo/ de ltar mdo chen bzhi ru bstan / ...*

APPENDIX IIIc

(Text adapted from a version by the Oslo canon team; Dan Martin?)

g-Yung drung tshul 'Khrims in his YTKC discusses the *mDo 'dus* on p.91: *li shu'i [shus] ta zig nas bsgyur ba'i dbus gter bsam yas ca ti sgo mang mchod rten dmar po nas bad sku rin chen dang tre rgya ra tsa ste ban dhe mi gnyis kyi rin chen bse sgrom chu srin kha sprod can gcig ba'i gcig mtshar drug thon pa khams pa dbu mchod 'bar gyi lag tu son pa'i nang nas mdo bzhi yod pa'i nang tshan dang po mdzad mdo bsodus pa dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khung mdo/ gling gzhi phun sum 'thsogs pa'i le'u dang po ... [listed are the twenty-four chapters of the *mDo' dus*] ... [93] ... ston pa mya ngan las 'das pa'i bon/ le'u nyi shu bzhi pa/ kun grol gyi mdzad pas mnyam med brgya pa'i mgon po rnam mkhyen rgyal ba gshen rab kyi mdzad pa rnam pa bcu gnyis kyi rnam bshad khams sum las rnam par rgyal ba'i nyi 'od ces bya ba'o/.*

The *Gzi brjid* is discussed at p.20: *de 'og tu khyad par ston pa 'di nyid kyi byon tshul bstan pa'i mdzad mdo rgyas pa/ sprul sku blo ldan snying pa la/ stong chen dmu tsa gyer med kyis snyan du brgyud pa mdo bzhi yod pa'i nang tshan/ dri med gzi brjid bstan pa'i mdo la/ 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud dri ma med pa gzi brjid rab tu 'bar ba'i mdo las/ sangs rgyas ston pa 'od gsal lha la bab pa'i le'u / ... [listed are the sixty-one chapters of the *gZi brjid*] ... [p.25] ... / sangs rgyas kyi mtshan dpe yon tan ji lta bar brjod pa'i le'u/ bstan pa bon gyi gtad gnyer mdzad pa'i le'u ste drug cu rtsa gcig /.*

The *gZer myig* is discussed at p.25: *de 'og tu mdzad mdo 'bring po gter ston chen po drang rje bisun pa gser mig gis bsam yas gling gi lho phug khri thang dur khrod kyi nang nas rnyed pa'i mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud gzer mig le'u bco brgyad pa'i dpe rtsis ni/ dang po ston pa nyid kyi zhal nas gsungs pa'i sgo bzhi lnga nang mtho thog spyi rgyug tu gtogs / de yang dang po ston pa snga rab 'das pa'i lo rgyus le'u ... [listed are the eighteen chapters of the *gZer myig*] ... slad kyi ston pa byon pa'i le'u dang bco brgyad yod/.*

APPENDIX VI

(Adapted from a version typed by Dan Martin)

gTer gyi kha sbyang by sGa ston Tshul khirms rgyal mtshan. Extant are a MS of 45 folios, kept at the LTWA, Acc.no.17765 (not accessible to me) and a recent Kathmandu computer edition without extensive publication data. I here follow the latter: p.49.4: bsam yas byang gter bcu [B: dbu] mchod ma 'i lo rgyus dang them la/ [1] dang po lo tsas ji ltar bsgyur ba/ [2] bar du ji ltar bsnuhs pa/ [3] mtha' ma dar lugs dang gsum mo//

1. dang po slob dpon chen po gnyan li shu stag rings kyis/ mnga' ris zhang zhung bon gyi yul na/ gser glang po 'i rna ba gang khyer nas/ mi rnams la phan gdags par bya ba 'i phyir/ stag gzig yul du byon te/ bod kyi chu 'go mtsho nag 'khyil pa na/ klu sdig pa glang mgo stobs chen rgya 'i nyams sod byas/ ri bo pad ma ldan gyi brag phug nas chas nas/ gas kyis btsan ri dgu sgril la lam byung / rgya mtsho bdal mo 'khyil chen la 'byung rlung gi khri byas/ ge khod gnyan lung la zhag 'dug byas/ mtsho pha gir phyin tsam na/ bdud khyab pa lag ring gis/ bon ri g-yung drung la me btang bas/ sol ba 'i ri yang 'dug skad/ bye ma 'i ri la nyi ma dgu phyin/ chu 'i chen po dgu brgal/ gangs ri dkar po 'i rtsar phyin/ seng ge mang po byung bas za ma nus skad/ ri gsum brgal nas byon/ lha ma yin gyi dmag mang po byung / sgrib shing byas pas bar chod ma byung / de nas chu 'o chen po si dhu la/ chu srin mang po sems can mthong tshad za yin 'dug pos [emend: dug pas] bar du ma chod/ bye ma 'i mya ngams la byi ru 'i gling 'dug- shing la nor bu 'i 'phreng ba skyes 'dug- mtsho 'i 'gram la nya phyis dang mu tig gi mchod pa 'dug- gsas mkhar ri rab dpe bzhag- sham po lha rtse dang / khong ma ne 'u chung gi gsas mkhar 'dug- nub phyogs kyi gling la/ gsang sngags kyi grub thob dang / phyi rgyud kyi grub thob mang po 'dug- lag na thog 'phen pa/ kha nas ser 'phro ba/ rdzu 'phrul du ma dang ldan pa mang po 'dug skad/ dmu tso ting rums/ dmu slang don dang / dmu mtha' lding [50] dang / dmu rje sprul sku dang la/ li shu stag ring gi bon sgo bsam gyis mi khyab pa zhus nas/ bod yul du sgra skad mang po bsgyur/ dbus kyi bsam yas su byon nas/ bon rin po cher spyod cing yod pa 'i dus na/ nub phyogs u rgyan gyi yul nas/ padma sam bha ba de/ khri srong lde btsan gyi mchod gnas su spyan drangs yod pas/ de 'i dus na/ yum mkhar chen za mtsho rgyal/ de 'i blon po khri bzang yab lhag dang / zhang ldo za khroms skyes la sogs pas/ bon 'phrul ngag bden pa 'di bsnuhs par byas te/ gnyan li shu stag ring dang / rgya nag gi slob dpon dpal ge zhes kyang bya/ ba gor bhe ro tsa na zhes kyang bya/ lo tsa legs btang rmang po zhes kyang bya ba de tshe 'phos gnyis kyis/ bon rin po cher sgo dgu ni/ btsad po yab yum dang / slob dpon pad ma gsum la phul bas/

2. nub lugs ni/ bsam yas kyi gling lho nub/ khri dang dur khrod srin po 'i mgo gnong/ lca ti sgo mangs/ mchod rten dmar por sbas te/ rin po che 'i bse sgroms chu srin kha sprod bya ba 'i nang du sbas/ tsan dan sol ba dang / dri bzang rgas med/ chu tshas gser skus sbas/ gsung rab gling skos dang / gling mtsho rgyud che chung / 'khor

ba la za 'i rgyud la sogs pa gsum mo// rin po che 'i bdud pho rtsi/ lha byang chub la gtad do// g-yung drung chab dkar sgo pa bar pa g-yung drung bde spyod dang / theg pa dgu 'i lugs kyi bon la sogs pa/ gnam mtsho phyug mo 'i gong pa bong chung rtse 'i shar phyogs/ seng ge kha yel gyi zhabs su sbas/ de nub lugs so//

3. gter nas thon lugs ni/ mchod rten dmar po 'i so phag gog pa nas/ shog dril mang po byung nas bltas pas/ bon du 'dug nas mer bsregs pas/ mi rung ba sna tshogs byung / lcags mo bya 'i lo la/ so phag mang po gog pas/ shog dril mang po byung nas/ bltas pas bon du 'dug- de mi rung ba byung bas ma bsregs par/ bsam yas lha khang lder so 'i 'og tu sbas/ lo bzhi bcu zhe dgu nas/ sad gu rin chen grags pa dang / tre rgyal ra tsa gnyis bkor gnyer byas pas/ [51] lder so 'i rgyab nas rnyed nas/ nub mo rta dang dre 'u la bkal nas/ rkong po 'i yul nas khams lhor byon/ khams pa dbus gtsang du slob gnyer snga shos tir gyi u ston bya ba/ zhu g-yas kyi slob ma zhid yod pa der phyin nas/ nged la shog ser yod pas byin nam byas pas/ khong ma na re/ ngas dbus gtsang du phyin pas/ bla ma gshen sgru gyis thon pa 'i shog ser khyer du ma btub/ de min khyed la med las che zer/ za ma drangs nas gter shog yod na 'dod skad/ de 'i dus na/ gur zhog dang rgya khri rje 'i slob ma/ khams kyi grva pa la snga shos sum pa rta ston bya ba/ khams pa yul du byon pa zhig- lho ngos kyi yul shod/ g-yung drung klong chen gyi chu dkar bya lam dkar shol na/ mchod gnas byed kyin yod pa de la bon bstan nas/ sbyin nam byas pas/ rung na rung gsungs nas/ zhal zas drangs/ mi gzhan la ma ston cig- gned kyi pha yul du phyin na bon spel/ khyed gnyis kyang che sar bzhag gsungs/ rlang sum pa lho ston gyi phyag tu gtad pas/ gter shog sgro drug byung skad/ der lho ston gyis yon bdag gcig la bcol/ de 'i dus na bre dang / sad ku gnyis par bu 'i mo 'debs cing yul gzhan du song ba dang / dus de tsam na/ yul der tshong pa mang po byung bas yul pas bkag- skyel ma dang yul pa gnyis rdo 'thab byas pas/ rdo ston gyis bar du shugs ma byas pas/ rdo ston dbu la rdo phog nas grongs/ der sngar gter sgro bcol ba 'i yon bdag mo skas la lhung nas mgo chag- der dbu mchod rten phur nag 'bar bya bas/ bon po sman shes pa zhig bos nas/ khrab ster bas mgo 'di 'chos par zhu byas pas/ dbu mchod na re/ yon bdag mgo drag par bya yis/ khyrab khyed rang gyis la/ slob dpon gyis gter sgro bcol ba rnams nga la slang zer/ yon bdag mo dga' che nas/ khrab bzung nas/ gter sgro drug po byin skad/ dus de tsam na/ par bu sdebs pa gnyis po byung nas/ rdo ston grongs/ dpe cha 'i rtsa ra bcaid pas ma chod/ mo btab pas dbu [52] mchod gan [emend: gang] du byung ste/ khyod la yod pas 'dod zer/ nga la med byas pas cis kyang yod pas 'dod zer/ der za ma drangs nas/ nga la yod pa mi la ston cig- nga yang zhu/ khyed rang yang spyod du zhu gsungs/ dpe 'dra ba bstan/ zhal 'ga' bsdad pas mo ma gnyis po med skad/ dus der dbu tir u ston chen po 'das/ de 'i tsha 'o// ting gi ston pa btsun bya ba yod pa/ u mchod gam du phyin nas/ khyod la gter shog yod par 'dug pas/ nged kyang zhu byas pas/ nga la med gsungs/ khyed la yod pa mi ster ba yin na/ khyod rang nga 'i skor du ma sdod byas pas/ dbu mchog na re/ de skad ma gsung nga la yod pas/ rnal 'byor gnyis po yang 'ong du re nas des gsang ba yin zer/ der tir gyis 'jam skol nas/ mi bsogs rta bzang zhig la dar yug gis mthur mda' byas nas dbu mchod la phul/ dus de ring nas 'di gter bdag

yin no// bon po rnam^s kyis dpon du khur cig zer/ rnal 'byor gnyis po 'di nas 'dug bya ba/ 'dir song bya ba yang ma byung / la la na re dbu mchod kyis bsad pa yin/ de'i rtags su dam tshig nyams pas/ bu yang lkugs pa sbal sbrul za pa zhis 'dug zer/ dbu mchod na re/ gte shog dril shing / gze snying dang mtshung rgya la bsgyur du song zer/ gnyis po ma log ro la thong pa yang gcig med/ phyis grags pa rgya yul na dmar bshal gyis grongs skad/ dbu mchod la/ snya li shu stag ring gi sgrub shing yod pas mi mthong ba dang / dpe cha gar bzhas kyang mi rnyed pa la sogs gda' skad/ de'i bon sde la brgyad de/

1. gsung rab kyi sde dang gcig-
2. mdo sde dang gnyis/
3. sngags nang gi sde dang gsum/
4. gso dpyad sman gyi sde dang bzhi/
5. bsgrub thabs sngags kyi sde dang lnga/
6. ngan sngags las sbyor gyi sde dang drug-
7. phan bya gson bon gyi sde dang bdun/
8. pra thabs ltas ngan gyi sde dang brgyad do//

de la gsung rab bye ma nyi khri chu rgyun gyi bon la/ dum bu sum cu so gnyis/ 'khor zhu ba po bcu drug gis zhus pa bzhus so//

gnyis pa mdo sde chen po [53] **bzhi/ mdo** 'phran nyi shu rtsa gnyis/ mdo chen po bzhi la/

dus gsum **gshen rab** byung khungs kyi mdo dang gcig-
kham^s gsum sems can skye 'chi'i mdo dang gnyis/
snod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig gi mdo dang gsum/
bla med go 'phang sgrub thabs kyi mdo dang bzhi'o//
de'i cha lag la zad pa med do/

mdo phran la gtso bo bzhi la bstod pa/ mdo gnyis gnyis brgyad/ thig le'i mdo/ yi ge brgya pa'i mdo/ ltung bzags kyi mdo/ sngags mdo/ ltas ngan bsgyur chog gi mdo/ sa dang lam gyi mdo las sogs pa rtsa gnyis so//

gsum pa sngags nang la/ khro bo la rgyud sde lnga/ phur pa la rgyud sde dgu- ge khod la rgyud gsum/ khro bo rgyud lnga la/ khro gsas mkha' 'gying ri rab g-yo 'gul gyi rgyud/ rngams gsas mkha' 'gying rlung nag 'tshub ma'i rgyud/ dbal gsas mkha' 'gying me dpur 'bar ba'i rgyud/ gtum gsas mkha' 'gying chu bo rba klong gi rgyud/ gtso mchog mkha' 'gying nam mkha' gsal byed kyi rgyud/ de la bsgrub thabs re re gshams na yod/ phur pa rgyud dgu la bsgrub thabs re re byung / ge khod rgyud gsum la/ khro bo gnam lcags thog mda'i rgyud/ mu dmar gser btso zhun ma'i rgyud/ mnga' bdag me lce 'phreng ba'i rgyud dang gsum mo// gnam lcags thog mda' la/ khro bo dgu la/ ye shes kyi khro bo bdun/ 'jig rten pa'i khro bo gnyis te dgu/ mu mar gser btso la/ me ri dang ge khod dbang rgyal dang gsum mo// sngags bdag la a ti mu wer rtsa 'grel dang / gzhung gsum khungs dang bzhi byung ngo //

bzhi pa gso dpyad la/ rtsa 'grel gnyis/ lag len la shing sbyor gnyis/ sngo sbyor ldum bcos gsum/ dpyad bu khri shes kyi sman mdo byung ngo //

*lna pa bsgrub pa ngan sngags kyi sde la gsum/ dgra lha mo dang / gas btsan
bsgrub thabs spyi gsum mo// dgra lha mo la rgyud bzhi/ bsgrub thabs brgya dang
brgyad cu rtsa gnyis/ dmag dpon gas btsan la rgyud sde dgu ste/ rgyud che ba gsum/
rgyud chung ba drug dang dgu 'o// spyi bsgrub la lha ma srin sde brgyad kyi bsgrub
[54] thabs dang dgu byung ngo //*

*drug pa ngan thabs bca' sbyor la/ skyogs lugs gsum/ chu skyogs thal skyogs gnyis
te lna 'o// chu gyen la drang thabs dang drug go-/*

*bdun pa gson bon la/ rgyal phung das chad/ sha ru rang 'gros/ thod pa rang
'gros/ 'dos rang 'gros/ rje sku glud rang 'gros la sogs pa mang ngo //*

*brgyad pa lta ngan la/ khang pa tshig pa/ chu gal bsgyur/ mkhar bsgyil ba/
khang par bya nag dbab pa 'o//*

bsam yas ca ti ma'i kha byang tshar ro//

GRUB CHEN U RGYAN PA AND THE MONGOLS OF CHINA

ROBERTO VITALI

(Dharamsala)

The life and activities of grub chen U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) are extraordinary by any criteria, his significance being stressed both in the Tibetan tradition and in Tibetological studies. He did enough in his life to be worthy of being distantly compared with the great souls of Asia, whose mystical enterprises and wanderings from land to land left a mark of their free spirit, yet his fame did not cross the boundaries of Tibet. He was:

- a *yogin* and a *siddha*;¹
- a Tantrist, expert in occult powers including lethal curses;²
- an author of important religious texts;³

1 I trace here the education of U rgyan pa in a nutshell:

- at the age of seven he learned Ma [mo], Phur pa, bDe [mchog] and dGyes [rdor] from his father Jo 'bar (Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.162 lines 4-5); from the age of seven until the age of sixteen he received Tantric commentaries, *grub thabs*-s and rituals on the Ma [mo], Phur [pa], bDe [mchog], dGyes [rdor], Phyag rdor and Yoga and learned them in a masterful manner (ibid. p.162 lines 5-6).
- Aged sixteen (wood snake 1245), he went to Bo dong E and learned *mNgon pa* and *Tshad ma* under Rin chen rtse mo (ibid. line 6).
- He then proceeded to study under rGod tshang pa, especially *Phyag rgya chen po* (p.162 line 6-p.163 line 2); he was bestowed the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow by Bo dong Rin chen rtse mo at the age of twenty in earth bird 1249 (ibid. p.162 lines 3-4).
- He studied Dus 'khor under Rin che rtse mo according to the system of 'Bro lo tsa ba (ibid. p.163 line 4); he received Dus 'khor according to the method of Tsa/rTsa mi lo tsa ba Sangs rgyas grags pa (?-?) and Chag lo tsa ba Chos rje dpal (1197-1264) from his brother Go lung pa (ibid. p.163 lines 4-5); he was also bestowed many additional bKa' brgyud pa teachings by rGod tshang pa (ibid. p.163 line 6).
- At rDo rje gdan he became a *yogin* "like a lion" and attained *siddhi*-s, including medical ones (*mKhas pa 'i dga' ston* p.915 lines 7-10; Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.169 lines 4-7).

2 He was accused by religious rivals of having had a hand in eliminating bla ma dBu ma pa, also known as Jo btsun Sras pa, a vainglorious Tshal pa master.

3 For instance, *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.735 lines 16-18) says that, inspired by spiritual practice, he wrote a treatise in verses on *bsNyen grub kyi rdo rje gsum*, at the hermitage of dGon dkar. This is confirmed in bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.169 line 19-p.170 line 6): "At the *ri khrod* of sKyid grong Bar sgar, (p.170) namely Kos (spelled as) dkar, a hermitage blessed by the *mkha' 'gro*, he wrote *Zab lam rDo rje gsum gyi snyen sgrub* with the

- a geographer and historian;⁴
- a master whose behaviour, at least once, was apparently in line with the *snyong ba* tradition;⁵

blessings of bcom ldan 'das ma rDo rje phag mo. [This is] like a golden necklace of words which are a wish fulfilling gem. He renounced to write it as his own creation”.

The last statement in this passage carries some weight. It refers to the practice, common to Tibetans of earlier periods, of writing a text and attributing it to someone else in order to increase its importance. The matter eventually boils down to whether to consider these works as forgeries, as the *sun 'byin* literature and several western Tibetologists do.

- 4 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.171 lines 8-11): “[U rgyan pa] wrote the texts entitled *Chu bo rab kyi phreng ba* (“The Necklace of Rivers”) and *rGyal po rabs kyi phreng ba* (“The Necklace of the Royal Genealogy”). He [also] composed verses in praise of the emperor and sent them to him as gifts”.

The presently unavailable treatise on the river systems flowing from Tibet to the neighbouring lands concerns the orography of Upper West Tibet feeding the Indian North-West, the river system of Central Tibet flowing to Nepal and Gangetic India; and the orography of eastern Tibet which feeds China. *IHo rong chos 'byung* contains what seemingly are parts of this work embedded in the biography of U rgyan pa (see for mNga' ris p.724 lines 11-16 and p.736 lines 6-22; for dBus gTsang p.739 line 20-p.740 line 4 and for Khams p.745 line 13-p.746 line 1). *rGyal po rabs kyi phreng ba*, too, is unavailable.

- 5 In 1261 U rgyan pa misbehaved in Ti ra hu ti on the way to rDo rje gdan for his first visit to the heart of the Buddhist world. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.135 line 3-p.137 line 2) reads: “[Ram shing], the king [of Ti ra hu ti], was invited to a festival by his senior minister. His palanquin could not move because a multitude surrounded it. While the ministers carrying various kinds of weapons in their hands were telling people to move away, the *rje grub chen rin po che*, grabbing the moment, snatched a stick from the hand of a minister and told him to go away. [U rgyan pa first] jumped (*'phyongs* sic for *mchongs*) on the king and [then], upon the king exclaiming: “A madman has come”, jumped on his palanquin. [The procession] moved after the *rje grub chen rin po che* dropped the stick. The people said: “This is the behaviour of a *dzo gi* who is bestowing protection”. The king sat on the throne, and the *rje grub chen rin po che* was asked [to sit] at the corner of the throne. He proclaimed: “I took part in the festival to which the king was invited. I have [achieved] the feats of someone successful in his activities” and sang a song that said: “I led Ram shing rgyal po with a stick”.

He then went to a Hindu temple that housed a stone image of the god Shiva. The *dkon gnyer ma* (“woman keeper”?) said (p.136): “Prostrate to the god”, but he retorted: “I will not prostrate”. As soon as she warned him: “If you do not prostrate, a disease will come to you”, he covered the image with a woollen robe and rode on it saying: “*Khyu khyu*” and added: “If a disease will come [to me], take this one”. She said: “He is doing this to my image!”, and cried. [U rgyan pa] sang a song which said that he rode on the neck of Ma ha de va sha ra (spelled so).

Then he went to another Hindu temple and halted [there]. He relinquished [there] his stools and urine. This being a behaviour supremely unruly, the next morning one *dkon gnyer* came and said: “You did such things in the *lha khang*. The king comes here for his worship, so you must clean it yourself. If you do not do it, the king will come to kill you”. [U rgyan pa] replied: “I am not afraid to be killed. If you are afraid to be killed, clean it yourself”. [The *dkon gnyer*] said: “There is no one who is not afraid of getting killed”. At that time, [U rgyan pa] urinated in a

- an inveterate pilgrim (he traveled to U rgyan, Ma ga dha and China);
- a lineage holder of several important transmissions;
- a builder of temples and promoter of restoration campaigns;⁶
- a political advisor (see below for his allegedly crucial intervention to save Bal po from an invasion by the Mongols of China);
- a *lo tsa ba*;⁷
- a polyglot; he seemingly knew Sanskrit, various Indian languages including some Pahari ones, Chinese, Mongolian and Uighur (Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.180 lines 6-7);
- a physician;⁸
- a *rtsis pa*;⁹ and
- an alchemist.¹⁰

leather (*ko*) bowl he had and poured it on the head of a statue. The *dkon gnyer* said: “You are someone who is not afraid to be killed, but they will come to kill me. Go away”. [U rgyan pa] said that the [*dkon gnyer*] was the one who cleaned. He said he sang a song which told that (p.137) he poured urine on the head of the god Shiva”.

- 6 [U rgyan pa] is said to have built bDe legs steng just before sBu tra *mchod khang* (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.180 line 14-18): “At Mang yul Kyi (sic for sKyid) grong, at the neck of Shar gangs (the “mountain in the east”), he built a monastery known as bDe legs stengs and stayed there”.

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.737 line 12-14): “He took the road to Bal po and, without stopping, went to sKyid grong. He founded bDe legs steng at the neck of Ri bo Shar gangs”.

He was also involved in at least three restorations of Bodhgayā during a time of destruction of the Buddhist institutions in Gangetic India (see my “In the presence of the “diamond throne”: Tibetans at Bodhgayā (last quarter of the 12th century to year 1300”).

- 7 This is what Byams pa 'phrin las (compiler), *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* (p.746 line 21-p.747 line 3) says about U rgyan pa after his return from the Mongol court in water snake 1293: “Having studied translations from pandi ta Ra hu la shri, Bi tsa tra ki ta and Sra ka ra in a masterful manner (p.747), there was hardly anything he did not know about the internal relations between the linguistic families of U rgyan, rGya [gar and] Bal [po]. So he did not need a translator at all. He also translated gShed dmar”.
- 8 Trained in the *dbyangs 'char* tradition, U rgyan pa was a reputed master of medicine. Proverbial episodes in the *rnam thar*-s of him are his unfortunate handling of Sa skya dpon chen Byang rin's disease (see below) and his treatment of Se chen rgyal po's ailments at the Mongol court of China (see below).
- 9 Being a master of Dus 'khor, he made a calculation of the Buddha's *nirvana* at bSam yas in water horse 1282 (*bsTan rtsis kun las btus pa* p.192 lines 18-19; Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.174 lines 2-3). The passing of the Buddha fell, in his view, in 652 BCE.
- 10 He transformed tin into silver at the Mongol court of China. On that occasion he said he could also turn iron into gold, fluids into gold and mercury into silver (see below n.50). In *dNgul chu grub pa'i bstan bcos* there is a reference to his capacity to distill mercury and his method to discontinue the cycle of births (Byams pa 'phrin las (compiler), *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* p.161 lines 10-12).

Despite ample chances to explore some of the many facets of his personality, in this paper I focus on a study of the political and social background to his activities. I examine some of his life experiences, symptomatic of an existence spent under a power he did not support and with which he did not sympathise.

He was born in iron tiger 1230 in one of the several families which claimed descent from the *lha sras btsan po*-s but would have remained unnoticed by historical records, were it not for the fact that they included important religious masters in their later generations.

Grub chen U rgyan pa's name at birth was Seng ge dpal (ibid. p.162 line 4), but he was known as Rin chen dpal after he took monastic vows (ibid. p.163 line 4). His belonging to one religious school of Tibetan Buddhism rather than another always was a little undefined. Karma Pakshi (1204 or 1206 or 1210-1283) thought that U rgyan pa was his best disciple; the 'Brug pa tradition includes him among its noblest sons. He was, no doubt, a bKa' brgyud pa, but he was initiated into monastic life at Bo dong by Rin chen rtse mo (?-?) (see above n.1).

His life spanned a good part of the Sa skya pa period. He was witness to the enforcement of the Mongol law in Tibet and the Hor's protracted control over the plateau. Like his contemporaries who did not belong to the ruling faction in Tibet, he had to cohabit with the Hor.

U rgyan pa was a child when, in iron rat 1240, the Mongols invaded dBus gTsang. The Tibetan tradition considers the 1240 campaign led by Dor ta as the earliest Hor pa invasion of Tibet; this is a historical stereotype whose validity needs to be investigated, but a treatment of this complex subject goes beyond the scope of the present article.¹¹

U rgyan pa's monastic career took a turn for the best, as often is the case of mystics, when in fire sheep 1247 he met his main teacher, the great rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1187-1258), at the old man's monastery of sBu tra bDe chen gling (*IHo rong chos 'byung* p.718 lines 7-8).

Sometime later, his teacher, tired of the jealousy of his older disciples towards U rgyan pa, decided to disperse them all to several meditation places. As a consequence of his Dus 'khor studies under various teachers—the last one being rGod tshang

11 I restrict myself to quote here a single, short passage in Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan's *'Bri gung gser phreng* (p.112 lines 3-6), which is a reference to belligerent activities by the Mongols, mentioned in this source before rDor ta's campaign of iron rat 1240. The passage does not go into any details about the events that it mentions: "At that time an army of the Hor came and all the people were deprived of their lives. When most *gtsug lag khang*-s were burnt down, ['Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187-1241)] first went to see the Hor commander. The latter developed faith in him. Hence ['Bri gung gling pa] accepted him as supporter".

The troubled relations between Tibet and the Hor need an in-depth treatment, in particular the several—less well known—raids undertaken by the Mongols in different regions of the plateau and the reasons for these campaigns.

pa—after his father Jo'phan's death in water rat 1252, U rgyan pa developed the idea of going to Sham bha la (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.719 lines 13-14). rGod tshang pa dissuaded him. He told him that his destiny was to go to U rgyan (Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.174 lines 6-7). He thus decided to go to Udiyana—the lands of the *mkha 'gro ma-s* and of the lotus-born Guru Rin po che—where the *Tantra-s* popular among the Tibetans had originated. Although the bKa' brgyud pa masters held in great esteem this pilgrimage, rGod tshang pa did not venture that far and stopped at Dza lan dha ra, nonetheless, a place of great Buddhist significance. The journey to Udiyana was, indeed, perilous beyond imagination.

In the next year, water ox 1253, U rgyan pa set out to the west, and proceeded to southern Byang thang for a first meditation period (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.719 lines 14-15 and p.720 lines 17-21). He continued his meditation practice at Gangs Ti se, where he faced the hostility of other hermits who claimed control of the mountain. Undeterred, U rgyan pa had his practice at Ti se and Ma pham g.yu mtsho. After an important diversion, he negotiated the Himalayan range on the way to Lahul. From Ri bo Gandhola, the centre of the bKa' brgyud pa in the Western Himalaya, he proceeded across the mountaineous terrain of the Indian North-West.

U rgyan pa first met the Mongols in his twenties, when he was in U rgyan (see bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.60 line 10-p.104 line 16), a journey that obviously accounts for his name. His encounter with the Mongols was not a happy one. The lands he crossed to reach Udiyana were troubled by the Hor pa invasion and the counter-activity of the Delhi Sultanate. The Muslim historiographers of the Mongols and some Tibetan sources document that the Hor had taken Kashmir, a turn of events not recorded in any local document.

Those Hor were the avantgarde of the hordes of Se chen rgyal po (Khubilai Khan)'s younger brother, Hu-la-hu, that had taken Kashmir before advancing towards Baghdad. The Tibetan sources compare the deadly effect of his advance with the thunder-like roar of the sky dragon.¹² The biographies of U rgyan pa, for their part,

12 *Pad ma dkar po chos 'byung* (Gangs can rig mdzod ed. p.422 lines 6-13) inserts this account in the biography of rGyal ba rin po che (1203-1267, in office 1236-1267): "His fame having spread, the eldest son (sic) of the Mongol ruler Jing gir gan, Hu la, the incarnation of gNam the (spelled so), whose dragon voice caused unconceivable panic [just] upon hearing it, could not occupy the throne of China, so he was sent [on a military campaign] against Sog yul (the "land of the Muslims"). By virtue of his great merit [previously accumulated by him], he became the lord of the entire land of the sTod Hor. He also subjugated Kha che. Hearing about [rGyal ba rin po che's] fame, this one (i.e. Hu la hu) appointed him as his supreme officiating *bla ma*. He made great offerings to him thrice. He summoned Kashmiri artists to the land of the sTod Hor to make all types of holy images, and great respect was paid to the Buddhist teachings during his time".

Hu la hu founded the Il-Khanate of Baghdad in the years 1256-1258, which is indirect evidence that those met by U rgyan pa in Udiyana were his hordes.

offer an extraordinary insight into Hu-la-hu's campaign in the Indian North-West (see my paper "Accounts of the journey to the "Western Regions" with particular reference to Khyung-rgod-rtsal and his '*das-log* experience. A historical view" I presented at the 8th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Bloomington July 1998).

Along the way, he had to bear the violence inflicted upon him by the Muslims and, after crossing the Indus in the territory of U rgyan, due to the constant risk of being apprehended by the Hor, he was obliged to hide and travel at night. He witnessed much death and devastation. U rgyan pa had to bear dire consequences to fulfill his plan to reach Udiyana. He was taken for a Hor, and his ragged appearance as a wandering *sadhu* encouraged the natives to take revenge upon him for the excesses that the Mongols had perpetrated upon the local population. He was beaten almost to death, was betrayed and forced to flee in order not to be imprisoned.

Aversion toward the Mongols took on a collective dimension among the sTod 'Brug masters. sTod 'Brug co-disciples of U rgyan pa, active in the south-western stretches of the plateau, such as Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal (1213-1258), shared unfriendly sentiments for the Mongols, first nurtured by their teacher rGod tshang pa.

U rgyan pa was in the lands of the North-West during the years 1254-1258 (his encounter with the Mongols falling around 1255-1256).¹³ Hence he got acquainted with the Hor before those of Khubilai Khan became the Yuan dynasty and held sway in Tibet. This also was before the Sa skya pa became the family implementing their control over the plateau.

On every occasion of their interaction which spanned more than half a century, the Mongols were those who took an interest in him. For his part he did not care to ingratiate himself to the mighty sovereigns of Tibet. Evidence of this attitude is a statement of Se chen rgyal po recorded in the biographies of U rgyan pa. The emperor expressed the desire to invite him to the court because, unlike other Tibetan *bla ma*-s who insistently urged to be summoned to the imperial court, U rgyan pa never expressed this wish.¹⁴ Paradoxically, this reason prompted Se chen rgyal po to invite him repeatedly rather than leaving him alone, as U rgyan pa hoped.

13 That the *grub chen* was out of the Indian North-West sometime during 1258 is confirmed by his being appraised of the death of rGod tshan pa when he was in Mar yul, whose passing occurred in that year. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.78 line 5): "[U rgyan pa] told the *jo bo* (De khyim) about the slightly bad dream he had the previous night: "I have the impression that the *chos rje rin po che* (i.e. rGod tshang pa) is no more".

Ibid. (p.78 line 7): "Then, when they (U rgyan pa and De khyim) reached gSer kha together, [U rgyan pa] received the news that the *chos rje rin po che* had passed away".

14 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.170 line 21-p.171 line 3): "At that time, the lord of the land, called Seng ge rgyal po (i.e. Se chen rgyal po), (p.171) having heard the fame of the *rje grub chen rin po che* like the dragon's voice, said: "Although he did not request so, rje U rgyan pa must be invited".

Soon after, U rgyan pa decided to go on a pilgrimage to the places in Gangetic India, blessed by Shakyamuni's frequentation, in order to fulfil a prophecy of rGod tshang pa (Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.168 lines 3-4), and left for the Kathmandu Valley.

Iron bird 1261—when U rgyan pa reached Bal po on the way to his first pilgrimage to rDo rje gdan—was marked by significant political developments. The Sa skya pa had extended their secular influence over the Kathmandu Valley in that year. As is well known, an outcome of this new scenario was that eighty Newar artists, headed by young Aniko, left for Sa skya in 1261 to contribute to the expansion of its monastery. Aniko worked at gSer thog of dBu rtse mying ma from its foundation in water dog 1262 until its completion in water pig 1263,¹⁵ before leaving for the Mongol dominions in the east.¹⁶ While transiting Bal po in coincidence with the departure of the group of Newar artists for Sa skya, U rgyan pa may have been witness to these events. He must have been aware of the prevailing situation, whereby a strong Mongol/Sa skya/Bal po alliance, despite its conspicuous unbalance, had been taking shape.

Another sign of these new political links was that Se chen rgyal po had given a grant to the Sa skya pa in the previous year, iron mokey 1260, which resulted in the above mentioned expansion of their main monastery and the summons of the Newar artists. Se chen rgyal po's endowment to the Sa skya pa has the appearance of a reward given upon his taking the Mongol throne for himself for their loyalty to him during the ongoing struggle, which ended up in the rout of A ri bo gha a few years

15 *Sa skya gdung rabs* (p.173 lines 6-8): "Then when ['gro mgon 'Phags pa] was twenty-eight years old (i.e. in water dog 1262), a great deal of funds were allocated upwards (i.e. to Tibet), and dpon chen Shakya bzang po built gSer thog chen mo, [located] to the west of dBu rtse mying ma".

After the completion of gSer thog, Aniko was sent by the Sa skya pa to contribute to the new capital of the Mongols of China, whose construction was in progress at the time. This was a task in which all the people of the Mongol empire were called on to participate. For the events intervening between 1260 and 1263 also see Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (p.103-104).

16 *rGya Bod yig tshang* is supremely brief in its assessment of the activities of Aniko at the court of the Mongol emperor of China. I include here the passage concerning them, because I did not mention it in my *Early Temples of Central Tibet*. The passage (p.281 lines 15-17) reads: "[The emperor] gave instructions to Bal po A ner dga', who was like an emanation of the divine artist. [The Newar master] made Dzu chur lha khang including statues of chos skyong Mahā kā la and his retinue". Aniko's making of this statue of mGon po reminds one of the cultural milieu shared, in the name of this deity, by the Tangut kingdom as well as sGa A gnyan dam pa and a stone sculpture of Mahā kā la with an inscription mentioning the name of this great Sa skya pa master from Khams (see Stoddard "A Stone Sculpture of Gur mGon.po, Mahakala of the Tent, Dated 1292"; Sperling "Some Remarks on sGa A-gnyan Dam-pa and the Origins of the Hor.pa Lineage of the dKar-mdzes Region"; Sperling, "Rtsa-mi lo-tsa-ba Sangs-rgyas grags-pa and the Tangut Background of Early Mongol-Tibetan Relations"; and Vitali, "Sa skya and the mNga' ris skor gsum legacy: the case of Rin chen bzang po's flying mask").

later in wood rat 1264. Further funds were assigned in 1262 to build Sa skya gSer thog (see above n.14).

The ruler of Bal po in that eventful iron bird 1261 was Jayabhīmadeva. *Gopalarajavamshavali* (f.26, p.129) credits him with a reign of thirteen years and three months, which fell from sometime around 1257 to circa 1269.

What is not explicitated in the sources is the status of the relationship between U rgyan pa and the Sa skya pa during the years preceding the official extension of the Mongol power over the central provinces of the plateau. I would suggest that it was already quite tense, given the political divide in Tibet between the Sa skya pa supporters of Go pe la (Khubilai, the future Se chen rgyal po), the undesignated successor to Mong gor rgyal po, and the bKa' brgyud pa supporters of A ri bo gha, the official heir apparent who had been chosen by his father, the emperor.

The event that caused long-term trouble for U rgyan pa is linked to the poisoning of 'Phags pa's brother, Phyag na rdo rje, in fire hare 1267 (van der Kuijp, "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" p.314), probably in view of the official enforcement of the Mongol law in Central Tibet, marked by the earth dragon 1268 promulgation of the *khri skor bcu gsum*.¹⁷

As noted by Leonard van der Kuijp in his brilliant paper, Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas says in *Karma kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* that U rgyan pa came to know who was responsible for the assassination of Phyag na rdo rje.¹⁸ Whether or not this was true, U rgyan pa thought he had evidence that Sa skya dpon chen Kun dga' bzang po had poisoned 'Phags pa's brother.

In the realm of conjecture, I prefer a suggestion different from the several hypotheses proposed by van der Kujip (ibid. p.315-316). All actors in the play were Sa skya pa, thus being in charge of the affairs of Tibet rather than antagonistic to the new status quo. The political situation had nuances within the rulers' ranks. I think of an internecine

17 On the *khri skor bcu gsum* system introduced in 1268 see *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.298 lines 7-9: "In the earth male dragon year (1268), the envoys A kon and Mi gling, altogether two, who had been directly sent by the imperial court, came. All the human communities and lands [of Tibet] took the name of the great Hor"). *Ngor chos 'byung* (p.326 line 7) says: "When ['gro mgon 'Phags pa] was thirty-four years old, in the earth male dragon year (1268) dpon chen Shakya bzang po established the *khri skor bcu gsum*".

Also see Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted" (p.125), where the establishment of the *khri skor* system is connected with the Mongol census of Tibet in the same year.

18 See van der Kujip, "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" (p.315). The passage in Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* (p.173 line 5) reads as follows in my own reading: "Kun [dga'] bzang [po] himself heard rumours about [U rgyan pa] having come to know that Sa skya'i dpon chen Kun [dga'] bzang [po] had served poison to Phyag na [rdo rje]. Hence he brought troops to sBung tra (spelled so). [U rgyan pa's] *gzims khang* was destroyed. This is why many bad omens manifested".

struggle for power on the verge of the formal submission of Tibet to the Mongols of China. Phyag na rdo rje was bound to become the viceroy of Tibet. His murder was, in my understanding, a move by the Sa skya pa authorities posted in Tibet to preclude the imposition of an administration run from the Mongol court of China. With the assassination of Phyag na rdo rje, the day-by-day management of Tibet passed to the Sa skya pa officers, to whose ranks Kun dga' bzang po belonged.

It seems that, from this time, Kun dga' bzang po nurtured hatred for U rgyan pa. The religious master was the holder of allegations too uncomfortable for the Sa skya pa officer. If one looks at the sequence of activities in the life of U rgyan pa, some of his exertions were influenced by Kun dga' bzang po's burdensome aversion. In those years U rgyan pa returned to rDo rje gdan a second time (*IHo rong chos 'byung* p.736 lines 2-6 and *ibid.* lines 22-25; *mKhas pa 'i dga' ston* p.915 lines 7-10). It would seem that he left for Bodhgayā in temporary exile to avoid the hostility of the *dpon chen*, when that tension became intolerable.

On the way back, he took charge of the dissidence of the Tibetans in exile in the Kathmandu Valley owing to their harassment by the Sa skya pa authorities (see my "In the presence of the "diamond throne": Tibetans at rDo rje gdan (last quarter of the 12th century to year 1300)"). When the Tibetans—numbering in the thousands—fled the plateau owing to their unwillingness to accept the situation prevailing in Tibet, the Newar ruler of the Kathmandu Valley was probably Jayashimadeva. He succeeded Jayabhīmadeva in 1270 and reigned for two years and seven months (*Gopalarajavamshavali* f.26, p.129).

None of his *'bha ro-s* (i.e. Newar noblemen) took the issue of the displaced Tibetans to heart. Some eleven years after the Newar artists had gone to work at Sa skya, the local political sentiments had not changed much. The Kathmandu Valley remained a hotspot of loyalists to the Mongol alliance of Tibet.

Typically, U rgyan pa disregarded the warnings of the local pro-Sa skya establishment not to lead the movement, which could count on such a conspicuous number of Tibetans.

Using the stereotype of Tibetan exposure to tropical diseases and the reason of the chronic vexation imposed upon them in Bal po as a pretext, he organised a march back to the plateau.¹⁹ He thus transferred dissidence against the Mongol rule from exile to Tibet.

Upon his return to his monastery of sBu tra, held by his teacher rGod tshang pa before him, he built a structure defined in his biographies as a *pho brang* ("palace")

19 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.176 line 18-p-178 line 3): "At that time, there was a crop failure in Tibet, hence, that winter, in the land of Bal po there were many thousands of Tibetans. Remembering all the kinds of misdeeds [they had to bear], the Tibetans requested the *rje grub chen rin po che*, Bho ta pandi ta and a Sa skya pa *dge bshes*, (p.177) altogether three, to intercede with the Bal po'i *bha ro-s*. It said that Bho ta pandi ta exclaimed: "This crazy U rgyan pa will not be useful to us". The *rje grub chen rin po che* retorted: "It is excellent (*go bcad*) that you are not crazy, so you should prevent them from catching fever

(bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa*; see n.18), a *gzims khang* ("private residence") or a *mchod khang* ("prayer room, temple") (for both the latter instances see *lHo rong chos 'byung*; respectively n.20 and n.24).²⁰

At the time when the construction work at sBu tra was in progress (i.e. soon after iron horse 1270), U rgyan pa is credited with having saved the Kathmandu Valley from an invasion by the Mongols of China.²¹ This acknowledgement is perhaps a mere apology; however, U rgyan pa—his biographers say—convinced the Mongols of China to desist from their plan by means of written arguments. *lHo rong chos 'byung* says that, among the three texts U rgyan pa wrote at the time, a praise of Se chen rgyal po was the one that helped avoid the invasion of Bal po.²² This praise

along the way". It is said that the Sa skya pa *dge bshes* exclaimed: "These bad Tibetans came here to evade the taxation by the Sa skya pa. Now, when they will go back to Tibet, each of them will stand [responsible] for this crime". The Tibetans went to see the *rje btsun rin po che*, and pleaded with him: "Those two will not help us to plead [the Bal po *bha ro*-s]. We beg [you], the *bla ma*, to help us with [our] appeal to [the *bha ro*-s]". He pleaded the *bha ro*-s, but [the problem] was not sorted out because the various [*bha ro*] denigrated one another (*phar skur tshur skur*). Hence the *grub chen rin po che* said: "All of you, Tibetans, must gather at Bod thang (i.e. Thundikel in Kathmandu), and carry a [walking] stick (*rgyug pa*) one 'dom (the length of two outspread arms) long [for the journey to Tibet]. If you stay here for the next season, you will catch a fever and die. Whoever will be holding up [*skvil ba*] here will be killed". The Tibetans did so. The Bal po [authorities] requested the *rje grub chen rin po che*: "*Bla ma*, do not be the head of these Tibetans". He replied: "I am not the head of these Tibetans. All these Tibetans will leave during the hot season. [Otherwise,] catching fever, they will die, which is not commendable. The locals say that, if they hold them up, they will beat them". Provisions for the journey were given to the Tibetans, amounting to fourteen *pham* of rice for each. (p.178) Rice was sent along with the 200 attendants of the *rje grub chen rin po che* as much as they could carry".

- 20 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.170 lines 11-19): "When the "palace" at dpal ldan sBud skra (spelled so) was under construction, he prophesied that it would be destroyed and the troops of the sMad kyi Hor ("from the lower side", i.e. China), coming to destroy the holy places of Bal yul, will be repulsed. Having [indeed] gone to dpal ldan sBud skra (spelled so) when the palace was under construction, the *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "Other people will come to destroy this building in the future. At that time, people will have to say that this building was [re-]constructed by a donor. Make it big and make it with big walls".
- 21 Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* (p.172 line 4) adds rGya gar to Bal po, but the earlier biographers of U rgyan pa do not do so.
- 22 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.171 lines 4-12): "At the same time, [U rgyan pa] performed a binding ritual (*sbyor ba*) against troops attacking the holy places of Bal yul, and gave many speeches to the *gser yig pa*, who had come with his horsemen, [saying] that they should neither conquer Bal yul nor that there was any use to conquer it. He wrote the texts entitled *Chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba* ("The Necklace of Rivers") and *rGyal po rabs kyi phreng ba* ("The Necklace of the Royal Genealogy"). He composed verses in praise of the emperor and sent them as presents. Moreover, it is said that, since he created obstructions by all kinds of means, the troops gave up [the military campaign]".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.735 lines 16-18) records different means used by U rgyan pa to dissuade the Mongols of China: "After composing the words of the "adamantine poetical

seems to have been rather expedient owing to an emergency rather than a heartfelt profession of esteem for the emperor (see below for U rgyan pa's stormy interaction with Se chen at his court).

At the peak of his troubled relationship with the Sa skya pa authorities, the protection extended by U rgyan pa to pro-Sa skya Bal po in order to prevent its takeover by the Mongols of China proves his equanimous and unselfish attitude. He adopted an evenhanded approach that transcended negative experiences in his own life. It also indicates that U rgyan pa's adventures in the North-West had made him enough aware of the damage done by the Mongol invasions not to be unconcerned.

The next event was Kun dga' bzang po's destruction of the "palace" at sBu tra. According to his biographers, U rgyan pa journeyed to rDo rje gdan after 1270, an event followed by his construction of the palace at sBu tra, subsequently burned down by Kun dga' bzang po.

sBu tra was rebuilt five years later by means of funds provided by A rog che,²³ the seventh son of Se chen rgyal po, borne by Zhwa gon ma, the emperor's youngest wife.²⁴ He was in charge of Tibetan affairs and accompanied 'gro mgon 'Phags pa back to Tibet in 1275-1276. 'Phags pa and A rog che, in fire rat 1276, dismissed Kun dga' bzang po from his role of *dpon chen*.²⁵ This may explain why the Mongol prince financed the reconstruction of U rgyan pa's sBu tra in the same year. *IHo rong chos 'byung* says that sBu tra was rebuilt five years before iron snake 1281. Hence the years water monkey 1272 for the destruction of sBu tra and 1276 for its restoration are confirmed.²⁶

verses", the text on the wish-fulfilling attainments (*bsnyen grub*, i.e. the attainments achieved by the training of body, speech and mind, this being a paraphrase of his work on *bsNyen grub kyi rdo rje gsum*) at ri khrod dGon dkar, he went to sBu tra. Here he founded a *gzims khang*. At that time, the troops of Se chen came to conquer the land of Bal yul, but he recited a hymn of praise [of the emperor] in metrical form, and the troops gave up [the invasion of Bal po]".

23 Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* (p.173 lines 5-6): "On account of the punishment [inflicted upon it by Kun dga' bzang po], [sBu tra] remained destroyed for five years without trace. rGyal bu A rog che being the sponsor, the monastery of sPung tra (spelled so) was restored".

24 *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.256 lines 10-11): "bTsun mo Zhwa sgon ma's eight sons were the eldest Hu kar cha, the second A rog che".

Ibid. (p.266 lines 11-14): "The son of the youngest wife of Se chen rgyal po was A rog che. He was entrusted with [the land] known as the "sun in the west" (i.e. Tibet). He resided at the border between China and Tibet [and] also went to dBus gTsang. He suppressed many rebellions".

25 *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.359 line 9): "The *bla ma* (i.e. 'gro mgon 'Phags pa) was not happy with Kun dga' bzang po".

Ibid. (p.359 lines 15-17): "As earlier requested [by 'Phags pa], nye gnas gZhon dbang was sent and, by order of Se chen, Byang rin was appointed *dpon chen* [at the place of Kun dga' bzang po]".

26 *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.737 lines 18-21): "Having listened to the calumny of others, dpon chen Kun dga' bzang po destroyed sBu tra' (spelled so) mchod khang. Then [U rgyan pa] went to

A combined reading of his biographies and *lHo rong chos 'byung* allows the reconstruction of the following sequence of events:

- U rgyan pa journeyed to rDo rje gdan soon after iron horse 1270 and built the palace at dBu tra in 1272;
- Kun dga' bzang po destroyed it almost immediately;
- U rgyan pa restored it in 1276 with funds provided by A rog che.

In iron dragon 1280 Kun dga' bzang po was found guilty of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa's poisoning. The first phase of interaction with the Mongols of China in the life of U rgyan pa ended with the execution of Kun dga' bzang po.

Dialogues between U rgyan pa and a loyalist of Kun dga' bzang po are symptomatic of the *grub chen*'s uncompromising style. On the verge of putting Kun dga' bzang po to death, this loyalist (sTod btsan) made a desperate plea to U rgyan pa that he should do something to spare his enemy's life. Unmoved by Kun dga' bzang po's fate, U rgyan pa replied with a sarcastic statement. This provoked a quarrel with the officer. Subsequently, in order to make him feel responsible, the officer showed him the severed head of the late *dpon chen*. U rgyan pa was unfazed, saying simply: "What a pity! Kun dga' bzang po is dead!", and went on with the prescribed *bla ma*'s routine of performing rites for him.²⁷

U rgyan pa had a part in the obscure circumstances surrounding the demise of Shangs mKhar po che ba Byang [chub] rin [chen], one of the *dpon chen*-s appointed after the dismissal of Kun dga' bzang po from this post in 1276. His tenure of the *dpon chen* rank, begun at an unspecified time after those of Zang btsun and Phyug po sGang dkra ba (see van der Kuijp, "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" n.35), was short lived.

Assigned to the year of the horse 1282 (see bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.192 line 20), the death of *dpon chen* Byang rin occurred soon after

sBu tra. He restored the *gzim* (spelled so) *khang* with the sponsorship of rgyal bu A rog che. Five years later, [Kun dga' bzang po] was sentenced to death by the *mi chen* (i.e. Sam gha)".

27 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.186 line 12-p.187 line 3): "Then, after completing the stages of the ritual, the following morning the *drung* ("secretary") (i.e. sTod btsan) wondered: "The disagreement [between] the *bla ma* and *dpon chen*, altogether two, has proved to be a loss for the latter". [U rgyan pa] replied: "What a pity (*snying rje*)!". [The officer] having pleaded: "What can one do (*ci*), *rje lags*? It is not possible that [they want to] kill him". [U rgyan pa said]: "Would it be binding to perform *rlung sbyor* ("*pranayama*")?". He replied: "It will help very little", and the two had an argument.

Subsequently (*sang dus*), jo bo sTod btsan having shown signs of being upset, for he did not even look [at him], [U rgyan pa] asked: "What is going on?", he showed him the severed head of *dpon chen* Kun dga' bzang po and left. Having said at the time: "Kun dga' bzang po is dead. What a pity!", [U rgyan pa] performed rites for twenty days. (p.187) He said: "Disputes with me do not bring any benefit. However, he will have a human rebirth", and added: "I had a vision that he will be reborn as a *ras pa* who remembers his births and, next, will be a minor '*brog pa* chieftain'".

the execution of Kun dga' bzang po. The circumstances of his passing are somewhat obscure, but not because U rgyan pa was instrumental in causing his death,²⁸ as Leonard van der Kuijp suggests—with several reservations, though, on account of the difficult passages describing it (ibid. p.311-312).

There are several acts in the drama of Byang rin's demise. This is my reconstruction of its unfolding:

- the bSam yas *rgyal po* had a curse made against Byang rin because the latter had taken away from the *chos skor* a turquoise which must have been of great importance for the monastery. The passage in question does not explain whether this was an emblematic appropriation of a symbol of local power, or sheer theft.

- Byang rin fell sick with a serious disease. His life was in danger. He tried to use other physicians before U rgyan pa, and then summoned him for treatment.

- U rgyan pa became acquainted with the complaint of the bSam yas *rgyal po*. He asked Byang rin to follow his own instructions exclusively. This upset one gSal ba

28 bSod nams 'od zer in his *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* recounts this episode assigned to the horse year 1282 (ibid. p.192 line 20). He introduces the events by saying that dpon chen Byang rin fell ill with a serious disease and that [U rgyan pa] was asked to go and give him blessings. The biography then gets into the heart of the matter (p.193 line 6-p.194 line 20): "A few days after, the bSam yas *rgyal po* showed up and [U rgyan pa] said that [the ruler] told him: "dPon chen Byang rin has stolen (*brkus*) and taken away a turquoise from the 'go rdung (?) of bSam yas gtsug lag khang. This being a huge offense, it is a fact that I did a little harm to him. I ask you to intervene [to sort out the matter] between the two of us". A few days after, the *dpon chen* sent four horsemen to escort [U rgyan pa] and [the latter] arrived [to see him]. [Byang rin] stood up from his seat upon [U rgyan pa's] arrival at 'Jad Dar sdings where the *dpon chen* was camped. The *dpon chen* prostrated. Having said: "[I am] the offspring in the paternal family who [benefited of your] empowerment. My hope is that the *bla ma* has an empowerment [for me] because I am afflicted by a serious disease", the *grub chen* replied: "The *dpon chen* should focus his attention [only] upon me. It may be possible that I have effective counsel and remedy". Bla ma gSal ba sgang pa objected: "You have my services, you do not need the services of U rgyan pa". U rgyan pa said: "The bSam yas *rgyal po* showed up to see me (p.194) and said: "My stolen turquoise was taken away by the *dpon chen*. [I think that] the stolen turquoise should be brought back to bSam yas". [The *dpon chen*] packed a substitute brocade and a substitute turquoise on a white horse and sent them on the trunk route to the east (i.e. to bSam yas), but the horse with its load was returned to the door [of the *dpon chen*'s residence]. In the course of that night, [U rgyan pa], standing at the door of their residential tent, told slob dpon Pha jo and dge slong Gyen rdor to wake up. Having joined him, he told them: "The bSam yas *rgyal po* has created a major obstruction. The *dpon chen* is running a huge risk. We must surround him with a protective ring. [You] should stick a *phur pa* each in the four directions of his tent". Then dbon po Rin chen rgyal mtshan and jo btsun bZang nga, two in all, came together to see [U rgyan pa to tell him] that the *dpon chen* had fallen into a state of coma. Bla ma gSal ba [sgang pa] said: "You must be having some *kan ci* camphor [with you]. You should say [now] that [you] should rely on [this] expedient", but U rgyan pa retorted: "Your *dpon chen* will come out [of the disease] by himself. Camphor is not effective in lung failure". [gSal ba sgang pa] burst out, maintaining: "He dies because of U rgyan pa's treatment", but [the *grub chen*] retorted: "I do not keep camphor (i.e I do not make use of it)". Then the *dpon chen* died".

sgang pa who, before U rgyan pa, had tried to treat the *dpon chen*, to no avail. gSal ba sgang pa said that U rgyan pa was not going to succeed in helping him.

- U rgyan pa told Byang rin that the first thing he should do was to return the turquoise to bSam yas. Byang rin complied but in a tricky way. He sent a substitute turquoise in a substitute brocade. The text does not talk about the reaction of the bSam yas *rgyal po* upon their receipt. But it indeed says that the duplicates were returned to Byang rin.

- This subterfuge angered the bSam yas *rgyal po* even more. He had a heavier curse made against Byang rin. The *dpon chen*'s health deteriorated further.

- U rgyan pa tried a protective technique and a treatment. However what he did was ineffectual, and the *dpon chen* died.

- gSal ba sgang pa, the rival doctor who had been sidelined so that the task of saving the *dpon chen*'s life was left to U rgyan pa, attacked the *grub chen* verbally, accusing him of having killed Byang rin due to his ineffective treatment. The bone of contention concerned the use of camphor, recommended by gSal ba sgang pa, but not used by U rgyan pa, who denied its usefulness in the case of the *dpon chen*'s disease.

The account does not indicate, in my interpretation, that U rgyan pa had a willing part in the death of Byang rin. It documents that he was called to exercise his profession of physician, but failed in healing the patient. The reasons that caused the *dpon chen*'s demise went back to the sour relations between the *dpon chen* and the bSam yas *rgyal po*, which may indicate a hostility wider than a personal one. Is the demise of Byang rin a sign of enmity nurtured by the dBus pa establishment towards the predominance of the new political order, implemented by the Mongols, over every other power in Tibet? The situation precipitated a few years later in wood bird 1285, when the first indications of a violent confrontation between Sa skya and 'Bri gung materialised.

Before 'gro mgon 'Phags pa's death, U rgyan pa had an exchange of views with him, denoting his position on the issue of a *bla ma* living a court life. U rgyan pa openly told him, using no diplomatic words, how much he disapproved of the existence in the shadow of the emperor.²⁹

29 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.185 line 15-p.186 line 1): “[U rgyan pa] went to see the 'gro mgon chos kyi rgyal po at the great seat dpal ldan Sa skya. He received teachings on *Theg pa chen po mDo sde* and they exchanged religious discussions to their mutual (*phan tshun*) satisfaction. Then the *rje grub chen rin po che* said: “Earlier a white man (i.e. sPyan ras gzigs) told me: “If you go to [the land of] the Hor, your benefit for sentient beings will reach (*nub tsam*) the neck of the foot (*bol*); if you stay in Las stod, it will reach the knee; if you go to mNga' ris, it will reach the neck; if you go to dBus gTsang (p.186), it will reach the crown [of the head]”.

Views such as these by U rgyan pa were not only based on political rivalry. Indeed, bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri (1228-1305), a sNar thang pa close to the positions of the Sa skya pa, was critical of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa's presence at the Mongol court of China in the capacity of *ti shri* to the emperor. He thought that this role went beyond the spiritual domain of a Buddhist master.

On the same occasion, the biographies record a dialogue between U rgyan pa and Sam gha. The Tibetan officer at the service of the Mongols sarcastically questioned the *grub chen* about his knowledge and, in exchange, received sarcastic answers from U rgyan pa.³⁰

This exchange of views is anachronistically placed in the *rnam thar*-s after the death of Kun dga' bzang po, when 'Phags pa had already been assassinated. The episode must have preceded both the latter events. A further point in need of investigation is whether Sam gha was already in Tibet before the murder of 'Phags pa. Van der Kujip ("U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" p.322) contributes evidence to prove that 'Phags pa and Sam gha were in 'Dam in 1267 when U rgyan pa met them and they had an exchange of views.

U rgyan pa's outburst with 'gro mgon 'Phags pa against the *bla ma*-s' custom of spending long periods at the Mongol court of China is indicative of the reasons that led U rgyan pa to refuse a plethora of invitations sent by Se chen rgyal po to summon him to his capital. These included his discontent at being a subject of the Hor.

These summonses characterise another side in U rgyan pa's interaction with the Mongols of China. Although *lHo rong chos 'byung* and *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* say that he was invited three times (respectively *ibid.* p.741 line 20-21 and p.916 line 11),

30 The reason why Sam gha, whose life and activity never leaned towards mysticism, ventured a conversation on religion with a well established master, such as U rgyan pa, is not given in the literature. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.187 lines 4-21) says: "When [U rgyan pa] went to gdan sa dpal ldan Sa skya to see the *bla ma chos kyi rgyal po* (i.e. 'Phags pa) upon the latter's return from China, on that occasion, he imparted *Mahayana* teachings to many thousands of monks who had faith in him. When this person who made the purely perfect teachings of Sangs rgyas shine like the day went to see the *chos kyi rgyal po* (i.e. 'Phags pa), he exchanged many pleasant conversations [with him]. On that occasion mi chen Sang gha (spelled so) having said: "Bla ma U rgyan pa, which teachings do you know?", the *grub chen rin po che* answered: "I do not know anything. Anyway, I know a little of *rigs pa'i gnas lnga* (the "five sciences")". Since [Sam gha] asked: "If so, do you know grammar?", the *rje grub chen rin po che* answered: "I know grammar". [Sam gha] exclaimed: "If so, show [that you know it]". The *grub chen rin po che* showed it [to him] by melodiously reciting *Ka la'i mDo* from the beginning, and it is said that mi chen Sang gha exclaimed: "There is no way [for me] to understand (*go rgyu*) [what you recite]", hence the *grub chen rin po che* retorted: "How would you understand grammar? If you wish to understand, come to listen (*nga' rtsa ru*) [to me]". It is said that 'gro mgon chos kyi rgyal po ('Phags pa) told [Sam gha]: "You should hasten to [learn from this] other *dge bshes*".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.738 lines 3-8): "Then, when bla ma 'Phags pa came from *gong* (the capital of China), [U rgyan pa] went to Sa skya to see him. The *bla ma* was pleased. He gave him offerings. In his presence there was mi chen Zam ka (sic for Sam gha) who asked him: "What do you know?". [U rgyan pa] replied: "I know the five sciences", hence [the other one] added: "Can you prove that you know grammar?". [U rgyan pa] recited it beginning with *Ka la pa*. [Sam gha] said: "I cannot understand". [U rgyan pa] retorted: "How is it that you do not understand? If you wish to understand, you should study, so that[, in the process,] you will [be able to] tease some other *dge bshes*".

his biographies state that this happened five times. On four occasions he refused. On the first two occasions, respectively occurring quite a long time before the death of Karma Pakshi in water sheep 1283 and soon after it, the emissary sent to invite him was the dignitary called Li ji lag; I byi lar and In byi lag (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.228 lines 2-p.230 line 9; see below n.37).³¹

In the course of his decades-long acquaintance with U rgyan pa, when they first got together around 1270, Li ji lag/I phyi lag was the head of the '*jam mo*' ("postal relay") network in Tibet.³² During his first meeting with U rgyan pa, he was the recipient of political arguments, communicated to him by the *grub chen* in order to avoid an invasion of Bal po by the Mongols of China (see above). The second meeting was about a decade later when, apparently, the dignitary had no other reason to meet him than to try again to summon U rgyan pa to the Mongol court of China.³³

Li ji lag/I phyi lag had a remarkable respect and esteem for U rgyan pa. He was present at the gathering in lHa sa upon U rgyan pa's departure for China in water dragon 1292, when the *grub chen* had to collect miraculous remedies for Se chen rgyal po (see below). During the meeting Li ji lag/I phyi lag was apologetic for the harassments by The mur bho ga and Tshal pa dGa' bde dpal (see below).

The next two times U rgyan pa was invited to court, the Mongol envoys were Go ron che and Thog mi thi mur.³⁴ The biographies of U rgyan pa record Thog mi thi

31 Other versions of his name are En ji (*lHo rong chos 'byung* p.741 line 21) and E ji lag (Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.176 line 1). On several of these spellings also see van der Kuijp, "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" (n.19).

32 *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.276 lines 8-12): "The '*ja*' (spelled so) *mo*-s of Tibet having been newly established, a request was made concerning the need of one man to run them. A '*ja*' *sa* and the rank of *thong ji* were awarded to the one known as mi chen I ji lag, and was sent upwards (i.e. to Tibet). He consequently took hold of them".

Ibid. (p.277 lines 1-2): "Before Thong ji Li ji lag arrived [on the plateau] in order to be in charge of the '*jams* [*mo*-s] of Tibet, the Hor emperor brought troops to lJang yul for the first time".

33 The circumstances of the second failed attempt to invite U rgyan pa to the Mongol court of China are described by bSod nams 'od zer (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.224 lines 11-16) in the following terms: "Se chen rgyal po, who became the drop (i.e. the ruler) of most of 'Dzam bu gling, the noble lord of the land in the exercise of his might, having heard the inconceivable qualities of body, speech and mind, and the uncountable feats of the *rje grub chen rin po che*, issued a '*ja*' *sa* for his [spiritual] protection (*bsrung ba'i*) without being requested [to do so by U rgyan pa]. Mi chen In byi lag went to invite him, but [U rgyan pa] did not accept to go [to the court]".

34 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.225 lines 4-18): "Subsequently, mi chen Go ron che went to invite him, but again [U rgyan pa] did not go. Mi chen Thi mur went to invite him, but, since he did not go, this *mi chen* said: "I take you away catching you by force" and added: "The calf being caught, I will take it away"; [U rgyan pa] retorted: "You are the calf, I am a young bull". He rebuked him lashing a whip, [which made] all the *res pa* ("bodyguards" in charge of Thi mur's security) ready to fight with their bow and arrows. [U rgyan pa's] retinue

mur's performance with amusement. The Mongol tried to kidnap the master, only raising the wrath of U rgyan pa who, in order not to be deported, scared away the great warrior with his whip and curse.

On the fifth occasion—Ne gu ta being the emissary—he finally accepted the summons to go to the Mongol court of China. He told his disciples that, years earlier, sPyan ras gzigs had appeared to him at Bodhgayā and said he should accept the invitation.³⁵

Things were rather different though. He was forced to leave by Mongol coercion following the crushing of the 1290 *gling log* and the destruction of 'Bri gung. The defeat inflicted upon the 'Bri gung pa dealt a heavy blow to the fortunes of the bKa' brgyud pa for some time to come. As is well known, many bKa' brgyud pa monks and laymen lost their lives. The military campaign also sent a warning. In the aftermath of the *gling log*, the members belonging to the other bKa' brgyud pa schools, too, were treated with aversion and mistrust.

were also ready to fight. This having turned into a big confrontation, upon [U rgyan pa] performing a binding ritual (*sbyor ba*) to expel them, [Thi mur] fled on a horse, exclaiming: "Let's go away". He recovered his composure at Gad ser. He said: "The *pag shi* is really scary. Were he not [busy] yelling [at me], he would have killed me". People made a proverb: "The meditation belt is miraculous". It is said that, on the account of the fact that the *rje rin po che*, being angry, lashed his whip and rebuked him, when [Thi mur] arrived back to the court, he was charged for his wrongdoings".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.741 line 20-p.742 line 7): "The first of the three (sic, actually five) times when Se chen rgyal po invited him earlier and later was when mi chen En ji (i.e. I phyi lag) came [to invite him, but] he did not go. On the intermediate (sic) occasion, Thog thi (p.742) mur came [to invite him, but U rgyan pa] exclaimed: "I will not go". It is said that, [the Mongol envoy] being angry, he [tried to] take him along by force. [U rgyan pa] reprimanded him and dashed his whip on the ground. Upon [the Mongol] troops taking out arrow and bows, ready to hit him, he performed a *sbyor ba* ("binding ritual") to repel them with a storm. As soon as [this happened, Thog thi mur] jumped on his horse and ran away. Everyone [in his army] left after him. Having recovered his composure above Gad ser, upon arrival [there], he said: "Had not he driven me out, he would have killed me. His meditation belt is miraculous. The *pag shi* is scary", and went back".

- 35 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.225 line 18-p.226 line 8): "Again at a later time, mi chen Ni gu ta went to invite [U rgyan pa]. It is said that, when he arrived [at the court], he was punished for his wrong doings. Having been sent [to invite him] by the emperor's command, an order was issued which said: "You must provide compulsory service. No one else is in charge (*'dzin*) of providing compulsory service to U rgyan *pag shi* as much as [you are]". (p.226) The *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "Earlier in rDo rje gdan, a white man told me: "In the future, you will be invited by the king of the Hor. Do not go against these words. This ruler has uncountable merits. Innumerable *mchod rten* at rDo rje gdan have been built by this ruler [in his previous lives]". This man was sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug. Although I am old now, I will go [this time]".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.742 lines 7-10): "The last time, mi chen Mu gu ta came [to invite him]. Because [U rgyan pa] had said earlier at rDo rje gdan: "When the ruler of the east will invite me, I should go without refusing his proposal (lit. "speech")", he declared: "I must go this time".

Subsequently, the Mongol patronage extended for the reconstruction of 'Bri gung was not a sign of reconciliation. The Mongol-supported reconstruction of 'Bri gung's destroyed monuments has the appearance of a concrete step in a policy aimed at patching up relations between antagonistic groups in Tibet to avoid further trouble, rather than a dispassionate wish to help.³⁶

Four times U rgyan pa was able to decline Se chen rgyal po's summons. It is significant that after 1290, on the fifth occasion, he was forced to consent. In 1292 U rgyan pa left for his journey to China, telling his followers he would return after one year, a sign that he did not plan to live a parasitical life at court.³⁷

In lHa sa, where he was compelled to collect Guru Padma 'byung gnas's long-life water (*tshe chu*) and an elixir for the emperor, he was trapped in an uneasy situation. The biographies recount that an attempt was made avoid handing over the miraculous remedies to the Mongols. This caused annoyance to the Mongol prince The mur bho ga, A rog che's son and Se chen rgyal po's grandson.³⁸ He was at the head of the troops sent to dBus gTsang to crush the *gling log*.

At a meeting presided over by U rgyan pa, he threatened to deal with the officer who was reluctant to release the remedies into Mongol hands. In denouncing the situation The mur bho ga walked up and down in front of U rgyan pa's throne using his bow as a walking stick, a histrionic display of ominous might. U rgyan pa was unmoved. He retorted he would not go to the emperor's court, if the officer were punished.

The Mongol prince was not the only one there who was hostile to U rgyan pa. The mighty Tshal pa chieftain, dGa' bde dpal, was party to the compulsion of sending him to court.³⁹

36 *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.416 lines 12-14): "Then a favourable order having come from Se chen rgyal po, the reconstruction of ['Bri gung] thel was pursued in wood female sheep 1295, when ['Bri gung spyang snga Cu gnyis pa rin po che (b. 1278)] was eighteen years old".

These statements are not accurate because Se chen rgyal po was dead in 1295. 'Bri gung was rebuilt during the reign of Ol ja du (1294-1307). Judging from the sequence of events summarised in the passage in confused terms, Se chen rgyal po sanctioned the reconstruction that was actually undertaken under his successor.

37 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.226 lines 11-15): "He said, having examined the karmic omens: "In about one year from now I will be back". In water male dragon (1292), when he was seventy-three (sic for sixty-three; b.1230) years old, he left with ninety-seven attendants".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.742 lines 10-12): "[U rgyan pa said]: "I will return about this time next year". When [U rgyan pa] was sixty-three years of age in water male dragon (1292), ninety-seven *dpon slob* [first] left [with him] for Sa skya from their *gdan sa*".

38 *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.266 lines 14-16) employs these few words to identify The mur bho ga: "His (i.e. A rog che's) son The mur bho kha (spelled so), too, rendered service to the great seat (i.e. the Mongol emperor). He pursued many activities useful to the [Mongol] law [in Tibet]".

39 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.228 lines 2-p.230 line 9): "When [U rgyan pa] went in front of lHa sa Jo bo Shakya, many people, such as members of royal lineages, bowed [to him]. He extracted without effort the [long-]life water (*tshe chu*) blessed by the attainments (*bsgrubs pa'i*) of Padma 'byung gnas, the son of the Victorious One. On the way to lHa sa, before reaching (*gong*) lHa sa (sic), he arrived at the area of the dam (*chu rags*

He was a loyalist of Kun dga' bzang po and probably saw in U rgyan pa an old enemy of his associate.⁴⁰

can) and stayed there. Here, he went to meet rgyal bu The mur bho ga, and [also] I byi lar (spelled so) who had [previously] come to invite him and convey the previous 'jal (sic for 'ja') sa. The rje grub chen rin po che sat on a high throne, surrounded by religious masters, chieftains, heads of the communities and, moreover, by uncountable common people. He had conversations with every side [of the gathering]. In front of the throne, rgyal po The mur bho ga stood up using his bow as a walking stick, all dpon g.yog also stood up and listened to the conversation. At that time, it is said that an ordinary man from dBus, who had no idea who he was, thought: "Is he bla ma U rgyan pa or a greatly powerful king? Even rgyal po The mur bho ga stands up in front of him". The rje grub chen rin po che said: "There is the [long-]life water (*tshe chu*), blessed by slob dpon Padma 'byung gnas's long-life ritual (*tshe grub* for sic for *sgrub*), inside a vase (*bum pa*) concealed in the Rigs lnga [statues] of 'On ljang rdo. After the vase is extracted, I will gift it to the rgyal po chen po". (p.229) Having said so, he went to extract it. Given that the dBus pa'i mi dpon a rtsa (sic for tsa) ra dPag shi had given many precious objects to the son of mGu (sic) ru Chos dbang, people chatted: "Is this the [same] *tshe chu bum pa* [given to Guru Chos dbang's son] which is going to be extracted?". Hence 'Tshal pa (spelled so) mi dpon dGa' lde dpal sent a *gser yig pa* [to the *a tsa ra* with the following message]: "If you have extracted the 'On ljang rdo's *tshe chu*, it is not appropriate to give it directly to the bla ma. Or else if you did not give it [to him] and he will extract it by himself [without giving it to us], there is no reason to extract it, and the case will be reported to the emperor". That same day's night, a tsa ra dPag shi came to give the *tshe chu*. The rje grub chen rin po che said: "It is not good that you give it to me now. Tomorrow, you must give it [to me] at the place where the rgyal bu (The mur bho ga) and the mi chen dBus pa'i mi dpon-s gather". It is said that he exclaimed: "I will do so" and left. The next day, when everyone gathered in front of him, while [the *a tsa ra*] was giving him the *tshe chu*, rgyal bu The mur bho ga said: "Since a rtsa (sic) ra dPag shi extracted it, unless you do not take it immediately to the emperor, he is culpable of a crime and will be charged for this offence". The rje grub chen rin po che retorted: "The *tshe chu* being already extracted, until it is taken by the emperor [the persons involved in this case] are criminals. Given that I am committed to the vow of leading criminals on the path of liberation and to protect the life of many wild animals, if the person who extracted the long-life water is a criminal, then I cannot leave [because I have to redeem him]". Having said so, he rebuked him. Being scared, (p.230) mi chen I byi lag was shivering and it is said that he exclaimed: "It is only you who is the bla ma. The rgyal bu did not realise this. I beg [you] not to say these words".

The rNying ma pa tradition (e.g. *Nyang ral chos 'byung* p.348 line 19-p.351 line 10 and *rGyal po bka' thang* p.189 line 3-p.190 line 10) records that Padma 'byung gnas, while he was building bSam yas, consecrated vases of *tshe chu* at g.Ya' ma lung in order to prolong the life of Khri srong lde btsan, but hostile ministers did not let the king make use of it. Several vases containing long-life water were concealed by Guru Padma for future rediscoveries. The fact that one of them was manifestly placed inside the Rigs lnga statues of 'On ljang rdo, the main temple built by Khri Ral pa, is a sign that the *tshe chu* in question had not been originally hidden there.

The rediscovery of a vase of *tshe chu* at 'On ljang rdo for the purpose of prolonging royal life was consonant with the intentions of Guru Rin po che. It also indicates that the benefits deriving from it were still clear in people's minds during the time of Se chen rgyal po's reign.

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.742 lines 12-15) deals with the episode in a concise way: "[U rgyan pa] went to lHa sa carrying parting gifts. The [long-]life water, hidden at 'Od 'jong rdo (spelled so) by Padma and rediscovered by Chos dbang's son, was in the possession of a tsa rya Pag shi. m'Tshal pa Ga bde traced it out and gave it into [U rgyan pa's] hands".

40 bSod nams 'od zer (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.232 lines 3-5) says that the relationship between U rgyan pa and dGa' bde was patched up when, in the aftermath of the lHa sa meeting,

He had reasons for his enduring hostility. In the aftermath of the iron tiger 1290 *gling log*, dGa' bde had been made to pay the price for his closeness to Kun dga' bzang po by Sam gha who had executed the Sa skya *dpon chen* years before.

Sam gha, too, had been sent to handle the 'Bri gung pa rebellion. dGa' bde was deported to China upon Sam gha's decision.⁴¹ He was rehabilitated and sent back to his dominions only after Sam gha himself was disgraced and put to death in iron hare 1291.⁴²

U rgyan pa had to go to the Mongol court of China to treat Se chen rgyal po who could no longer move his limbs owing to rheumatism and gout by using the long-life water of Guru Padma and the elixir.⁴³ He treated his ailments successfully,⁴⁴ but told

dGa' bde invited him to Tshal Gung thang. No clue is available to confirm whether there was a true rapprochement.

41 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.1420 lines 1-3): "The next year, iron hare 1291, the troops of the Hor intruded up to Dwags [po and] Kong [po], and Tshal pa dGa' bde was dragged to prison. From then on, it seems that Mongol armies, which were not exclusively large, came. However during the intermediate period the ocean of sorrow overflowed in the whole of Tibet, everywhere".

42 *Gung thang dkar chag* (see Soerensen-Hazod, *Rulers of the Celestial Plain* p.187-189) talks about the animosity between dGa' bde dpal and Sam gha and attributes to 'Dam ri pa the wicked treatment meted out by the latter to the former. The text says that 'Dam ri pa inflamed the Tibetan officer at the service of the Mongols of China against the Tshal pa nobleman. Given the Tshal pa origin of the text, the account is written in praise of dGa' bde to the extent that the Tshal pa officer's deportation for trial in China is described—as Soerensen and Hazod point out—as a journey to the imperial court. Conversely Sam gha is depicted in negative terms. The account stresses that it was dGa' bde's presence at court, where he was rehabilitated, that made the situation precipitate for Sam gha, eventually ending with the latter's disgrace and death punishment.

As proved by the evidence of *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (see the note immediately above), the tiger year of *Gung thang dkar chag*, during which the hostility between Sam gha and dGa' bde erupted in the earnest, that led to the former's arrest, was iron hare 1291, the year after the 'Bri gung *gling log*. Soerensen and Hazod identify this tiger year as 1278 in the text of their translation (ibid. p.187), but they have a second thought and propose 1290 in the accompanying footnote (ibid. n.452), adding that this assessment is anyway inconclusive, which is not my view.

This 'Dam ri pa who was hostile to dGa' bde dopal cannot have been the other 'Dam pa ri pa (1200-1263), the associate of lHa Rin chen rgyal po (1201-1270) and a figure of great charisma and authority. These two founded Gye re lha khang and Phag ri Rin chen sgang—the latter in mGos yul stod gsum, the land between Myang stod, Bhutan and the Indian frontier—in water hare 1243 (*Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* f.10a lines 4-6).

43 On the way to the imperial court the localities in Tibet, traversed by U rgyan pa were Tshal Gung thang (bSod nams 'Od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.230 line 3-p.231 line 9), sTag lung (ibid. p.231 lines 10-13), Ri bo che (ibid. p.231 lines 14-17) and 'Dam (ibid. p.231 line 17-p.232 line 1) before heading towards China.

44 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.235 line 1-p.236 line 5): "[U rgyan pa] met the emperor. After uttering auspicious formulas in Sanskrit, he offered the long-life water to [Se chen rgyal po] who, at that time, moved to a smaller throne from the imperial golden throne where he was previously sitting. No one could sit on a seat without the emperor's consent [but], during their conversation, upon [the ruler] saying: "I have pain in my waist", [U rgyan pa]

the emperor he would die within two years because nine of his twelve winds were blocked.⁴⁵ He planned to save his life by means of acupuncture. But the courtiers prevented U rgyan pa from treating him, adducing a taboo in Mongol culture by

sat on his couch, and the emperor laughed. People said that all the attending *mi chen* were surprised, and covered their mouth with a hand.

The emperor told [him]: “I have heard the fame of you *dpag shi* (spelled so for *pag shi*) a long time ago. Due to this, I have sent [my people] to invite you many times. Why did not you come until now?”

The emperor had some pain in the right hand; both his feet were contracted (*'khums*, lit. “shrunk”) and had pain in the joints (*dreg*). The emperor added: “I have a big pain in my hands and feet. Previously, although whoever was around, such as ban rde (sic) *sngags pa* Zin shing, tried a variety of remedies, they did not work. I wonder whether you, *dpag shi*, have an effective cure”. The *rje rin po che pa* examined him and said: “Emperor! This contraction in your hand (p.236) [is due to] the *cakra* with thirty petals at the joint of the shoulder blade with the shoulder. Some pus formation is concentrated there. It will be useful to anoint (*dbyug pa* sic for *byug pa*) it and drain it out together with blood with a needle”. As soon as he anointed it, [the emperor] was able to move his hand above the crown [of the head]”.

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.742 line 21-p.743 line 12): “When he met the emperor, [U rgyan pa] uttered auspicious words in Sanskrit (p.743) and offered him the [long-]life water. Although no one could sit down without authorisation, upon [the emperor] saying during their conversation: “I have a pain in the waist”, he sat down. The emperor said: “This has not been [properly] prepared”. The *mi chen* laughed, covering their mouth with a hand.

“I have heard the fame of you, *pag shi*, for a very long time. Despite having repeatedly sent [messengers] to invite you, why did not you come until this time?”. He said: “I am a *bya bral ba* (“renunciate”). I go where I wish to go and stay where I wish to stay. I do not need to go there or stay here”.

[The emperor said:] “I do not feel comfortable with my arm which has a feeling of pain (?). Do you have any useful remedy?”. He checked that. Some pus had formed at the thirty-second [acupuncture] point between the shoulder blades. He said it would be useful to remove the pus by smearing ointment. [The emperor] told him: “If so, do it”. Ointment was smeared and, after finishing [to apply] it, he was able to lift the arm above the crown of the head”.

- 45 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.237 lines 2-9): “Then, having realised that the emperor’s life was going to be exhausted, the *rje grub chen rin po che* told this and that to the *mi chen*-s: “Normally, in the human body’s navel, along twelve different (*'dab*) nerves of the astrological mansions (*dus sbyor*), *prana* (*rlung*) circulates in twelve *pho ba* (“points of transference of the vital energy”?). There are no more than three *rlung pho ba* [working] in the emperor’s body. Nine different nerves of the astrological mansions (*dus sbyor*) dried up. It is too late for the elixir (*ro bcud*) of sPyan ras gzigs and the long-life water (*tshe chu*) of Pad ma 'byung gnas [to be effective]”.

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.743 line 21-p.744 line 5): “[U rgyan pa] told the courtiers (*mi chen*) separately: “The pulses beating at regular intervals which can be felt (*ster ba*) (p.744) in all people normally are twelve. The *rlung* (“*prana*”) system is composed of twelve *pho ba*. Since the emperor has nine of them blocked, there are no more than only three *pho ba* left now. Were it not for the [long-]life water and the elixir (*ro bcud*), he would not [be able to] survive for long (*ched po*) now. And it is already a little too late. Since I wish now to go back quickly, you should help me with this request [of mine]”. He also taught others to serve [Se chen] food mixed with the elixir”.

which no prince of theirs could be pierced by any object.⁴⁶ In sheer disappointment, U rgyan pa decided to leave, stating three reasons for doing so:

- the impossibility of treating the emperor, as required by physician deontology;
- his aversion to the Sa skya pa, in remarkable numbers at the capital of China; and
- his disgust for court life.⁴⁷

Se chen rgyal po told U rgyan pa he thought he would become his officiating *bla ma*, to which he retorted that his mission was that of a *gser yig pa*, a simple emissary who forwarded the miraculous remedies. U rgyan pa considered himself a *gser yig pa* inasmuch as he was on a mission forced upon him by The mur bho ga. He was not acting on his own free enterprise.⁴⁸

U rgyan pa was defiant against Se chen rgyal po's attempts to keep him at court. He told him he did not feel intimidated because he took orders only from his guru rGod tshang pa a long time before, when he was alive.

46 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.236 lines 5-9): “[U rgyan pa] was ready to [drain blood] by pricking it with the needle, but the many attending courtiers (*mi chen*) all together, kneeling down, said: “Since earlier time, there is no [custom] of inserting the tip of a blade into [the members of] the genealogy of Ji 'dir Gan (i.e. Jing gir rgyal po, Gengis Khan). Do not perform any needle perforation”.”

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.743 lines 12-15): “Then having thought of making acupuncture (*khab tshag*), since he wished to insert a long needle (*bsud ring brgyab*), the *mi chen*-s requested [U rgyan pa]: “Do not do this. In the lineage of Ji gin (i.e. Jing gir rgyal po), there is no custom of inserting an instrument [into the bodies of its members]”, [U rgyan pa] added: “You are not going to give [him] a treatment (*ster ba*) useful for his health. I am going back now”.”

47 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.237 lines 9-12): “My conduct has been [forcibly] rough, [and] what the Sa skya pa are doing is [quite] bad. In particular, as for my stay here, the need of having only sinful food and sinful drinks is not suited (*mi ran pa*) to my inclinations (*blo*). I am going to plead to go upwards [to Tibet]”.”

48 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.236 lines 8-21): “The *rje grub chen rin po che pa*, scolding them, said many things, such as: “You all do not let me perform what is beneficial to the health of the emperor. I am leaving to return upwards (i.e. to Tibet)”. The emperor said: “You are not a *gser yig pa*. I believe I have invited [you] to be a *bla mchod*. I will award you the crystal seal of a *bla ma* lord of the teachings. Why do you say that you [wish to] leave when you have just arrived?”. The *rje grub chen rin po che* retorted: “I am a simple *gser yig pa*. I have been sent to take [to you] the elixir (*ro bcud*) blessed by sPyan ras gzigs. I have been sent to bring Pad ma 'byung gnas's long-life water (*tshe chu*)”. It is said that the emperor did not add anything”.

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.743 lines 16-19): “The emperor said: “You are not a *gser yig pa*. I have called you to be my *bla ma*. I will confer the crystal seal of lord of the teachings upon you. You have just arrived, do not say that you are leaving”. He replied: “I am like a *gser yig pa*. I came to bring the [long-]life water (*tshe chu*) and the elixir (*ro bcud*). Being a *bya bral ba*, I do not wish to accept the *tam ka* (“seal”) and the *las ka* (“appointment”)”.”

Se chen rgyal po then tried to lure him with a donation of carts full of gold and silver, which U rgyan pa indignantly refused.⁴⁹ He told him that, had he craved for wealth, he could have used his alchemical knowledge of transforming iron into gold or tin into silver. Se chen rgyal po, overawed, asked for a demonstration, to which he complied after requesting that no courtier should learn the technique and benefit from it.⁵⁰

He left to return to Tibet without asking permission, after he had refused to impart teachings upon the emperor whom he considered unworthy of them.⁵¹ Having stayed a meagre one and a half months at court, a very short time in view of the distance traveled from Tibet to China and back, he returned to his monastery one year after his departure from sBu tra.

The last contact U rgyan pa had with a Mongol emperor of China was with Ol ja du. As I have already said in my paper for the LTWA Seminar in Dharamsala in

49 bSod nam s 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.238 lines 8-16): "A chariot filled till its mouth with wealth and chariots filled with a *bre chen* of gold and silver; brocade and silk along with various robes were offered in numbers of three by the king and one each by two princes. It is said that all the *mi chen* ("notables") chattered gossiping behind [his back]: "This much of wealth cannot be moved by those giving compulsory service. What is the best method [to transport it]?" The *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "I do not need this wealth. I did not come here craving for wealth". Having said so, he did not accept [the gifts]".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.744 lines 7-10): "At that time, since a chariot was filled with *bre-s* of gold and silver and uncountable wealth was offered [to him], the *mi chen-s* commented: "He has been offered so much wealth that he cannot even carry it away". Having heard this, [U rgyan pa] said: "I did not come here craving for wealth"."

mKhas pa 'i dga' ston (p. 916 lines 18-20) talks about one cart full of gold and silver.

50 bSod nam s 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.239 lines 2-11): "The *rje grub chen rin po che* [added]: "Moreover, if I wish to have wealth, by means of the teachings of *rGyud sde rin po che*, I know the method of transforming fluids into gold, mercury into silver, and making silver from tin. Therefore, I do not need to care for your wealth". The emperor said: "I request [you] to show [to me] such kind of technique". He gave him a practical demonstration (*lag len*) how to make silver from white tin. [Se chen] was greatly surprised. [U rgyan pa added]: "Do not show this to the *mi chen-s* otherwise my treasure will be wasted"."

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.744 lines 14-17): "[U rgyan pa said]: "If I crave for wealth, [I] could transform iron into gold, and *gsha' tshé* (equal to *gsha' dkar*, i.e. "tin") into silver, as told in *rGyud sde*". Upon [the emperor] saying: "If so, show it to me", he transformed tin into silver and offered it to him. [The emperor] said: "Yes, this is extraordinary"."

51 bSod nam s 'od zer, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.240 lines 2-5): "Not having stayed more than one and a half months at the imperial palace, he left without taking permission and without even a little of the whole wealth [offered to him]. The emperor sent *mi chen* No go to accompany him".

Ibid. (p.240 lines 16-20): "[U rgyan pa] having gone to Cha gan na'u for a farewell, the emperor's mood was not too happy: "I invited you, U rgyan *dpag shi*, from a distant land and, although I asked you to stay, you are leaving immediately without staying here [not even for a while]. You did not give me empowerments, but you gave them to others"."

September 2009, on that occasion U rgyan pa accepted the emperor's gold and silver in order to attempt another of his restorations of Bodhgayā.⁵²

What should be stressed, as obvious as it seems, is that Tibet during the time of U rgyan pa was a land under foreign domination. The political sentiments among its various secular and religious groups were far from being united, although the pro-Sa skya literature tends to promote a picture of harmony. Voices of dissent during this phase of Tibetan history marked by the enforcement of the Mongol law do not only arise from a reconstruction of the political developments, but are loud and clear from the statements found in the texts of the Tibetan schools not allied to the Mongols. They go as far as to be found in the prophetic literature, which refers to the catastrophic effects of the state of affairs prevailing on the plateau, and the forthcoming karmic retribution reserved to the Hor.

It was the first time in the history of Tibet that the plateau witnessed a social, political and religious transnational tearing apart, the Tibetans being used, from *bstan pa phyi dar* onwards, to internal disputes of a minor extent. Not even the crashing

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.744 line 17-p.745 line 5): "Then, since he did not stay longer than one and a half month, on the same day on which the emperor proceeded to Cha gan na gu, he was [ready] to leave Shang to. At the place where he offered his parting prostrations, since the emperor's expression was not happy, the latter said: "U rgyan pa, despite having invited you for a very long time, you do not stay and are going back. (p.745) You did not give empowerments to me but you gave them to others. You did not accept my wealth but you accepted that of others". Having said so, [U rgyan pa] replied: "Ever since I have touched the feet of rGod tshang pa until now, I never let others lead me by the nose. Whether I go or stay—being what comes in my behaviour (*kham*s) for the benefit of others—there is no system that a disciple goes against [something of] superior importance. I would not have a thought of fear even if brGya sbyin appears in front of me trying to break my head"."

The biographies nowhere say that he accepted any wealth from anyone at court.

On the way back he stayed at Ri bo rtse lnga and returned to his monastery by way of the *'jam lam* (the "postal realy route") across China and Tibet (ibid. p.745 lines 8-10).

52 bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.254 lines 2-10): "The one known as Ol bya (i.e. Ol ja du) rgyal po, due to the fame of the *rje grub chen rin po che*, granted two *bre chen* of gold, twelve *bre chen* of silver and extensive offerings to the *rje grub chen rin po che* in order to restore all the decaying *lha khang*-s and statues of Ma ga ta (spelled so) rDo rje gdan. Moreover, the *dpon mi* ("chieftains"), the princes and many *mi chen* ("dignitaries") sent, without obstacles on the way, gser yig pa Me dpag shi with an inventory [of the gifts], which were handed over to him. These [gifts] were brought to rDo rje gdan, and many meditators who were ascetics, headed by rDo rje gdan pa mGon po rgyal mtshan, brought to conclusion a great service [by restoring the temples]".

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.746 lines 11-14): "Then having put together the noble offerings and much gold and silver given to the *grub chen pa* by Ol ja ru (sic for Ol ja du) for the restoration of rDo rje gdan, which had rDo rje gdan pa mGon po rgyal mtshan at its head, [U rgyan pa] rendered the service of Ma ga ta (spelled so)".

On the restoration of Bodhgayā, undertaken under the aegis of U rgyan pa and with the funds by Ol ja du, also see my paper "In the presence of the "diamond throne": Tibetans at rDo rje gdan (last quarter of the 12th century to year 1300).

downfall of the *lha sras btsan po* order had brought control by foreigners over their lands.

A world deeply influenced by Buddhist idealism, Tibet for the first time had to face the reality of the cross-boundary threat posed by the Mongols. The relatively successful solution of coming to terms with them did not prevent the sovereigns' heavy handed exercise of power. Tibet was not devastated like other countries but neither was it spared a number of blood baths.

In the pursuit of his activity undertaken with this political panorama as a background, U rgyan pa showed, throughout his life, a defiance against the Se chen's Mongols that went beyond ideological positions. He indeed shared the widespread resentment, especially nurtured by the bKa' brgyud pa schools—the Tshal pa excepted—as well as the rNying ma pa—with the exception of some individuals—and the Bon po for the Hor pa control of the plateau. However, his defiance was also based on personal reasons, the death and destruction left behind by the Mongols in Udiyana having left an impact upon him.

One should not harbor the impression that U rgyan pa was a cynical, insensitive Tantrist, lacking the compassion of an enlightened Buddhist master. On the contrary, he was a Tibetan moved by great ideals that led him to venture to the land of the *dakini-s* in forbidding conditions and try to save Bodhgayā from iconoclastic ravage when few others dared even to think about this. But when the Mongols of China or their feudatories persecuted him (they burned down his monastery, tried to kidnap him and threatened him in several ways), he never bowed to the rulers of Tibet. U rgyan pa did not attempt to retaliate—he knew he had no alternative—but made zero concessions. He went his way and, in the long run, they could not stop him. His message was simple and clear: do not accept compromise. He would have approved Mahatma Gandhi's experiment with truth, the one holding that people should stand their ground because those lacking courage are prone to submission.

ADDENDA

Dates of interaction of the Mongols—and their Sa skya pa feudatories—with U rgyan pa

- 1254-1258: U rgyan pa in the lands of the North-West;
- 1255-1256: first encounter with the Mongols; he has to care for his life;
- 1261: first journey to rDo rje gdan; on the way he stays in pro-Sa skya Bal po;
- 1267: comes to know that Phyag na rdo rje was poisoned by Sa skya dpon chen Kun dga' bzang po;
- soon after 1270: second journey to rDo rje gdan; on the way back he leads Tibetans, who had fled Sa skya's taxation, from Bal po to Tibet;
- 1272: builds his "palace" at his monastery of sBu tra;

- 1272: first summons to go to Khubilai's court (Mongol emissary: I phyi lag); he refuses to leave;
- 1272: saves the Kathmandu Valley from an invasion of the Mongols of China;
- soon after 1272: Kun dga' bzang po destroys his "palace" at sBu tra;
- 1276: restores sBu tra with funds provided by A rog che, the seventh son of Khubilai;
- around 1276: tells 'Phags pa he detests Mongol sovereignty and *bla ma* life at court;
- 1281: his foe Kun dga' bzang po is put to death by Sam gha for the alleged poisoning of 'Phags pa;
- 1282: he is called to treat the next Sa skya *dpon chen*, Byang rin, who dies;
- after 1283: second summons to go to Khubilai's court (Mongol emissary: I phyi lag); he does not comply;
- after 1283 and before 1290: third summons to go to Khubilai's court (Mongol emissary: Go ron che); he refuses to leave;
- after 1283 and before 1290: fourth summons to go to Khubilai's court (Mongol emissary: Thog mi thi mur); he whips Thog mi thi mur, who tries to kidnap him, and does not decamp;
- 1291: fifth summons to go Khubilai's court (Mongol emissary: Ne gu ta); he accepts the invitation;
- 1292: in lHa sa he is harassed by Khubilai's grandson, The mur bho ga, and Tshal pa dGa' bde;
- 1292: travels to Khubilai's court and treats the emperor's disease; refuses to impart teachings upon him and to remain at court;
- 1293: back from China to his monastery;
- sometime between 1294 and 1307: accepts funds from Ol ja du for a restoration of rDo rje gdan.

Zur Shakya 'od, Se chen rgyal po and a vase of long-life water

U rgyan pa's mission to the Mongol court of China was not the only case in which a vase of long-life water was brought to Se chen rgyal po. For instance a Sa skya pa text—the copy at my disposal missing the title, colophon and many folios—has an extremely brief account of a mission to Se chen rgyal po's court, similar to U rgyan pa's ordeal. The account tells that an 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa* extracted Guru Padma's *tshe chu* from an unspecified locality and took it to the emperor.⁵³

53 This unidentified, fragmentary Sa skya pa text (f.52b lines 6-7) reads: "Slob dpon Padma 'byung gnas kyi tshe chu'i gter sbas pa/ 'Ug pa lung pa'i sngags pas bton nas phul bas/ sku tshe lo brgyad bcu rtsa lnga thub//"; "An 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa* extracted the *tshe chu* of slob dpon

The aftermath of this endeavour in the Sa skya pa narrative differs remarkably from what is said in U rgyan pa's biographies. The *grub chen's* prognostic that Se chen rgyal po would survive for just two more years after meeting him (he indeed lived until wood horse 1294) was seen by U rgyan pa as a reduction of Se chen rgyal po's life that he could not overcome owing to the courtiers preventing his medical treatment. The Sa skya pa version untenably credits the 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa* with success in extending Se chen rgyal po's life until the age of eighty-five (b.1215)—thus until earth pig 1299, when the emperor was dead since several years.

'Ug pa lung was the stronghold in Rong of gTsang of the famed Zur family of rNying ma pa practitioners, such as Zur po che Shakya 'byung gnas (1002-1062) and Zur chung Shes rab grags (1014-1074). Members of the Zur interacted with the Mongols of China under the aegis of their Sa skya pa mentors.

The *sngags pa* from 'Ug pa lung mentioned in this account was Zur Shakya 'od (ca. 1206-ca. 1268). His birth was facilitated by Kha che pan chen Shaskyashri, who was at 'Ug pa lung in wood rat 1204 after visiting Khro phu. He prophesied to Zur dBang chen 'od po, who longed for a male offspring, that two sons would be born to him if he would give them Kha che pan chen's own name. They were duely named after him. Shakya 'od was the younger, the other one being Shakya mgon po.⁵⁴

'Jigs med gling pa's text assigns the account of Zur Shakya 'od's rediscovery of the *tshé chu* to the aftermath of the struggle between Se chen rgyal po and A ri bo gha, which began soon after the death of Mong gor rgyal po (r. 1251-1258). Se chen rgyal po first sought the use of a powerful curse from Tibet. Given that A ri bo gha, who actually had a legitimate right to succeed being the chosen heir apparent, had—the text says, showing a strong bias in favour of Se chen—seized the throne, an unidentified Mi nyag Gha *ras pa* activated himself by performing rituals against the former. He also recommended Se chen rgyal po to seek the services of Zur Shakya 'od, a *sngags pa* of

Padma 'byung gnas, which was a hidden treasure, and offered it [to Se chen rgyal po], who was able to live until the age of eighty-five”.

54 'Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (see Pema Tsering, “rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof” Text I p.518 lines 1-11): “Pakshi Shākya 'od belonged to the Zur family. Zur dBang chen 'od po, who could remember previous births and [foretell] future ones easily owing to the power of his spiritual attainments, had five daughters. Not having a son, when it was time to perpetuate the family, in wood male rat 1204, after pan chen Shākya shri had been invited to Khro phu, dBang chen 'od po invited him to 'Ug pa lung. There the *pan chen* said: “This 'Ug pa lung is ornamented with many qualities typical of a holy place of *gsang sngags*. The mountain at the northern edge is as if the rGyal ba Rigs Inga spontaneously appeared [there]. The birds and wild animals, too, are noble transformations. Given that every generation [in the Zur family] voices the religious sound of *gsang sngags*, it will not be too long before you will have two sons. Give them my name. They will be beneficial to the teachings and sentient beings”. It then happened likewise. The elder son was named Shākya mgon po and the younger Shākya 'od”. Also see *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* (p.312 line 9-p.313 line 3).

great powers.⁵⁵ Se chen, the contention for the throne having been decided in his favour in iron monkey 1260, sought to obtain a remedy to extend his longevity. This event could not have taken place much after the 1260 turning point and before the tentative death date of Zur Shakya 'od (ca. 1268).

Following an order by the emperor, Zur Shakya 'od was assigned the task of rediscovering a vase of Guru Padma 'byung gnas's *tshe chu* at gTsang brag rDo rje tshe brtan, on the basis of a *gter yig kha byang* (i.e. prediction in written form that leads to the unearthing of a hidden treasure) of Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192 or 1136-1204). Having obtained a clear prophecy at the place of concealment (*gter sgo*), Zur Shakya 'od held a summit with Gu ru Ye shes khyung grags, dpon chen Shakya bzang po and Se chen's *gser yig pa*, A ga yan.⁵⁶ What followed is a classical

55 'Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (see Pema Tsering, "rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof" Text I p.519 lines 8-20): "At that time in Hor yul, the younger brother A ri bo gha seized the throne, so that rgyal po Se chen gan did not take hold of power and there was an ongoing military conflict. Se chen gan asked Mi nyag Gha ras ra (spelled so for *ras pa*): "People say that there is a curse in Tibet. Do you know whether this is so?". Gha ras replied: "I know about it. [There is a curse by which] one can do anything: kill, drive away to exile or force to submit". Se chen gan, owing to his *karma*, had a big doubt about killing, [wondering whether] death was appropriate. Being inclined to care for sentient beings, [he deemed] the [other] two ideas, [such as] expelling [his brother], acceptable. He added: "I know that [my] rival [brother] will not accept to be summoned to my encampment, so force him to submit [to me]!". With bla ma 'Phags pa rin po che standing as witness, Gha ras made a binding ritual in the shape of a whirlwind. The younger brother A ri bo gha's steadfastness was broken. Still [Se chen rgyal po] was not too confident [about the outcome of this]. [Se chen] having said: "May lightnings fall in the midst of this lake and this plain", Gha ras, with confidence, made lightnings fall there and there. He took great pleasure in contributing on who, among the *sngags pa*-s, could scare [A ri bo gha]. He said: "This one, a disciple of the Tshal [pa] (bla ma Zhang?), has obtained powers over gShin rje. Moreover there could be another solution. No one can be found better than Zur pa who has brought his performance of binding rituals of harmful Tantric nature to the ultimate degree". Also *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* (p.314 line 10-p.315 line 5).

56 'Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (see Pema Tsering, "rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof" Text I p.519 lines 20-33): "Consequently, pakshi Shākya 'od having sent ston pa Rā hu as emissary, Gha ras met him and offered splendid gifts. He communicated to him that a *tshe chu gter [ma]* ("hidden treasure of long-life water") was [concealed] at rDo rje tshe brtan, a place in gTsang, according to the *gter yig kha byang* of mnga' bdag Nyang. [Gha ras] offered [the *kha byang*] to bla ma Shāk (spelled so) 'od by sending it with ston pa Rā hu. Concomitantly, an order of Se chen gan was addressed to Shākya 'od po and Shākya mgon po. [Shākya 'od said:] "On account of the need to make every possible *rim 'gro* [for the emperor], the task of rediscovering the *tshe chu* is entrusted to me. It may be that related merit will arise. I am familiar with the happiness and misery of you people". A *gser yig pa* assigned to the task came with a *bre* of silver together with a *gtor ma*. On that occasion a great *rim 'gro* was performed [but Shākya 'od] became somewhat weary of the emperor's oppressive manners and the *gser yig pa*'s rashness. The night he offered prayers, sounds and rays of light manifested thrice, as a succession of miracles, and he received a clear prophecy at the *gter sgo* ("treasure door"). Then Zur Shākya 'od, Gu ru Khyung grags, dpon chen Shāk bzang (i.e. Shakya bzang po) and *gser yig pa* A ga yan got together. They cumulatively dealt with the *gter ma*". Also see *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* (p.315 line 6-p.316 line 1).

case of *gter ma* rediscovery. Inside a box made of two (male and female) conjoining skulls there were thirteen scrolls of religious texts enveloping the *tshe chu* placed inside a lapis vase ('Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag*; see Pema Tsering, "rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof" Text I p.519 line 33-p.520 line 2).

Given the *tshe chu*'s property of extending longevity to 100 years, Zur Shakya 'od experimented it upon himself and found out that it was ineffective. Still, he hurried to bring it to Se chen rgyal po in order to prolong his life, the emperor hoping to live for that amount of time.⁵⁷ This obviously did not happen.

An emperor's edict granted Zur Shakya 'od the title of *pakshi* and a land, the size of fifty-five households inhabiting it. Eventually Zur Shakya 'od built a monastery and established a community of *sngags pa*-s. His passing occurred when he was aged sixty-three.⁵⁸

A few remarkably different versions of the Zur Shakya 'od's *tshe chu* affair are provided by *Zab khyad gter ma'i lo rgyus gter ston chos 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, an earlier source than the one by 'Jigs med gling pa.⁵⁹ This text's treatment is a good

57 'Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (see Pema Tsering, "rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof" Text I p.520 lines 2-5): "Given that [the *tshe chu*] could bestow [him] a longevity of 100 years if the *bla ma* (i.e. Shākya 'od) would take it as *phud* (i.e. first and best portion of anything to be given out), he put [some of] it with a spoon over his tongue but took it out, [realising] that its use was ineffective (lit. "the karmic link was wrong"). Having rolled it many times into cloths, he strove hard to fight back sleep [on the way] and took it to China. It is well known that [the *tshe chu*] could extend [life] to 100 years, as requested by rgyal po Se chen gan". Also see *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* (p.316 lines 12-15).

58 'Jigs med gling pa, *rNying rgyud dkar chag* (see Pema Tsering, "rNying ma pa Lamas Am Yuan-Kaiserhof" Text I p.520 lines 5-13): "As a reward for [the *tshe chu*], [the emperor] issued a 'ja' *sa* whereby he exempted all the *sngags pa* residing in dBus gTsang from compulsory military service. In order to make [Zur Shākya 'od] equal to the imperial *bla ma*-s, he granted him the title of *pakshi*. In return for the *tshe chu*, he bestowed upon him fifty-five households (*Hor dud*). [Zur Shākya 'od] planned to build a great *dgon pa* on the mountain of Mas 'gril (spelled so for Mas sgril) but since there [already] was a great *klu* town, the *klu*-s pleaded with him. In exchange they offered him [the land] at the lake in the plain of rGya rgan. He made the *klu*-s drain it miraculously and founded a great *sngags [pa]* community. After undergoing one-pointed meditation on the navel of khar (i.e. a construction situated high up on a spur) rDo rje brag, [Zur Shākya 'od] passed away when he was sixty-three years old. Touching his relics (*pur*) healed leprosy". Also see *bDud 'joms chos 'byung* (p.316 line 15-p.317 line 5).

59 *Zab khyad gter ma'i lo rgyus gter ston chos 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba* (f.73b line 7-p.74a line 4): "At that time, by command of Se chen rgyal po, a compelling order came to Zur pa pakshi Shāg (spelled so) 'od, who was the protector of the life of the emperor of China, which said: "You have power over *gSang sngags rnying ma* and the *zab gter* of slob dpon Padma. You must rediscover for me a *tshe chu* hidden as *gter* and bring it over". Slob dpon Zur pa having extended a request to gter ston Ye shes khyung grags, Gu ru Ye shes khyung grags accepted [to help him]. Having come to know about the order [issued] by Se chen (f.74a), he left together with Zur pakshi Shāg 'od. [Ye shes khyung grags] extracted the *tshe chu* filling a *ka pā la* made of lapis from Shangs mda' brag rDo rje tshe brtan and gave it to Zur pa. Zur pa gave it to Se chen

proof of how opinable history can be when events are prone to different interpretations. Its foremost point is that credit for the rediscovery is given to Gu ru Ye shes khyung grags who appears in the account of 'Jigs med gling pa marginally. The text says that the role of Zur pakshi Shakya 'od was limited to carrying the *tshe chu* to Se chen rgyal po. This is not always so in all versions of the episode mentioned in *Zab khyad gter ma'i lo rgyus gter ston chos 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba* which cites unidentified Sa skya pa documents that attribute to either 'gro mgon 'Phags pa or some undescribed Sa skya pa the task of taking it to the Mongol court of China. In *Zab khyad gter ma'i lo rgyus gter ston chos 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, Zur Shakya 'od is portrayed as a master with no *gter ston* capacities.

Back to the account of the activities of Zur pakshi Shakya 'od in the treatment of 'Jigs med gling pa, which is the most complete, the length of Zur Shakya 'od's life and the involvement of dpon chen Shakya bzang po in the rediscovery of the *tshe chu* confirm that these events took place sensibly before U rgyan pa went to the Mongol court of China.⁶⁰

The episode of Zur Shakya 'od's long-life water is a sign of Se chen rgyal po's obsession with death, as shown by his later interaction with U rgyan pa. It also stresses the ineffectiveness of the *tshe chu*, a realisation that did not prevent the 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa* to bring it, rather cynically, to the emperor. Indeed Se chen rgyal po lived for eighty years rather than 100.

U rgyan pa's attitude on the issue of the emperor's survival was as uncompromising and skeptical as ever in his relations with the Mongols of China. Zur Shakya 'od's attitude was different. His handling of the matter may have exposed him to a major risk, for he—the account says—took advantage of the emperor's credulity. One needs

who survived until the age of eighty-four (i.e. d. 1298, sic). According to a Sa skya pa document, Gu ru Ye shes khyung grags and Zur pakshi Shāg 'od, together, extracted the *tshe chu* and passed it to 'gro mgon 'Phags pa. The 'gro mgon rin po che gave it to Se chen. Se chen survived until the age of eighty-four (i.e. d. 1298, sic), and thus his longevity was extended. According to another Sa skya pa document, it is said that an 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa* extracted the *tshe chu* hidden as *gter* from brag rDo rje tshe brtan and gave it to the Sa skya pa. The Sa skya pa gave it to Chinese emperor. [But] as for the rediscoverer of the *tshe chu*, he indeed was Gu ru Ye shes khyung grags alone”.

60 Among all the alternative versions that appropriate the episode—with different nuances—and transfer it into the Sa skya pa milieu, the one that attributes to 'gro mgon 'Phags pa the task of taking the *tshe chu* to the imperial court is the most extreme. Were it be credited as valid, it would work as a confirmation of the approximate dates of Zur Shakya 'od (ca. 1206-ca. 1268) because 'gro mgon 'Phags pa returned to Tibet the first time in wood ox 1265 and was back in Sog yul in earth snake 1269.

All versions of the episode hint at different degrees of Sa skya pa involvement in the course of events. Beyond the different descriptions of this *tshe chu* affair and the different attributions of the merit to help Se chen rgyal po live longer, they confirm the links between the Zur family of 'Ug pa lung and the Sa skya pa at the peak of the Mongol authority over Tibet.

to find corroboration on whether Se chen rgyal po's immoderate desire for miraculous remedies, such as the useless *tshe chu*, was the reason for allegedly procuring material gain to the 'Ug pa lung pa *sngags pa*.

The Zur Shakya 'od's narrative shows, in sharp contrast with U rgyan pa's defiant style, that pockets of rNying ma pa masters, associates of the Sa skya pa, interacted with of the Mongols of China to benefit of their support. Despite their differences, there is a meeting point between the missions of Zur Shakya 'od and U rgyan pa. Both were promoted by the Sa skya pa who were eager, in the first case, to show their loyalty to Se chen and, in the other, to cope with the concern for his grandfather's health nurtured by The mur bho ga, the *de facto* ruler of Tibet in the nineties of the 12th century, when U rgyan pa traveled to the imperial court.⁶¹

61 Karma pa and rNying ma pa historical works credit the third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339) with a similar activity in favour of Tho gan the mur (r. 1333-1368). For instance, *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.941 lines 9-15) reads: "By virtue of a true miracle, [Rang byung rdo rje] rediscovered [a vase of] *tshe chu* from upper bSam yas (mChims phu or g.Ya' ma lung?). He extracted it without his attendants noticing that. Massive offering came from the imperial court to invite him again and again. Having left on the eighth month of the year of the rat 1336, he set out from 'Dam on the fifteenth day. He accomplished uncountable deeds in favour of sentient beings on the way [before] reaching the imperial court. At the residence of minister Tha'i shri and three mentors he gave the empowerment of long life and the *tshe chu* to the emperor, thus prolonging his longevity in order to secure stability to the throne".

bDud 'joms chos 'byung holds, possibly elaborating on the notion of upper bSam yas, that the rediscovery of the *tshe chu*-s took place at both bSam yas mChims phu and g.Ya' ma lung. Guru Padma 'byung gnas's original place of concealment (ibid p.192 lines 4-6: "[Rang byung rdo rje] rediscovered *tshe chu gter* [ma-s] at bSam yas mChims phu and g.Ya' ma lung, and thus prolonged the life of the emperor").

Rang byung rdo rje—recognised in his childhood as the third Karma pa by U rgyan pa—undertook the same mission of his master but his interaction with the Mongol emperor of China was rather more sympathetic. Spiritual care and devoted patronage prevailed in the relationships between his rebirths and the Ming rulers.

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THE 17th CENT. GTSANG RULERS AND THEIR STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMATION

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INTRODUCTION.

The relationship between the Tibetan prelate Tāranātha (1575-1634) and his major patrons, the various sDe pa of gTsang is a most complex one. In studying it I am increasingly aware that the wealth of detail to be gleaned from the various relevant texts is not just limited to the narrow study of the lives of just a few people, in this case those of Tāranātha and the various rulers of gTsang. Indeed the various strategies to maintain their respective positions developed by both Tāranātha and the gTsang sDe pa in these fraught times, reflect a larger relationship, that of the ideal ruler and the ideal priest as it has been exemplified throughout Indian history. This brings in its train a broad range of baggage, not merely the spiritual aspects of the patron/priest relationship extolled in Buddhist texts, but also a series of strategically aimed skilful means through which the various power modalities, both internal and external, might be maintained or even ameliorated.

In this paper I will suggest, among other things, that Tāranātha was both a manipulator of the relationship between himself and the various sDe srid of gTsang, while at the same time, becoming a partial victim of it. In this paper my position is that, through his careful manipulation of their relationship, Tāranātha sought to maintain the apparently unlimited generosity of his patrons. The negative corollary to this pact was that his patrons sometimes drew the prelate ineluctably into their power struggle against the Mongols and their backers, the dGe lugs pa.

THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR (1557-1603)

An important point to note concerning this period is that it witnessed the end of what had been a gradual process of the decline of the older aristocratic families who had acted as 'binding agencies' for both the regions of dBus and gTsang. Through their unparalleled power and their historical links with ancient lineages, these families, specifically the Rin spungs and their successors the Phag mo gru pa, had held in check the ambitions of others who would rule those regions. By the time of Tāranātha's birth in 1575, this old order had largely deteriorated and atrophied, leaving a power vacuum in which the manipulation of armed force allowed those who sought mastery

of the regions to assert themselves. Those who were later to become known as the 'Kings of gTsang' were precisely such an ambitious and resourceful group. We will note their spectacular rise to ascendancy below.

Although the issue of competing sectarian beliefs is frequently adduced as a prime cause of pre-Civil War tension, it must be placed into a broader context. In this paper I propose that it was in fact a quite minor factor. As is well known, there had been and still was at that time, a great deal of fluidity between the different sectarian traditions. We frequently find reference to secular leaders being patrons to a very wide variety of prelates. For example, among others, the various sDe pa of gTsang supported the Ka rma bKa' brgyud pa, the Jo nang pa through Tāranātha, the Sa skya pa through the person of A mes zhabs and the rNying ma pa through Yol mo sprul sku, as well as many other religious figures whom they had relationships with. Each of these performed life rituals and other ceremonies for the gTsang rulers irrespective of their religious alignment. In my readings of some of the documents of the time I have found very few tensions of a level which might have led to active warfare.

The major factor leading to the contention between the gTsang pa and the coalition of forces supported by the dBus pa was the sense of outrage which the gTsang pa felt against the coalition of dGe lugs pa abbots centred in dBus, who had so effectively consolidated their relationship with the powerful Mongols. This move clearly thwarted the aims of the gTsang rulers among which were strategies aimed at placing them as the undisputed rulers of both dBus and gTsang and to establish a powerful kingdom based upon older Tibetan values. Ahmad (1971) refers to these ambitions as involving what he refers to as 'geopolitical visions.' Such broader aims were clearly present at the founding of the lineage of gTsang rulers in 1565 by Zhing shag pa (1510? – 1599) (Ahmad 1971: 94) and were also noticeable in the strategies of his sons, especially Phun tshogs nam rgyal (1550 – 1620) and his son Ka rma bstan skyong dbang po (1606 – 1642). The various Mongol tribes who were subsequently brought into dBus and other parts of Tibet by the dGe lugs pa to counter the tightening power-grip of the gTsang pa, were regarded by the gTsang rulers as being utterly foreign, alien forces, and therefore implacably opposed to their own vision of a Tibet of older, more 'Tibetan' values. Indeed, for the gTsang pa the intrusion by those foreign tribes recalled nothing so much as the Mongol presence 'by proxy' exerted over Tibet several centuries previously.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE gTSANG DYNASTY (MID 16TH – EARLY 17TH CENT)

A recent historical work, *Bod rgyal khab kyi chab srid dang 'brel ba'i dmag don lo rgyus* ('Political and Military History of Tibet' hereafter referred to as BRKK) notes the almost unseemly rapid rise of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje, the founder of the dynasty which later became known by the epithet the 'Kings of gTsang.' It documents his transition from groomsmen to the Rin spungs pa family, to official in

the Rin spungs hierarchy and eventually to primogenitor of what may be loosely called, the dynasty of gTsang rulers. The question to be asked here is what was the situation in gTsang at the time which would have permitted such an interloper (at least in the eyes of established families who held power) to have effected such a stellar arc.

In 1557 there existed both the threat of, and later on the eruption of, major fighting between the Rin spungs pa and the ambitious Zhing shag pa, now the Rin spungs governor of gTsang, appointed to that position in 1548. In 1557 he ruled from the fortress of bSam grub rtse in modern gShis ka rtse. We are informed that the scholar 'Brug pa Pad ma dKar po negotiated a stay of warfare between the opposing sides and delayed combat, bringing about a reconciliation between the would-be combatants. After this lull Zhing shag pa, still an official under the Rin spungs pa, was appointed a *dmag dpon*, or general of the army in 1565. In that year he finally defeated his aristocratic Rin spungs pa rivals. His cunning opportunism is outlined in a charming (but probably apocryphal) story involving needles and suits of armour, in Shakabpa: 89.¹ In public Zhing shag pa claimed to be the undisputed ruler of gTsang and also to be a relative of the great 'Brug pa Pad ma dKar po himself. In this process of linking himself to such an illustrious figure, which as far as I am able to see at the present stage of my research is unjustifiable, we can see nascent signs of a process of legitimation being evoked. Clearly his purpose was to consolidate the authority for his already spectacular and swift rise to renown by joining himself to a person already possessing the respect and authority he craved. Attached to this rise, we also find a spurious etymology of his name, relating the syllable 'Zhing' to his origin as a peasant, suggesting that there existed a special relationship between himself and the very soil of gTsang. I am not certain whether this etymology is from the times themselves or whether it is of more recent origin. If it is an early etymology then its purpose as a link between the person and the land is clear.²

Zhing shag pa (Ka rma) tshe brtan rdo rje, the first of the gTsang rulers (1510? – 1599) did not rise from a noble family and was therefore considered to be an opportunistic upstart by many. This sense of mistrust by the populace extended to Zhing shag pa's grandsons, of whom Bogin notes that the prevailing sense in gTsang was that they were merely usurpers, able to retain their seats only through their exercise of military power and economics. (Bogin 2005:70)

The patronage proffered by the old and noble families, although generally beneficial for the dGa' ldan pa (dGe lugs pa), as it had been previously for other religious traditions, possessed certain drawbacks. These became more evident to

1 The story, now a part of folklore, says that to covertly access 500 suits of armour (*khra*) for his 'rebel' troops, Zhing shag pa wrote an order for 500 needles (*kh*) which was duly authorized by the Rin spungs chief. With the deft addition of the tiny stroke of the subscribed letter 'ra' to the word for 'needle', Zhing shag pa was able to access the armour required for his take-over.

2 BRKK:189.

others by the late fifteenth century. The large number of monasteries belonging to the dGe lugs pa was regarded as constituting something of a threat by certain aristocratic families who were not part of that tradition. What were potentially fortifiable sites swiftly became monasteries, funded by families with whom, for example, the gTsang pa had chequered pasts and uncertain futures. Other issues also worked against the gTsang pa. These included the disposal of buffer land-holdings as prebends to dGe lugs pa monasteries, the loss of taxation potential, radically altered access routes to trading marts and weaker guarantees of safe travel through alien principalities.

From the time of his 1565 victory, Zhing shag pa commenced the process of redefining himself and his family. He came to regard himself as the founder of a family which had been somehow newly en-nobled, thereby placing it in the more aristocratic company of the Phag mo gru pa and Rin spungs pa, both by then almost completely moribund. This sense of being what might be called the ‘new aristocracy,’ was achieved largely by virtue of his conquest and the consequent subservience of all potential rivals. Zhing shag pa’s ultimate objective, at least as far as we are informed from the writings of his sons, was to protect Tibet from the ‘foreign’ intervention of the Mongols. It was this primary aim which Zhing shag pa inculcated in his progeny, all of whom were to follow his vision of a united, Mongol-free, prosperous and well-governed gTsang.

Thus in a swift and decisive manner Zhing shag pa consolidated his replacement of the old aristocratic Rin spungs family and became the powerful and ambitious master of some of the most productive farm land in Tibet³ and allied himself to the family of one of Tibet’s greatest living scholars, ’Brug pa Pad ma dkar po.⁴

Zhing shag Tshe brtan rdo rje’s overarching aim was to ‘revive the institutions of the imperial period and to bring peace and prosperity to the country by applying a five-point policy.’ (Karmay 2003: 66) This policy sought to revive the glories of the past through changes to Tibet’s legal and social fabric.⁵ There was general agreement

3 We are told of the rich productivity of gTsang by Tāranātha (TARAAUTOBIOG: 306) who notes that gTsang was both prosperous and a centre of dharma practice and by the observations of the Jesuit father Cabral, who in 1628 noted the richness and large population of gTsang. (Wessels: 152-155)

4 It appears that one of the Rin spungs pa princes was named after ’Brug pa Pad ma dkar po, being known as the Rin spungs sras, Pad ma dkar po. Dung dkar blo bzang ’phrin las (DUNKAR1: 2324) records that in 1565 the Prince was slain by Zhing shag pa, but I have not been able to find independent reference to this event.

5 The recent Tibetan historical work, *The Ruby Key* (PADMARAGA) informs us in some detail about some of the ambitious plans of Ka rma Phun tshogs mam rgyal (1550-1620) to introduce a series of sixteen fundamental laws to gTsang. Little is known about these laws, or indeed the impetus to develop them, save for the oft-repeated observation that they were a revision of the earlier laws introduced by the Phag mo gru pa in the 14th century which in turn, reflected older legal and moral concerns. Kapstein observes of these earlier Phag mo gru pa law codes, ‘Like the old imperial law codes it was based on strictly hierarchical principles, and it provided

with the broad aims of this policy by the Jo nang, Sa skya pa, Ka rma bKa' brgyud traditions.

There is now so much new and previously unstudied archival and private material relating to gTsang in this period, as well as newly collected traditional oral accounts, that I am unable to vouch for either the accuracy or quality of much of it. Much of it, the ancient gTsang archival materials in particular, is now apparently stored in Beijing and may be in the process of being edited and published.⁶ My point in mentioning this is that I employ for much of my argument, several new works which discuss this period in some detail, and which use material which does not appear to have been

guidelines rather than well-formed procedures. A distinct innovation however, was the institution of a new system of local administration.' (Kapstein 2006:118.)

This system gave responsibility for governance of areas to what might be termed 'fort masters' (*rdzong dpon*) who, from their strongholds were responsible for all aspects of local governance. The intention of the laws was to maintain what was regarded as the valuable characteristics derived from Tibet's dynastic or imperial period of the 7th – 9th centuries. The most innovative aspect of this redefinition of societal structure was that it was to be inaugurated, championed and maintained by secular leaders. The characteristics to be exemplified by these secular rulers included for example, certain aspects of martial valour as well as a re-evaluation of the practical merits of demonstrating kindness and care to the aged, including for example the donation of silk fabric to aged women. Both *The Ruby Key* (PADMARAGA:803-4 and 808) and *The Translucent Mirror* (KGML:220) observe that the sixteen laws (*bca' khrims*) were a revision of the laws set down by the Phag (mo) gru (pa) and note that certain new values were additional to those earlier laws. Most of the sixteen fundamental laws (*zhal lce*) were primarily concerned with such things as bravery, statecraft, oath-taking and the means of controlling barbarians on the borderlands. In his approach, Ka rma Phun tshogs was possibly following in the footsteps of his father Zhing shag pa Ka rma tsho brtan rdo rje who in 1548 had applied the 'five-point policy' referred to above which sought to 'revive the institutions of the imperial period.' (Karmay 2003:66) Reference to Karma bstan skyong's formulation of the Sixteen Legal Edicts may be found in GANGSCAN:10. The list of the Sixteen Legal Edicts may be found in DUNGKAR1:28, as well as in BODRGYA:2379. The final Edict concerning control of the 'borderland barbarians' appears to have been added to the already existing series of fifteen edicts formulated by Phag mo gru pa. Nevertheless in formulating a series of injunctions for society, Ka rma phun tshogs was no doubt being mindful of the sixteen moral principles which were said to have dated from Tibet's imperial period and which, although differing in actual content, possess a similar overall tone and intent to his own formulations. (French:41 and 81) Although not completely backward-looking in their intention, the desire to return to the codes of behaviour of the 7th–9th centuries was given impetus by certain of the noble families, some of whom were by then again (temporarily) in ascendancy. Their rather rearward-looking aim was to link themselves to Tibet's glorious past, as well as, by implication Tibet's future, which they regarded themselves as custodians of. Some noble families even had biographies created which demonstrated how their lineage extended backwards to that glorious period when Tibet ruled much of Central Asia, when at the peak of its power in the 7th century, it was said to have even forced the T'ang Dynasty Emperor of the time to cede his daughter in marriage to the Tibetan ruler. (Ahmad 1999:140.)

6 Oral Communication from Tashi Tsering, August 2009.

remarked on before. I suspect that much of this new material derives from these recently archived sources. Among the works I have used in this paper, two in particular, *The Ruby Key* (PADMARAGA) and *The Translucent Mirror* (KGML) appear to employ such archival records among their sources. One of the problems with these published histories is that they do not attribute dates or other critical apparatus to their studies and therefore such useful detail can become an exercise in speculation rather than history. Concerning the rise of Zhing shag pa, Tshe bstan rdo rje and the details of certain of his nine sons, we seem to be on firmer ground because we have older, texts written closer to the events, to supply us with much of the detail. These include the biography of the 9th Zhva nag, dBang phyug rdo rje (1556-1603) and that of the 6th Zhva dMar, Gar dbang Chos kyi dBang phyug (1584-1630), both texts written in the 18th century and both containing small but invaluable vignettes concerning the gTsang rulers.⁷

CARD GAMES WITH TUTELARY DEITIES.

The combination of a lust for power and a measure of anti-dGe lugs pa sentiment seem to be among the foremost reasons adduced by historians for the gTsang expansionist policies. Although doubting the anti-dGe lugs stance, I do notice the presence of a certain religious sentiment which I believe was a contributing factor to, and which was a powerful informing agency, for the gTsang pa rise. This sentiment was largely roused through various predictions and other strategies of legitimization. *The Ruby Key*, presumably basing itself on the new sources referred to above, suggests that the gTsang pa hegemonists were not merely local adventurers out to assert a powerful and renascent gTsang. Instead it tends to give them a background which is far broader than the predominantly dark shadow of greedy self-interest which has lain over the image of the gTsang rulers until now. *The Ruby Key* tells us that there were certain spontaneous omens which heralded the rule of the gTsang pa kings. Here we can note that the theme of political expediency has become garbed in a mantle of religious justification through reference to these 'spontaneous omens.' This 'window-dressing' process of introducing a noetic dimension into what was basically a purely political realm, is in itself a common enough theme in many cultures. In it we can note how religious sentiments become simply another means towards legitimation of rule. *The Ruby Key* tells us that the rulers of gTsang were said to have been 'mystically' predicted. This ploy appears to add a certain foreordained *cachet*, a historico-spiritual inevitability, to their rule. Ka rma bstan skyong dbang po for example is said to have been predicted as being an earthly form of the *bodhisattva* Vajrapāṇi, as seen in a vision by no less a figure than the eminent Pad ma gling pa himself. This is recorded in the latter's work *The Translucent Mirror*.⁸

7 SITU.

8 This reference is cited *in extenso* in PADMARAGA: 810-811. This text of Padma gling pa is

Furthermore in this process of linking Vajrapāṇi and Ka rma bstan skyong we can see another interesting issue arise. It appears that there was another claimant to the mantle of Vajrapāṇi in the person of Gushri Khan, the Mongol ally of the 5th Dalai Lama, implacable enemy of the gTsang rulers and the person who after 1642 became the so-called 'Ruler of Tibet.' In a similar process to that which recognized Ka rma bstan skyong, Gushri Khan was claimed by the Fifth Dalai Lama also to have been a reincarnation of that very same deity, Vajrapāṇi. (Ahmad 1995:193, and 5DALAI:190.)

Here we find ourselves in the rather curious situation where two of the main protagonists, who had struggled against each other in the very same period and in the same general location, on opposite sides of the conflict, are both claimed to be incarnate forms of Vajrapāṇi by their respective 'sides'. However, the most interesting aspect of this parallelism is that even in those difficult times, there appears to have been a sense of prevailing propriety which worked against both claimants being the identical deity at the identical time. In fact we find that Gushri Khan was recognized as Vajrapāṇi only after the death of Ka rma bstan skyong. I suggest that this was a Tibetan example of what would appear to be a case of 'deity capture,' a process in which the tutelary of a defeated opponent is adopted by the victor as a symbol of their defeat. The adoption of ones enemy's tutelaries, rather like the consumption of certain of their body parts in other cultures, demonstrates not only utter defeat, but that the victor has completely absorbed any power and prestige attached to the vanquished party's tutelaries.⁹

This interesting aspect of Buddhist involvement in the political arena merits a broader survey than I am able to attempt here, to discover whether there are other, similar occurrences of the same protective deity being so consciously invoked by opposing sides in Tibetan history. A question which might be addressed in such a study is whether such claims to the divine were adopted simply as a means of psychologically 'unsettling' the opposition by claiming the most powerful and ferocious deities as being incarnate on one's own side or whether there were other

not to be confused with the more recent work, titled *The Translucent Mirror*. (KGML) Padma gling pa (1450-1521) was a renowned extractor and revealer of hidden texts who is still highly revered in Bhutan to this day as a national saint. As with other visionary predictions mentioned below, *sortilege* of one sort or another was a relatively easy and convenient way of legitimating political power. In the Tibetan tradition, most predictions made about the arising of great religious leaders tend to be quite non-specific, and to an extent can easily be interpreted in a variety of other ways. The retrospective understanding of predictions can often be explained by a sort of hermeneutic which privileges certain readings over others. We must in fact be extremely cautious about accepting this prediction of Padma gling pa and should not use it as a reliable source for our understanding of the times. Rather, we would be better off regarding it simply as a piece of adroit political justification.

9 The process of self-empowerment through deity capture is a common enough theme in Indian history where it became a routine affair in warfare. (R.H. David 1997: chapters 1-3)

dimensions. Such an investigation might reveal signs of what I might in fact call ‘deity escalation,’ a process in which incumbents become saddled with the *zeitgeist* of an increasingly awe-inspiring range of deities, rather like overbidding in a card game.”

Later, more sectarian historical texts have of course polarized such dualities into even more outrageously simple forms. One example of this genre portrays the Mongol Gushri Khan as a pious supporter of Buddhism and champion of the Fifth Dalai Lama, while on the other hand depicting the gTsang pa Kings as evil, possessing aberrant and intemperate habits and being implacably opposed to Buddhism. This latter point is claimed, despite the well known religious links of the gTsang pa Kings to both the Jo nang pa and the Karma pa, as well-attested believers and as major patrons. The above example of what might be termed ‘character assassination’ is taken from SUMPA written by Sum pa mkhan po in 1748, one of the prime writers of this *revanchiste* type of literature.

ANCIENT HEROES FOR MODERN TIMES.

According to *The Ruby Key*, due to his accumulated merits, Zhing shag

tshe brtan rdo rje the ‘dynasty’s’ primogenitor was claimed as a *nirmāṇa* form of Tibet’s great culture hero, the warrior Gesar. Moreover in ritual ceremonies he was bestowed with the power of the Ka rma pa’s own protecting deities (*dharmapālas*) themselves. (PADMARAGA:806.) According to a prediction of the Ka rma pa hierarch, Mi skyod rdo rje (1507-1554), as well as one made by Tāranātha’s immediate predecessor-but-one Kun dga’ grol mchog, Zhing shag tshe brtan rdo rje the primogenitor was to become completely victorious over the areas of dBus and gTsang. Almost following this as a model of precedence, the prediction then goes on to say that:

- Zhing shag pa’s son Ka rma mthu stobs rnam rgyal (died 1610) would in fact be a reincarnation of one the ancient Kings of Tibet.
- Kun spangs lha dbang rdo rje (often referred to simply as Kun spangs drung - died 1605/6) would be a reincarnation of the powerful Ka rma pa protector deity Ber nag can, and
- Ka rma bstan srung dbang po (died 1609 or 1611) would be a(nother) rebirth of Gesar. (PADMARAGA:807)

As if he had swiftly learned the importance of allying himself to eminence, even fictitiously as he had done with the person of ’Brug pa pad ma dkar po, Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje appears to have been quite complicit in what might be called this game of creating appropriate antecedents, impressive tutelary deities and ancient mythic origins. According to the *The Ruby Key*, Zhing shag pa was born as a *nirmāṇa* form of Tibet’s great culture hero the mythic warrior Gesar, due to his accumulated merits. In a manner of speaking, the choice of Gesar is an entirely understandable one for Zhing shag pa to have been linked with. At one level both were similar in their

physical attributes – both were skilled in the art of warfare, displayed incisive wit and skill, brought a new era of moral rectitude as well as heralding a sense of reascent ‘Tibetan-ness.’

As mentioned above, Zhing shag pa is also said to have inherited certain powerful aspects of the protective deities of the Ka rma pa themselves. (PADMARAGA: 806.) We know from the biography of the 9th Zhva nag, dBang phyug rdo rje (1556-1603) that he met with Zhing shag pa in 1567, 1585 and again in 1590.(SITU: 161; 186; 201) It is likely that the Zhva nag’s tutelaries were bestowed at the first of these meetings in 1567, two years after his victory over the Rin spungs pa. In this transfer of tutelaries, we are reminded of gTsang pa ruler Phun tshogs mam rgyal who, in 1620 requested that Tāranātha transfer his own tutelary deities to him to help him overcome an illness. (Zongtse: 1977, 352)¹⁰ The transfer of one’s own tutelary deities to another was not always a guarantee of success as may be seen in 1609 when even the transfer of Tāranātha’s tutelaries to the ailing gTsang ruler, Ka rma bstan srung was ineffective and failed to prolong his life.¹¹

That these tutelaries were actual entities for the people of the time, is demonstrated by the cataclysmic omens which followed the murder of the sDe pa of nearby ’Phyongs rgyas and his wife by a crazed Indian *yogi* in 1615. The tutelaries of the sDe pa and those of the young ’Brug pa rin po che, Ngag dbang mam rgyal were said to have been so aroused at this offence to natural order that they brought the area under a grip of gloom. There was a prevailing panic among the people and ominous glowing lights were seen above the town of gShis ka rtse, along with firebolts which shot through the heavens. A gathering of ravens, no doubt an omen of Ngag dbang mam rgyal’s impending journey to Bhutan, hovered over the darkened fortress and howling dogs gathered in the streets. Partly out of a fear that the area had been somehow cursed, but also due to their love for the Zhabs drung, many people from both dBus and gTsang followed him to Bhutan. (GTS2:320-322) The renown of many lamas at that time was to an extent dependent upon their ability to manipulate their own tutelaries and those of their enemies. Tāranātha expresses his own opinions concerning the implications of the above incident and omens in his large Autobiography.¹²

Having established the powerfully appropriate antecedents for Zhing shag pa in the person of Gesar, *The Ruby Key* goes on to note much the same retrospective divine placement for the case of his grandson, the gTsang pa hierarch Ka rma bstan skyong dbang po (1606-1642). The claim is made that Ka rma bstan skyong was in fact a *nirmāṇa* form of Vajrapāṇi. (PADMARAGA: 809) As with the juxtaposition

10 To be noted here are the regular visits of the 9th Zhva nag to the various other sDe pa of gTsang, including not only Zhing shag pa, but also mThu stobs mam rgyal in 1601 and Ka rma bstan srung in 1602. Tāranātha visited the gTsang court on over 35 occasions throughout his life, sometimes at times which were of the greatest inconvenience to him.

11 ZONGTSE 1977:349

12 TARAUTOBIOG:388 ff.

of Gesar with Zhing shag pa, from what we know of the Ka rma bstan skyong's character it might be entirely appropriate to acknowledge that Vajrapāṇi was a suitable choice as his informing deity. The young King of gTsang was renowned for his hasty temper, his physical audacity, strength and impetuosity and several of these aspects of Ka rma bstan skyong's character inform the early legends concerning the deity Vajrapāṇi himself in his earliest known Indic forms.

The scholar Benjamin Bogin makes the point that, according to Yol mo sprul sku, the sDe srid Ka rma bstan skyong was a rank outsider employing dubious means to legitimize his family's past. Of course this may simply be Yol mo sprul sku's personal dislike of Ka rma bstan skyong formed into a *leitmotif* for some far greater ambition of his own. Bogin says,

The principal criticism of Bstan skyong dbang po is that he behaves in a manner unwarranted by his family's status in Tibet's elaborate social hierarchy. Despite Bstan skyong dbang po's own attempt to glorify his family lineage through tracing it back to Gnyags Ku mā ra, a disciple of Padmasambhava and member of the ancient Gnyags clan, many considered the Gtsang kings to be unrightful usurpers of power begrudgingly accepted because of their economic and military right. (Bogin 2005:70) ¹³

Bogin records Yol mo sprul sku's feelings towards the brash young ruler over a disagreement with Ka rma bstan skyong concerning expressions of appropriate politeness. Yol mo sprul sku notes that the gTsang rulers have,

'...crossed into excessive arrogance about their family lineage. They are renowned for quarreling over seats with the Red-hat and Black-hat emanations. He (Ka rma bstan skyong) expects all to perform prostrations to him...He rejoices in his great qualities such as the power of his blessings and magical abilities. Yet, he was unable to humble himself regarding (the height of the) seat and so forth. I heard that he remained worried about that for a fortnight.' (Bogin:167)

It was to this rather self-congratulatory family, with its fabricated genealogy, that Tāranātha was ineluctably drawn. He spent a great deal of time with the various rulers between 1595 and 1632. No doubt Tāranātha also felt something of the

13 We also note here that according to KGML, after the 1621 defeat of the Gtsang army nominally under the command of Ka rma bstan skyong, and the negotiated peace treaty of lCags po ri, the gTsang pa leaders were still proud even in defeat (Tibetan: *ske bcad nas 'og mar byul byul* which I translate as 'after their necks were severed they stroked their chins,' Even though no gTsang rulers were in fact executed at the lCags po ri surrender, this folk expression conveys something of the force of their arrogance. (KGML:221-2) The Jesuit Cabral's description of Ka rma bstan skyong's character which he recorded after their meeting in 1628 shows that there was a positive public side to the ruler, one which certainly appears at odds with the views of his Tibetan contemporaries. (Gettelman:273)

brashness of the family which, like so many other families, attempted to textually demonstrate that their own particular lineage extended back to the so-called 'Dynastic Period.' In Ka rma bstan skyong's case, this retrospective genealogy extended back to the person of gNyags ku mā ra, scion of the ancient gNyags clan.¹⁴ As if in some competition with his patrons, or simply establishing his special nature in an acceptably cultural manner, Tāranātha also made grand claims about his own family's links with certain key figures in Tibetan history. A claimed lineage such as that of Ka rma bstan skyong's links to gNyags ku mā ra would have appeared quite petty to Tāranātha, for in his own case, he had had visions of himself in a previous existence as being one of the actual dynastic rulers of Tibet, King Za nam ze lde, the son of A sho legs and rMu lcam smad legs.¹⁵ However this relative superiority of Tāranātha's antecedents was never a point he made anything much of, because the gTsang sDe srid were his most important patrons and he would have been unlikely to have upset them merely to establish himself as deriving from a superior family and a more ancient and more impressive antiquity.¹⁶

We find no statements by Tāranātha at all in his large Autobiography which might suggest that the populace in general felt any sense of dislike or resentment towards the gTsang rulers, either for their opportunism or their pretence to family antiquity. In a way this is not at all surprising because the various sDe srid were munificent supporters of Tāranātha. In one rather dubious case they even presented Tāranātha with stolen religious booty reminding us again of the importance of the capture of certain select items, even among Buddhists! In this act the *sDe pa* Phun tshogs mam rgyal, in an act of patrician-like generosity and, it must be observed, considerable political audacity, gave into Tāranātha's hands the three 'supports' of religion, holy images, a *stūpa* and sacred texts which had been purloined from the private shrine of the ruler of sNar thang whom he had recently defeated in 1617. Adroitly linking a religious act with his victories on the battlefield, those particular items were donated along with the specific request that they be incorporated as 'supports' into the newly constructed temple of rTag brtan monastery.¹⁷ That Tāranātha appears to have accepted them without demurrals is a point of some importance here, for on several occasions he had performed private rituals for the sDe pa of sNar thang and he would have been extremely familiar with the purloined 'supports' under discussion. Nevertheless he accepted them without any hesitation, finding among the cache several

14 Bogin (2005) cites Ka rma bstan skyong's own legal text, the *Zhal lce bcu drug* as the source for this claim to family antiquity

15 Tāranātha's vision of himself as one of the dynastic rulers of Tibet is found in TARASECRET: 677. However, apart from Tāranātha's own words at the commencement of his Autobiography (TARAAUTOBIOG) we have no other independent verification for his claims.

16 Tāranātha claimed an even more impressive future for himself. He says in his Secret Autobiography (TARASECRET: 689) that he would be born in India as a mighty king and that he would cause the dharma to spread greatly.

17 ZONGTSE: 351.

old Indian texts written in Sanskrit and which were said to have come originally from the *mNgon dga'* (Abhirati) monastery at *rGyal rtse*. (TARAAUTOBIOG:399, line 7 –400, line 2.) It is in incidents such as this that we can note the awkward relationship which sometimes existed between the patron and the patronized, one which bent religion towards the secular and the other which employed religious justifications quite shamelessly at times. We should be in no doubt that this attachment to power even to the extent of collaborating in the creation of fictitious antecedents, was not just a stratagem adopted by lay families, and even 'lay upstart' families such as that of *Zhing zhag pa*.

Of necessity this stratagem of fabricating the past involved prelates and other religious figures all of whom had something to gain from the procedure. For example *Tāranātha* was painfully aware of the importance of the powerful patrons he worked with and had strategies in place to attach himself more firmly to them. This guaranteed for him the ongoing patronage for the building of the monastic complex of *rTag brtan Phun tshogs gling* (commenced 1617) a project which was so extremely dear to *Tāranātha's* heart.

The extent to which *Tāranātha* ignored the warlike propensities of the *gTsang* rulers, his disinclination to discover the source of much of their wealth, his willingness to engage in dubious acts such as blessing troops before battle and in performing enemy-suppressing rituals suggests something of the compromise that he, like so many other Tibetan prelates, became involved in.

Buddhism always seems to have courted patrons, but too frequently has also compromised itself through meretriciously following the ideals and goals of those patrons. The case of *Tāranātha* and the rulers of *gTsang* is an example from among many which demonstrates that throughout its history Buddhism has been as much about its often fraught travels through social history as it has been about its lofty doctrines and ideals. More specifically, as this paper has demonstrated, Tibetan prelates have often allowed themselves to be drawn into their patron's webs of deceit and have lent their authority to various suspect practices such as those of regnal legitimation, seeking spiritual justification through the invocation of tantric deities, tutelary deities and the creation of suspect lineages. In their employment of these practices Tibetans have acted in precisely the same manner as so many other rulers throughout history.

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‘FLOW OF THE RIVER GANGĀ’: THE GSAN-YIG OF THE FIFTH DALAI BLA-MA AND ITS LITERARY SOURCES*

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that from the eleventh century onwards one main concern of Tibetan authors was to determine the authenticity of the Buddhist texts received from India and thereby establish different lineages of transmission, by which means they were able to trace back any specific teaching either to the historical Buddha or to such representatives of Buddhahood as Vajradhāra or Samantabhadra. These efforts resulted in a specific literary genre known as the “record [of teachings] heard” (*gsan yig*) or “record [of teachings] obtained” (*thob yig*). The term *gsan-yig* seems to have made its appearance in the thirteenth century.

One crucial source for an investigation into these lines of transmission is the enormous *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682), consisting of four volumes from among his collected writings. Besides the great number of individual texts and lineages it mentions, this work is of particular importance for its references to earlier texts of the same genre and its discussion of divergent views on specific textual transmissions. The Great Fifth was thus actively engaged in what has been called “comparative *gsan yig*-ology.”¹ In the following I shall give an overview of the structure and content of this fascinating work of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, and then look into the literary sources he used for its composition. My special interest is the treatment of the rNying-ma-pa school and the transmission of the Tantra collection known as *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*.

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1 L. v.d. Kuijp: “Fourteenth Century Tibetan Cultural History VI: The Transmission of Indian Buddhist *Pramāṇavāda* according to Early Tibetan *Gsan yig-s*”. *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques*, 49(4), 1995, pp. 919-920.

2. THE MAIN SECTIONS

The two main sections of the work, which bears the title “Flow of the River Gangā” (*gangā'i chu rgyun*), are concerned with the “stream of pratimokṣa vows, [which are] a door for entering into the Buddhist doctrine” (*bstan par 'jug pa'i sgo so so thar pa'i sdom rgyun*) and the “cycle of the knowledge of the five objects which are to be heard and reflected on after entering [the Buddhist doctrine]” (*zhugs nas thos bsam bya ba gnas lnga rig pa'i skor*).

The second section is subdivided into a treatment of the “common objects of knowledge” (*thun mong pa'i rig pa'i gnas*) and a treatment of the “uncommon inner knowledge” (*thun mong ma yin pa nang gi rig pa*); the former deals with texts and lineages concerning the subjects of grammar, logic, medicine and Buddhist craftsmanship, and the latter with the philosophical and spiritual traditions of the Buddhist doctrine as such. The *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma is thus structured for the most part around the principle of the “five objects of knowledge” (*rig gnas lnga*).²

The comprehensive chapter devoted to Buddhist teachings as such is made up of three parts: a presentation of the “vehicle of the cause” (*rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*), the “vehicle of the mantras [which is] the result” (*'bras bu sngags kyi theg pa*), and the “cycle of the complete translations of the words of the Mahāmuni which are the root of all these [teachings]” (*de dag kun gyi rtsa bar gyur pa thub pa chen po'i bka' 'gyur ro cog gi skor*).

Looking first into the third part, dealing with the collections of texts regarded as the translated pronouncements of the Buddha Śākyamuni himself, we see that the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma provides a useful sketch of the traditional view of the development of the Buddhist scriptural canon. This sketch places the first appearance of texts at the time of the mythical king lHa Tho-tho-ri, and then follows the two phases of the earlier and later translation periods up to the compilation of the first manuscript *bka'-'gyur* in dPal sNar-thang and a catalogue of it by bCom-ldan Rig-pa'i ral-gri (1227-1305).³

After delineating the further history of the collection along with the version of it produced by the Tshal-pa lords of Central Tibet in the fourteenth century and the rGyal-rtse Them-spang-ma edition of 1431, that is, the two lines of transmission called by modern Kanjur research “common Kanjurs”,⁴ the Dalai Bla-ma then points to the Sa-skyapa scholar Kun-dga' nman-rgyal (1432-1496) from Gong-dkar rdo-rje gdan as an important link in the transmission of the “[reading-]authorization” (*lung*) of the collection.

2 D. Seyfort Ruegg: *Ordre spirituel et ordre temporel dans la pensée bouddhique de l'Inde et du Tibet: Quatre conférences au Collège de France* (= Collège de France. Publications de l'Institut de Civilisations Indiennes, 64). Paris 1995, pp. 95-108.

3 K.R. Schaeffer & L.W.J. van der Kuijp: *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri* (= Harvard Oriental Series, 64). Cambridge, Mass. / London, 2009, pp. 101-277.

4 H. Eimer: *The Early Mustang Kanjur Catalogue* (= Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, 45). Vienna 1999, p. 14, note 33.

Particularly worth noting are the remarks of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho on the different ways the reading of this huge collection was actually performed. The transmission reached the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma through his teacher Khra-tshang-pa, also known as sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog rdo-rje (1607-1671).

3. THE TANTRA COLLECTIONS

After further discussion of this scriptural canon and its central writings in relation to the Three Turnings of the Wheel of the Doctrine, the final part of this section—and of the *gsan-yig* as a whole—treats the different collections of Tantras, the so-called *rgyud 'bum*. These collections bear the qualification of “having reached the very peak of all the vehicles” (*theg pa thams cad kyi yang rtser son pa*). They are divided into the “Tantras of the Early Translations” (*snga 'gyur gyi rgyud*) and the “Tantras of the Later Translations” (*phyi 'gyur gyi rgyud*).

The section on the first group of Tantras is introduced by elaborating on the authenticity of these works, which had been approved by scholars like 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dpal (1392-1481), Khrimts-khang Lo-tsā-ba bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (1424-1482), and the Fourth Zhva-dmar-pa Chos-kyi grags-pa (1453-1524).

Concerning the collection of Tantras of the Early Translations known as *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho states that it had consisted originally of texts belonging to the *bKa' ma* transmission, a great number of *gter-ma* texts being only added for the edition produced at lHun-grub pho-brang by the “treasure-discoverer” (*gter ston*) Ratna gling-pa (1403-1478). He quotes in this respect the *gsan-yig* of the Third Pad-gling gsung-sprul Tshul-khrims rdo-rje (1598-1669), a person occupying a central position in the transmission of this version of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*. Tshul-khrims rdo-rje gave readings of the collection to the previously mentioned sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog rdo-rje and to Gong-ra Lo-chen gZhan-phan rdo-rje (1594-1654); the latter teacher was responsible for transmitting the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* to the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma.⁵

As it is a worthwhile endeavour to look into the list of the *gsan yig* and further literature of the rNying-ma-pa school quoted at the beginning of the section of the different cycles of the Tantras of the Early Translations, I shall present this introduction in appendix I.

The following section, on the Tantras of the Later Translations, is also introduced by a note, albeit a quite short one. The Fifth Dalai Bla-ma makes the point that the transmission of this *rgyud 'bum* collection follows for the greater part the “Tradition of Ngor” (*ngor lugs*), the source for the authenticity of these texts being the *rGyud*

5 F.-K. Ehrhard: “Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the Rnying ma rgyud 'bum from Nepal”. In *Tibetan Studies*, 1 (= Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse Denkschriften, 256 / Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens, 21). Vienna 1997, p. 253, note 1, and p. 256, note 8.

'bum gyi dkar chag of Bu-ston Rin-chen grub (1290-1364). The section ends with a presentation of the different cycles of the Tantras of the Later Translations.

4. THE bKA'-GDAMS-PA LINEAGES AND FURTHER COLLECTIONS

We have now to return to the first part of the comprehensive chapter on the Buddhist doctrine, the one dealing with the “vehicle of the cause”, that is, with the exoteric texts and their transmission lineages. Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho uses here the scheme of the “Six Ornaments” (*rgyan drug*) and the “Two Excellent Ones” (*mchog gnyis*) to sketch the teachings of the most outstanding masters of Indian Buddhism. The notion of the “Two Excellent Ones” refers to the Vinaya teachers Gunaprabha and Śākyaprabha, and the metaphor of the Six Ornaments stands for Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and Dignāga and Dharmakīrti; their names being associated respectively with the basic texts of the Madhyamaka, Abhidharma and Pramāṇa traditions. It has already been observed that the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma replaced the broken *Abhidharmakośa* lineage with the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* lineage – an intriguing case which shows that these lineage lists are not just passive historical sources, but “texts” with interesting histories of their own to tell.⁶⁵

Reading through this part of the *gsan-yig* soon makes it obvious that the transmission lineages pass in a great number of cases through teachers of the bKa'-gdams-pa school. We are thus provided with an instructive picture of the Tibetan traditions and scriptures which adapted the basic Indian sources (for example, in the form of the *blo-sbyong* and *lam-rim* teachings).

The Fifth Dalai Bla-ma refers on several occasions when dealing with these lineages to the *gsan-yig* of one of the Lo-pa sryan-snga—this title of the abbots of Lo-dgon-pa, which was founded in 1095 by sPyan-snga-pa Tshul-khrims 'bar (1038-1103), one of the three well-known disciples of 'Brom-ston rGyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas (1005-1064); the important role of the 20th to 22nd throneholders of Lo-dgon-pa in transmitting the teachings of Po-to-ba (1027/31)—another of the three disciples—has already been noted on the basis of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma's work.⁷ The last section of this part of the work is mainly concerned with the “Hundred-some Small Teachings of Lord [Atiśa]” (*jo bo'i chos chung brgya brtsa*), among which we find the *Bodhisattvamaṅyāvali*, the main literary work of the *bKa' gdams glegs bam* collection of texts. Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho twice critiques the *gsan-yig* of the Second dPa'-bo sPrul-sku gTsong-lag phreng-ba (1504-1566) with regard to this work; these remarks are given in interlinear notes to the main text.⁸

6 D. Martin: “Gray Traces: Tracing the Tibetan Teaching Transmission of the *Mngon pa kun btus* (*Abhidharmasamuccaya*) through the Early Period of Disunity”. In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism* (= Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, 2:10). Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2002, p. 344.

7 P.K. Sørensen: “The Prolific Ascetic lCe-sgom Śes-rab rdo-rje *alias* lCe-sgom zig-po: Allusive, but Elusive” in *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre*, 11, 1999, pp. 183-184, note 11.

8 F.-K. Ehrhard: “The Transmission of the *Thig-le bcu-drug* and the *bKa' gdams glegs bam*”. In

The second part of the comprehensive chapter on the Buddhist doctrine has as its subject the “Vehicle of the Mantras [which is] the Result”. It is divided into the “Secret Mantras Translated Later” (*gsang sngags phyi ’gyur*) and the “Secret Mantras Translated Earlier” (*gsang sngags snga ’gyur*). The first section has again three subdivisions, called “Pronouncements Set Apart” (*zur bka’*), “General Pronouncements” (*spyi bka’*) and “Supplement” (*zhar byung*). The first of these subdivisions deals with the texts and lineages of the four Tantra classes codified by the new translations, namely the Kriya-, Cārya-, Yoga- and Anuttarayogatantras; it takes up most of the first volume of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma’s “record [of teachings] heard”.

The second subdivision is by comparison quite short, describing compilations of Indian tantric teachings and how they were transmitted to Tibet. It begins with the so-called “three cycles” (*skor gsum*) of Abhayākara Gupta (11th/12th cent.)—*Vajrāvalī*, *Jyotirmañjarī* and *Niṣpanṇayogāvalī*—and continues with collections like the *sGrub thabs bsdus pa*, *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* and *sNar thang brgya rtsa*. The final teachings are those of the “direct instructions” (*dmar khrid*) of Mahākaruṇika.

The third subdivision is mainly concerned with the transmission of the “Collected Writings” (*gsung ’bum*) of Tibetan teachers, including the “Five Superior Ones” (*gong ma lnga*) of the Sa-skyapa school and rGyal-sras Thogs-med bzang-po (1295-1369), a teacher of the late bKa’-gdams-pa school. In it we also find lists of the contents of the writings of Bla-ma Zhang g.Yu-brag-pa (1123-1193) and the works of Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa (1357-1419). The section ends with the writings of ’Khon-ston dPal-’byor lhun-grub (1561-1637), which had reached the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma through the rNying-ma-pa master Zur Chos-dbyings rang-grol (1610-1657).

5. THE RNYING-MA-PA TEACHINGS

By far the longest part of the *gsan-yig* of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho is made up of teachings and lineages of the “Secret Mantras Translated Earlier”. This part is structured according to the distinction between “Continuous [Transmission of the] Pronouncements” (*bka’ ma*) and the “Rediscovered [Teachings]” (*gter ma*). The first section contains interesting investigations into the Ati- and Anuyoga traditions, the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, and the *bKa’ brgyad* and *Phur pa* cycles. It also contains details concerning the *g.Yu thog snying thig* of g.Yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po (1127-1203) and the *Bye ba ring bsrel* of Zur mKhar-ba mNyam-nyid rdo-rje (1439-1475), two influential teaching lineages of the Tibetan medical tradition, which the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma was part of.⁹

The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism (= Brill’s Tibetan Studies Library, 2:10). Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2002, pp. 35-36, notes 9 & 11.

9 F.-K. Ehrhard: “A Short History of the *g.Yu thog snying thig*.” In *Indica et Tibetica: Festschrift für Michael Hahn* (= Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, 66). Vienna, 2007, p. 153, note 4.

The section concerning the *gter-ma* teachings is a veritable gold mine for future research on the contents and history of the cycles of individual treasure-discoverers, and the evaluation of this wealth of material has just begun. I may here just refer to the lineage of the Mahākaruṇika teachings of the cycle *Thugs rje chen po 'gro 'dul yid bzhin nor bu* of mNga'-bdag Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer (1124-1196), which played an important role in the history of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* collection; the *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma explicitly states that this lineage was kept alive by members of the Bo-dong-pa school.¹⁰

Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho remarks at the beginning of this section that he used a prayer by one of the exponents of this tradition as a literary source for the presentation of the treasure-discoverers and their “teaching [and] birth lineages” (*chos skye brgyud*). This is the *sPrul sku gter ston grangs nges kyi gsol 'debs*, written by Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal (1550-1602). There also exists a commentary on this prayer with the short title *gTer ston chos 'byung*; it is a composition of Karma Mi-'gyur dbang-gi rgyal-po, one of the teachers of sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog rdo-rje.¹¹

An overview of the complete *gsan-yig* and its individual chapters and subdivisions is presented in appendix II; particular emphasis is laid on the large section concerning the *gter-ma* teachings and the different treasurer-discoverers of the rNying-ma-pa school. The structure of later section should be compared with the prayer of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal.

6. THE COLOPHON AND THE LITERARY SOURCES

The colophon of the *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma informs us that the work was written between the years 1665 and 1670 in the Potala palace, and it provides an exhaustive list of further literary sources used by Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho for its composition. Primarily he relied on the “records [of teachings] heard” of six persons, their bearing qualifying them as “noble mentors” (*yongs 'dzin dam pa*). These were rDo-rje 'chang-pa Pha-bong kha-pa [= 'Khon-ston dPal-'byor lhun-grub], Zur Thams-cad mkhyen-pa [= Zur Chos-dbyings rang-grol], Khyab-bdag gNas-gsar chen-po [= mGon-po bSod-nams mchog-lan (1603-1659)], 'Khor-lo'i mgon-po Zhva-lu mKhan-chen [= Rin-chen bSod-nams mchog-grub (1602-1681)], mKhas-grub chen-po Khra-tshang-pa [= sMan-lung-pa Blo-mchog rdo-rje] and Chos-rgyal gTer-bdag gling-pa [= Padma Gar-dbang 'Gyur-med rdo-rje (1646-1714)].

These teachers belong to the dGe-lugs-pa, the rNying-ma-pa and the Sa-skyapa school of Tibetan Buddhism, a prominent placed being taken by 'Khon-ston dPal-

10 F.-K. Ehrhard: “The Transmission of the *dMar-khrid Tshem-bu lugs* and the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*.” In *Vividharatnakaraṇḍaka: Festgabe für Adeleheid Mette* (= Indica et Tibetica, 37), Swisttal-Odendorf, 2000, p. 209, note 19.

11 D. Martin in collaboration with Y. Bentor: *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*. London 1997, p. 110, no. 229.

'byor lhun-grub, who was holding both teaching lineages of the rNying-ma-pa and dGe-lugs-pa schools and had acted as abbot of Se-ra monastery.¹²

Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho must have been well acquainted with their writings, having composed biographies of five of them, namely the dGe-lugs-pa master, 'Khon-ston dpal-'byor lhun-grub, the Sa-skya-pa masters mGon-po bSod-nams mchog-ldan and Rin-chen bSod-nams mchog-grub (both of whom held the oral transmission of the Tshar-chen tradition), and the rNying-ma-pa masters Zur Chos-dbyings rang-grol and sMan-lung-pa Blo-mchog rdo-rje. Up to now, apparently, only the *gsan-yig* of gTer-bdag gling-pa has surfaced.

As “auxiliary material” (*khol bu*) for the composition of the *gsan-yig*, the corresponding works of eight persons were used. This list starts with Bu-ston Rin-chen grub and Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa and contains, besides a certain Phag-mo-gru mKhan-po 'Bum-ram-pa Kun-dga' Chos-dbang lhun-grub, the names of other well-known teachers of the Sa-skya-pa school. These are Ngor-pa rDo-rje 'chang Kun-dga' bzang-po (1382-1456), the previously mentioned Kun-dga' mam-rgyal—also known as Kun-mkhyen rDo-rje gdan-pa 'Jigs-med dpa'-bo—Zhva-lu sKu-zhang mKhyen-rab Chos-rje [= Rin-chen mKhyen-rab mchog-grub (1436-1497)], rDo-ring Rin-po-che [= Kun-spang Kun-bzang Chos-kyi nyi-ma (1449-1524)] and Tshar-chen [= Chos-rje Blo-gsal rgya-mtsho (1502-1566)].

The longest list of names of authors whose “records [of teachings] heard” the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma used concerns works “analyzed in detail” (*zhib mor dpyad pa*). Here we find, for example, Thams-cad mkhyen-pa mKhyen-brtse dbang-phyug (1524-1568), another member of the Tshar-chen tradition of the Sa-skya-pa school, and rJe Kun-dga' grol-mchog (1507-1566), an important figure of the Jo-nang-pa school, whose *gsan-yig* is available and bears the title *Dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig bstan pa'i nor rdzas*.¹³ This list comprises twenty persons in all, but I will concentrate in the following only on widely known representatives of the rNying-ma-pa school.

The list begins with the name of Ratna gling-pa, the “treasure-discoverer [who is] an incarnation” (*sprul pa'i gter ston*), and ends with the names of Pad-gling gsung-sprul Tshul-khrims rdo-rje and Dar-sdings Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las lhun-grub (1611-1662). We encountered the first two persons earlier in the context of the transmission of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, the *gsan-yig* of these lineage-holders being among those discussed by Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho at the beginning of the presentation of the different cycles of the Tantras of the Early Translations; the one of Pad-gling gsung-sprul is known at least by title: *dKar chag snga 'gyur bstan pa mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*.¹⁴

12 J. Cabezon: “The Life and Lives of 'Khon ston dpal 'byor lhun grub.” *The Tibet Journal*, 34:3-35:2 (= Special Issue: The Earth Ox Papers), 2009-2010, pp. 210-227.

13 E.de Rossi Filibeck: *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of the IsIAO*, vol. 2, 2003, p. 4 [=No. 289/1].

14 S.v. Schaik: “Sun and Moon Earrings: The Teachings Received by 'Jigs-med gling-pa.” *The Tibet Journal*, 25:4, 2000, pp. 7 & 10.

The work of Dar-sdings Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las lhun-grub is compared with that of Gong-ra Lo-chen gZhan-phan rdo-rje; this suggests a relationship between these two masters, and indeed the latter is known to have been the teacher of the former. Also figuring in this line of transmission is Chos-rgyal gTer-bdag gling-pa, whose *gsan-yig* is among those quoted in this section. In treating the different cycles of the doctrine of the "Great Perfection" (*rdzogs chen*), the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma in the end bases his classification on the *gsan-yig* of the treasure-discoverer Ratna gling-pa, whom he quotes under his alternative name, Zhig-po gling-pa Rin-chen dpal-bzang.

In this interesting section are further mentioned the *gsan-yig* of mNga'-ris Pañ-chen Padma dbang-rgyal rdo-rje (1487-1542) and his younger brother Rig-'dzin Legs-ldan bdud-'joms rdo-rje (b. 1512). Their names together with that of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal are also to be found in the list of twenty persons whose works have been "analyzed in detail". All three figures belong to the tradition of the "Northern Treasures" (*byang gter*), which can be described as the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma's preferred lineage among the treasure-cycles of the rNying-ma-pa school. One link in this tradition is Glo-bo dzar-pa sNgags-'chang Chos-rgyal bsod-nams (1442-1509); his name turns up in the mentioned list immediately after that of the treasure-discoverer Ratna gling-pa.

A fourth list of persons contains authors to whose *gsan-yig* the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma had no direct access at the time he composed his work. Here we find two members of the 'Bri-khung-pa and two members of the Sa-skyapa school; these are 'Bri-khung-pa Chos-rgyal Rin-chen phun-tshogs (1509-1557), 'Bri-khung Chos-kyi grags-pa (1595-1661), rTse-gdong Khri-chen Kun-dga' bsod-nams lhun-grub (1571-1642) and Sa-skyapa Khri-chen Ngag-dbang Kun-dga' bsod-nams (1597-1659). The list is rounded out by a certain 'Dar-nag Rig-'dzin rGyal-sras bDe-ba bzang-po.

As the *gsan-yig* of Ngag-dbang Kun-dga' bsod-nams (the renowned Sa-skyapa master and historian generally known under his short name A-mes zhabs) has been discovered recently, it is now possible to investigate in detail the transmissions he was part of, and use them, for example, as source material for bibliographical studies. The twelve lists of teaching lineages given in this particular *gsan-yig* from the 17th century contain transmissions which A-mes zhabs had received from the rTse-gdong Khri-chen Kun-dga' bsod-nams lhun-grub.¹⁵

In the case of Ngag-dbang Kun-dga' bsod-nams the stylistic peculiarities in the presentation of the names of individual teachers have already been investigated, and it has been noted that there exist several ways of "ornamenting" a whole lineage by giving all names in Sanskrit.¹⁶ These kind of stylistic observations could also be

15 J.-U. Sobisch: *Life, Transmission, and Works of A-mes-zhabs Ngag-dbang-kun-dga'-bsod-nams, the great 17th Century Sa-skyapa Bibliophile* (= Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Supplementband 38). Stuttgart 2007, pp. 65-74.

16 J. Kramer: "The *Gsan yig* of A mes zhabs: Observations regarding Their Stylistic and Formal Features." In *Contributions to Tibetan Buddhist Literature* (PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies:

applied to the work of Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtso, an author known for his interest in the Sanskrit language.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Let me close this general survey of the *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma and its literary sources with a note on sNgags-'chang Chos-rgyal bsod-nams, another teacher belonging to the tradition of the Northern Treasures. His name turns up in a quite prominent place in the list of works "analyzed in detail," where he is styled as Glo-bod-dzar-pa. He was thus a native of Southern "Mustang" (*glo bo*) in present-day Nepal, the village of Dzar being located in the Muktināth valley.

There exists biographical material on him which provides some insight into his life. He travelled extensively after his initial training in the remote Himālayas, visiting first the Kathmandu Valley in 1464, where he met Vanaratna (1384-1468), the famous Buddhist Paṇḍita from Chittagong. One year later, in 1465, he received in Central Tibet the name Chos-rgyal bSod-nams from Rin-chen dpal bzang-po (1421/22-1467), the head of the 'Bri-khung-pa school at the time. In 1467 he reached the sacred site of Ri-bo bkra-bzang in La-stod Byang, and there obtained from a teacher called Sangs-rgyas byams-bzang or Sangs-rgyas dpal-bzang the transmissions of the Northern Treasures. Soon afterwards he arrived in rDo-rje gdan, that is, Bodhgāya, in India. Information that he spent one year in China at the famous pilgrimage site Ri-bo rtse-Ingā also survives.¹⁷

The above examples should be ample proof that the enormous seventeenth-century "record [of teachings] heard" composed by the religious and political head of Tibet can shed a good deal of light on rather obscure persons and lineages if supplemented by additional historical sources. In order to get an overview of the whole text and to facilitate further research the internal structure of the complete *gsan-yig* is given in Appendix II.

It has been noted that this work "has some bibliographical importance as it gives the titles of a very large number of works along with the names of their authors and sometimes even the circumstances under which they were compiled", accompanied by the statement that "despite the large number of historical personages mentioned, this extensive work has little historical significance, for it gives nothing more than mere names of these persons."¹⁸ These observations can be seen to reflect a particular period in the development of Tibetan and Buddhist studies, when the literary sources the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma used for the composition of his work were not yet available.

Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006 = Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung, 14). Halle 2008, pp. 506-508.

17 F.-K. Ehrhard: "Two Further Lamas of Dolpo: Ngag-dbang nam-rgyal (born 1628) and rNam-grol bzang-po (born 1504)" in *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre*, 10, 1996, pp. 59-60, note 10.

18 A.I. Vostrikov: *Tibetan Historical Literature* (=Soviet Indology Series, 4). Calcutta 1970, p. 200.

Although we are still far away from the point in time when all these *gsan-yig* will be before us simultaneously, we can at least try to track down the different literary traditions and find out more about the authors and textual transmissions they promulgated. We may be said to be following the example of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma himself and engaging in “comparative *gsan yig*-ology”.

APPENDIX I

Zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gang gā'i chu rgyun, in “The Collected Works (Gsung-'bum) of Vth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho“, vol. 4, Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, 1992, pp. 411.1-412.5:

“The identification to which [section] the individual tantras belong, not only that [they belong] in general to the Great Perfection [teaching], [there exist] many different opinions of the individual ācāryas at the time of [the classification] the three yogas [i.e. Mahā-, Anu- and Atiyoga]. Also concerning the Great Perfection [teaching] there exist in the registers, historical works, records of teachings heard and so forth of the previous masters many expositions of conflicting positions; although they are in reality not contradictory, it is on a provisional level difficult to bring all the different ways of explanation into one agreeing opinion.

Even if these days the textual transmission and the doctrinal transmission, [these] two, [of the teachings contained] in the old historical works and the records of teachings heard of the Paṅ-chen brothers [i.e. mNga'-ris Paṅ-chen Padma dbang-rgyal rdo-rje and Legs-ldan bDud-'joms rdo-rje] are declining [and] even if a clarification of what had been mixed up by the existence of several [opinions] is beyond an object to be judged by the [ordinary] mind, I have analyzed in detail the *Grub mtha' mdzod* of the All-Knowing Dharmarāja Klong-chen Rab-'byams[-pa], the *Chos 'byung rin chen gter mdzod* of rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog rdo-rje rtsal, the stream of the record of teachings received of the great treasure[-discoverer], the Dharmarāja Ratna gling-pa, and the records of teachings heard of mNga'-ris Paṅ-chen Padma dbang-rgyal rdo-rje, the embodiment of the lord, the ruler Khri Srong-ldel[‘u] btsan, and his younger brother, the highest incarnation Legs-ldan bDud-'joms rdo-rje.

In the record of teachings heard of the all-encompassing master, the great sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje, at the very beginning it is aimed to analyse in detail [the contents of the Collected Tantras of the Early Translations], but through the activities of teaching, hearing, meditating [and] realizing [the Buddhist doctrine] he left [in the end the task alone] by becoming completely inattentive [to it], following verbatim the unchanged record of teachings obtained of Gong-ra Lo-tsa-ba [gZhan-phan rdo-rje]. And also the records of teachings heard of Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las lhun-grub, the one from Dar-rgyas chos-ldings [in Grva-nang], aside from the introduction

and the lineage of the teachers it seems something which left unchanged just that [work] of the one from Gong-ra [= gZhan-phan rdo-rje]. In this [work] of the one from Gong-ra there is no clarification to which section some of the tantras belong and [there are] little conventions for identifying [them] besides many unnecessary words, like in [the case of] some of the tantras of the Mental Class [of the Great Perfection teaching]: “not sufficient [to be included and thus] left out”, and in [the case] of some [others tantras]: “where do you originate from?”, and “I do not know to tell if most of it should be contained here”, and “in this part of the tantra it is said that these [are] sealed [chapters]” and so forth; and on the occasion of the transmission saying: “whatever transmission among [them]”, by mentioning [only] the name of just each tantra. Having quoted [these statements] it appears as a very great mistake without a reason of pointing a finger [in the sense of] such a teaching and transmission.

The actual record of teachings heard of gSung-sprul Tshul-khrims rdo-rje, although it exists in a pure manner based [on the fact] that on a variety of clear and unclear [things], including the marks and the distinctions of the individual groups in the teaching section above, the transmissions are enumerated all in one below, and thus there exist a variety of unrecognized teachings and transmissions of the cycle of the Great Perfection [teaching].

Therefore, not being enough that the Vidyādhara Ratna gling-pa is in general an unerring great treasure-discoverer, as he has performed something like rekindling in a proper way the ashes and bringing to life again the teachings of the Collected Tantras of the Early Translations, I have based myself on the stream of the records of teachings heard of the treasure discoverer Zhig-po gling-pa Rin-chen dpal-bzang and have brought about [the following chapter] also in accordance with the historical works and other authentic records of teachings heard.”

(rgyud so so gang du gtogs kyi ngos 'dzin spyir rdzogs chen du ma zad yo ga gsum ga'i skabs slob dpon so so'i bzhed tshul mi 'dra ba mang zhing / rdzogs chen skor la'ang gong ma rnams kyi dkar chags chos byung gsan yig sogs su dgongs bzhed mi mthun pa'i rnam grangs mang ba 'dug pa don la mi 'gal yang gnas skabs su dgongs pa 'grel tshul ma gcig pa mtha' dag dgongs mthun phyogs gcig tu sgrig dka' zhing / chos 'byung rnying pa rnams dang paṅ chen sku mched kyi gsan yig tshor deng sang dpe rgyun chos rgyun gnyis ka nub pa'ang kha shas yod 'dre ba sogs nas mtha' chod pa zhig blos dpog pa'i yul las 'das na'ang / kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po klong chen rab 'byams kyi grub mtha' mdzod / rgyal ba'i sras po thugs mchog rdo rje rtsal gyis mdzad pa'i chos 'byung rin chen gter mdzod / gter chen chos kyi rgyal po ratna gling pa'i gsan yig gi rgyun / rje mnga' bdag khri srong lde btsan gyi yang srid mnga' ris paṅ chen padma dbang rgyal rdo rje dang gcung mchog gi sprul sku legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje gnyis kyi gsan yig sogs la zhib mor dpyad / khyab bdag sman lung pa chen po blo gros mchog gi rdo rje'i gsan yig tu thog mar zhib dpyod bzhed pa la 'chad nyan sgom sgrub sogs 'phrin las kyis mam par g.yengs pa'i btang snyoms su lus te gong ra lo tsā ba'i thob yig sor bzhag bshus pa yin tshul dang / dar rgyas chos ldings pa rigs (= rig) 'dzin 'phrin las lhun grub kyi gsan yig kyang 'go brjod dang

bla brgyud tsam ma gtogs gong ra ba'i de ga sor bzhag yin 'dug pa / gong ra ba'i der [412] rgyud la la sde tshan 'dir gtogs kyi gsal kha'ang med cing sems phyogs kyi rgyud 'gar ma ldangs lhag la zhes pa dang 'ga' rer khyed rnams gang nas phebs dang 'dir bzhugs cher zhu ma shes pa dang / rgyud ler rgya can 'di rnams zer ba sogs dgos med kyi tshig mang ba las gcig tu ngos 'dzin gyi tha snyad chung ba dang brgyud pa'i skabs rgyud re re tsam gyi ming smos te sogs khongs nas ci rigs pa'i brgyud pa ni / zhes drangs nas chos dang brygud pa shig mdzub sprod rgyu med pa'i zom skyon shin tu che bar snang / gsung sprul tshul khirms rdo rje'i gsan yig dngos ni sgros gtsang ba 'dug kyang gong gi chos tshan rnams la sde so so'i dbye ba dang rtags sogs gsal mi gsal sna tshogs la gsham du brgyud pa rnams sdebs su bgrangs par brten rdzogs chen skor gyi chos dang brygud pa ngo 'phrod mi 'phrad sna tshogs shig 'dug pas / rigs (= rig) 'dzin ratna gling pa spyir 'khrul med kyi gter ston chen po yin par ma zad snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum gyi bstan pa'i me ro legs par bsos te srog 'thud pa lta bur mdzad pa nas gter ston zhig po gling pa rin chen dpal bzang gi gsan yig gi rgyun la gzhi byas / chos 'byung dang gsan yig khungs thub gzhan rnams dang yang bstun te bkod pa la).

Next to the *gsan-yig* literature two works are especially noted by the Fifth Dalai Lama for his assessment of the teachings of the rNying-ma-pa school. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa and the *Chos 'byung rin chen gter mdzod* of rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog rtsal; this statement makes clear that these two teachers are not identical and that Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa is not the author of the latter work. Recent research has tackled this problem once again, coming to the result that the *Chos 'byung rin chen gter mdzod* must have been composed in the year 1422 and that rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog rtsal figures as an important teacher of a Great Perfection doctrine known as “cycle of the six lamps of the clear light” (*'od gsal sgron ma drug pa'i skor*).¹⁹

The *gSan-yig* of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho offers a description of this cycle, based on several writings of rGyal-sras Thugs-mchog rtsal; see the text (as above), vol. 3, pp.208.4-215.2. The name is given in this section as Ri-phug rGyal-sras rDo-rje Thugs-mchog rtsal, which suggests an association of this teacher with [Zhva-lu] Ri-phug/Ri-sbug in gTsang. The Fifth Dalai Bla-ma had received this transmission from his teacher sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje, who was holding this particular lineage through his teacher Ngag-dbang don-grub rgyal-mtshan; this is mentioned in the biography of sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje, written by Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho in the year 1676; see *Nyang ston khra tshang pa blo gros mchog gi rdo rje'i rtogs pa brjod pa nyung ngu rnam gsal*, in “The Collected Works (Gsung-'bum) of Vth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho”, vol. 9, Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology”, 1992, p.

19 L.W.J v.d. Kuijp, “On the Authorship and Date of the Ecclesiastic Chronicle *Chos 'byung rin po che'i gter mdzod bstan pa gsal bar byed pa'i nyi 'od*”. In *Tibetstudien: Festschrift für Dieter Schuh zum 65. Geburtstag*. Bonn, 2008, pp.132-146.

307.1-2: "... the complete empowerment and [reading-] authorization of the secret cycle of the Great Perfection as transmitted from rDo-rje Thugs-mchog rtsal, the Jinaputra from Ri-sbug" (... *ri sbug pa rgyal sras rdo rje thugs mchog rtsal nas brgyud pa'i rdzogs chen gsang skor gyi dbang lung yongs rdzogs*).

This biography contains further comparative materials, including details on the *gsan-yig* of sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje and the transmission of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* as received by him. We are thus informed that the record of teachings heard of Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje was the only volume of his writings, executed by a disciple and close attendant who acted as head of the monastery Gong-ra Nges-gsang rdo-rje gling in gTsang after sMan-lung-pa's death. See the text of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma (as above), p. 252.4-5: "Although the resident teacher sMar Ngag-dbang thub-bstan had stayed a long time as an attendant [in the company of Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje], aside from the plan of just a great paper [in the form] of a letter [which was] the seed [of a biography], [such a task] did not enter his mind and there came about only the volume of the record of the teachings heard [of the master]." (... *gdan sa ba smar ngag dbang thub bstan gyis sa bon 'phrin shog che ba tsam gyis rtsis las zhabs phyir yun ring bsad kyang blor ma 'jags tshul dang gsan yig gi glegs bam las ma byung ...*).

Concerning the transmission of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* associated with the names of sMan-lung-pa Blo-gros mchog gi rdo-rje and Gong-ra Lo-tsā-ba gZhan-phan rdo-rje it is stated that they had received the reading authorization from gSung-sprul Tshul-khrims rdo-rje with the addition of ten volumes as transmitted by a teacher from the monastery of Yon-po do in Yar-'brog. See the text of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma (as above), p. 294.2-3: "In the presence of Tshul-khrims rdo-rje, the speech incarnation of [Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa], he obtained the pronouncement of the Buddhist doctrine including the reading[-authorization] of the Collected Tantras of the Old Ones, which was a close transmission from the Dharmarāja Ratna gling-pa, and [the treasure cycle] *Nor bu rgya mtsho* of [Rig-'dzin] Padma gling-pa. And at the time when he heard together with Gong-ra Lo-chen [gZhan-phan rdo-rje] the reading[-authorization] of the remaining ten volumes of the Collected Tantras [of the Old Ones] from the great teacher bKra-shis lhun-grub, the one from Yon-po do in Yar-'brog" (*pad gling gsung sprul tshul khrims rdo rje 'i drung du chos rgyal ratna gling pa nas nye bar brgyud pa'i rnying ma rgyud 'bum gyi lung dang padma gling pa'i nor bu rgya mtsho sogs kyi chos bka' nod par mdzad / yar 'brog yon po do pa bla chen bkra shis lhun grub la rgyud 'bumpo ti bcu lhag gi lung gong ra lo chen dang chabs gcig par gsan pa'i dus*).

It is known that this later edition of the Collected Tantras of the Early Translations had been produced by mDo-sngags 'byung-gnas, regarded as an embodiment of the treasure-discoverer Rig-'dzin mChog-ldan mgon-po.²⁰

20 F.-K. Ehrhard, "Addressing Tibetan Rulers from the South: mChog-ldan mgon-po (1497-1532) in the Hidden Valleys of Bhutan." In *Chomolungma, Demawend and Kasbek: Festschrift für Roland Bielmeier* (= Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung, 12). Halle 2008, p. 64, note 4.

Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho himself obtained the transmission from Blo-gros mchog-gi rdo-rje during one of the latter's sojourns in the Potala palace which took place on a yearly basis during the period from 1660-1666; see the text of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma (as above), p. 328.3: "I requested the incomparable kindness of the noble doctrine [from Blo-gros mchog gi rdo-rje] exemplified by the complete bKa'-gyur—except of some volumes of the Collected Tantras of the New Mantras which I had obtained earlier—and some volumes of the Collected Tantras of the Old Ones." (*sngags gsar ma'i rgyud 'bum sngar thob pa'i po ti 'ga' zhid ma gtogs bka' 'gyur yongs rdzogs / rnying ma rgyud 'bum po ti kha yar gyis mtshon dam pa'i chos kyi bka' 'drin zla med pa zhus*).

APPENDIX II

In an informative list with the title "Tibetan Transmission Records (*gsan-yig* and *thob-yig*)" Dan Martin and Bryan J. Cuevas have collected a fair amount of records of teachings heard of different Tibetan authors and provided in some cases also an overview of the contents of the texts. This list includes the *gsan-yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma, making use of the xylograph edition of the four volumes published by Nechung and Lhakar in Delhi in the year 1970. The following table of contents provides the internal structure of the text and is based on the xylograph edition of the four volumes published by the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok in the years 1991-1992. In order to document the great number of persons listed in the chapter on the treasure tradition I have also noted treasure discoverers, when only their names are mentioned, although the actual transmission had not reached Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho.

Verses and Introduction	I:2-18
bstan par 'jug pa'i sgo so so thar pa'i sdom rgyun	I:19-26
zhugs nas thos bsam bya ba gnas lnga rig pa'i skor	I:26-IV: 288
thun mong pa'i rig pa'i gnas	I: 26-43
thun mong ma yin pa nang rig pa	I: 43-IV: 288
rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa	I: 43-101
'bras bu sngags kyi theg pa	I: 101-IV: 288
gsang sngags phyi 'gyur	I:102-II: 316
zur bka'	I:102-II: 23
bya ba'i rgyud	I:102-227
spyod pa'i rygud	I: 227-230
mal 'byor rgyud	I: 230-240
mal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud	I: 240-II: 23
pha rgyud	I: 240-343
ma rgyud	I: 343-837

'dus kyi 'khor lo skor	II: 4-23
spyi bka'	II: 23-86
zhar byung	II: 86-316
gsang sngags snga 'gyur	II:316-IV:288
rgya che ba bka' ma	II: 316-478
zab pa gter ma	II:478-IV:288
rDor-'bum chos-grags	II:479-489
lHa-gcig Kun-dga' 'bum	II:489-482
Nyang Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer	II:492-624
Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug	II:624-768
sPrul-sku bZang-po grags-pa	II:768-773
Dum-pa rGya Zhang-khrom	III:2-108
Padma dbang-phyug	III:109-158
Gu-ru Tshe-brtran rgyal-mtshan	III:110-126
sNye-mo rGya-gong ri-pa	III:126-130
Grub-thob dNgos-grub	III:130-153
dGe-bshes Dri-'dzin tshe	III:153
Gru-gu Ang-dbang	III:153-158
Byang-chub gling-pa	III:158-175
Nyi-zla sangs-rgyas	III:175-176
Zla-ban gZi-brjid 'bar	III:176-177
lHo-yi ban-de	III:177.3
Rog-ban 'Bog-po	III:177.3
Sar-ston Phyogs-med	III:177-182
lDang-ma lhun-rgyal	III:182.-208
lCe-sgom nag-po & Zhang-ston	III:208-215
Grub-thob Me-long rdo-rje	III:215-221
Dung-mtsho ras-pa	III:221
sGom-pa g.Yu-sgom rdo-rje	III:221
Rig-'dzin rGod-kyi phru-can	III:221-349
Ba-mkhal smug-po	III:346
dPal-ldan 'Jam-dbyangs bla-ma	III:346-348
Gu-ru Ye-shes khyung-grags	III:348-349
Sangs-rgyas 'bar	III:349
g.Yung-ston mGon-po rgyal	III:349
Ra-shag gter-ston Chos-'bar	III:349-350
Zla-ba rdo-rje	III:350
rGya-gar gter-ston Vajramati	III:350-351
Khyung-po thig-le	III:351
Bal-po Bhā-ro-ba	III:351
Shud-phu dPal-gyi grags-pa	III:351
Atiśa	III:351-352

lHa-btsun Byang-chub 'od	III:352
rDo-rje 'od	III:352
'Brom Chos-kyi snying-po	III:352
'Brog-mi Lo-tsā-ba	III:353
lHa-btsun sNgon-mo	III:353
Sum-pa Byang-chub blo-gros	III:353-367
Se-ston ring-mo	III:367
Khams-ston Khal me-'bar	III:367
rGyang-grags 'od-zer	III:367
'Od-zer ston-pa	III:367
mNga'-bdag Mol-mi 'khyil	III:367
Du-gu Rin-chen seng-ge	III:367-374
Śākya-'od alias Śākya bzang-po	III:374-376
gTsang-ring Shes-rab	III:376
La-stod sPrul-sku dmar-po	III:376-380
rKyang-po Grags-pa dbang-phyug,	
Sum-pa Byang-chub tshul-khrims	
& 'Bro Shes-rab bla-ma	III:380-397
Bla-ma Grum & Nag-po mkhar	III:397-398
sKye-ban rDo-rje btsun-chung,	
Mi-nag Grags-'byung, Gar-ston	
Mkhar & Avadhūti-pa	III:398-399
sGom-chen 'Brug-pa &	
gNyan-ston Dzambhala	III:399
Don-grub seng-ge &	
Padma grags-pa	III:399
sPrul-sku Las-'brel rtsal	III:399-451
Sho-ban legs-ldan	III:451-452
Zangs-ri ras-pa	III:452
dBang Śākya Nyi-'bum khri	III:452
Pra-dun-pa gsum	III:452
gNyan-pa Nyi-ma shes-rab	III:452-453
Gra-pa mNgon-shes	III:454-462
Ra-mo shes-sman	III:462
Sum-ston Ye-shes gzungs	III:462
Brang-ti mkhar-bu	III:462
Nyang-ring Shes-rab grags	III:462
gTsang-ston Chos-'bar	III:462
Bon-ston Hūṃ-'bar	III:463-466
sKal-ldan Byis-pa	III:466-467
gTer-ston Gu-ru Jo-ttse	III:467-468
gNyal-zhig Nyi-ma seng-ge	III:468

gNyal-pa Jo-sras	III:468-470
sPrul-sku Shes-rab me-'bar	III:470-473
gTer-ston Khams-pa Me-zor	III:473
'Brog-pa sNa-nam Thub-rgyal	III:473-474
gNyan Lo-tśā-ba Darma grags	III:474-476
gTer-ston g.Yas-ban Yar-bon	III:476-477
Bal-po A-hūm	III:477-478
rGya-ban rDo-rje 'od	III:478-479
A-jo dpal-po	III:479-480
Bla-ma Zangs-ri-ba	III:480
dBang-chen bzang-po	III:480
Bon-po Drag-rtsal	III:480-481
Zangs-gling dbang-phyug	III:481
sBur-po Bya'u-mgon	III:481-482
Lang-bon Ri-khrod seng-ge	III:482-483
Thang-stong rgyal-po	III:483-464
Drang-srong Don-grub	III:484-485
O-rgyan gling-pa	III:485-491
Sangs-rgyas gling-pa	III:491-557
rDo-rje gling-pa	III:557-583
Padma Kun-skyong gling-pa	III:583-589
Rin-chen gling-pa	III:589-595
Ratna gling-pa	III:595-718
Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa	III:716-IV:88
Karma gling-pa	IV:88-93
Las-'phro gling-pa (five persons bearing this name)	IV:93-101
bSam-gtan gling-pa	IV:101
sPrul-sku bsTan-gnyis gling-pa	IV:101-111
Dri-med 'od-zer (= Klong chen-pa)	IV:111-159
Dri-med kun-dga'	IV:159-165
Dri-med lhun-po	IV:165-172
mChog-ldan mgon-po	IV:175
sNgags-'chang Śākya bzang-po	IV:175
mNga'-ris Paṇ-chen	IV:175-200
Legs-ldan bDud-'joms rdo-rje	IV:200-223
Rin-chen phun-thogs	IV:223-244
Shes-rab 'od-zer	IV:244-261
Chos-rgyal bKra-shis stobs-rgyal	IV:261-278
Yol-mo-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu	IV:278-280
gTer-bdag gling-pa	IV:280-288
bka' 'gyur ro cog gi skor	IV:288-728

snga 'gyur gyi rgyud	IV:391-611
rdzogs chen a ti yo ga	IV:404-487
yang ti'i skor	IV:412-429
spyi ti'i skor	IV:429-437
man ngag sde'i skor	IV:437-453
klong sde'i skor	IV:453-461
soms sde'i skor	IV:461-487
rlung a nu yo ga	IV:487-501
bskyed pa ma hā yo ga	IV:501-611
phyi 'gyur gyi rgyud	IV:611-728
rnal 'byor bla med kyi rgyud	IV:611-654
rnal 'byor gyi rgyud	IV:654-662
spyod pa'i rygud	IV:662-665
bya ba'i rgyud	IV:665-728
Verses and Colophon	IV:728-734

REINCARNATION AND THE GOLDEN URN IN THE 19th CENTURY: THE RECOGNITION OF THE 8th PANCHEN LAMA

ELLIOT SPERLING

Anachronistic elements abound in different aspects of the present-day Tibet issue and perhaps nowhere is this more strikingly obvious than with regard to the question of reincarnation, i.e., the means by which the incarnations of high-ranking lamas are recognized and accorded both sectarian and popular legitimacy. This has been a particularly charged issue and the source of tremendous tensions and rancor since 1995, when the Chinese government—hardly renowned for traditional sympathy to religion—accorded recognition to a young boy as the incarnation of the late Panchen Lama, in outright opposition to the Dalai Lama's recognition of another child as the sought-for incarnation.

The rationale for the dismissal of the Dalai Lama's choice, according to the Chinese government, was his disregard for traditional practices in the recognition of high incarnations.¹ It goes without saying that the underlying—albeit, quite obvious—reason was the need for the Chinese government to retain control over the structure and content of the Buddhist apparatus insofar as what are perceived as state interests were concerned. And permitting the Dalai Lama—residing outside the People's Republic of China and beyond its direct control—a role in this important process was unacceptable. The politicization of certain elements of Tibetan Buddhism has been a given for decades, of course, and at times has manifested itself in some rather pointed pronouncements about the approved role of the religion, such as those asserting a link between fidelity to Buddhism and patriotism.²

Importantly, the Chinese government maintained that Tibetan incarnations needed to be selected through the drawing of lots or tally sticks from a "Golden Urn" (Ch. *jinping* 金瓶; Tib. *gser-'bum*), a procedure that had been ordained by the Qing

1 Ainam, "How the Soul Boy of the 10th Bainqen is Determined," *China's Tibet* 7.1 (1996), p. 9: "There was no historical precedence [*sic*] indicating that the Dalai could nominate the reincarnated soul boy of the Bainqen."

2 Hua Zi, "Tashilhunpo Monastery: Ceremony Unveils The Gold-Character Board," *China's Tibet* 7.4 (1996), p. 4: "Safeguard the Country and Benefit the People is a praise [*sic*] of the patriotic tradition of the religious people;" Hua Zi, "Another Grand Event of Tibetan Buddhism—The 11th Bainqen Erdeni Initiated into Monkhood," *China's Tibet* 7.4 (1996), p. 9, describes Buddhist authorities in China "wishing that the 11th bainqen Erdeni would continue to study hard and be a Living Buddha who loves the country and Tibetan Buddhism."

Dynasty at the end of the 18th century. Thus, the Dalai Lama was castigated for his wanton violation of the requisite norms for identifying the Panchen Lama:³ rather than awaiting the verdict of the Golden Urn, he had made a choice based upon his own divinations and consultations with representatives of Bkra-shis lun-po. It is not possible to deal with all elements of this issue in this short paper. Rather, I would like to turn to one or two strands of the story found in Tibetan historical materials.

The way in which the use of the Golden Urn came to be mandated for the selection of Tibetan incarnations has a generally well-known common explanation: in the aftermath of the Qing campaign against the Gurkha state in Nepal, the Qing court made a sweeping reassessment of Tibetan affairs, seeking to find a way of understanding what circumstances had left it with no option but to mount a difficult and costly military expedition to the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley. The Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor (1711-1799; r. 1736-1799) was particularly exasperated with the state of affairs at the upper levels of the Tibetan government and considered the selection of incarnate lamas and lay ministers to both be subject to corrupt influences. In 1793 the emperor promulgated articles that comprised the “Twenty-Nine Regulations for Resolving Tibetan Matters” (Ch. *Qinding Zangnei shanhou zhangcheng ershijiu tiao* 欽定藏內善後章程二十九條).⁴

The formulation of the various articles is reflected in a variety of Qing sources, such as the *Wei-Zang tongzhi* 衛藏通志 and others.⁵ However, such sources have not contained a complete Chinese-language text of the regulations. Perhaps the most thorough study of them, a series of articles by Liao Zugui 廖祖桂, Li Yongchang 李永昌, and Li Pengnian 李鵬年, published in *Zhongguo Zangxue* 中国藏学 in 2002 and 2004,⁶ makes it clear that the complete texts which have been cited in various Chinese publications since the 1950s are translations from two somewhat different Tibetan-language copies of the regulations. While several memorials on the reform of Tibetan affairs are extant, including those drawn up by the Manchu general Fu Kang'an 福康安 and the Grand Secretary of the Grand Secretariat (Ch. *Neige daxueshi* 內閣大學士) Heshen 和珅 and others,⁷ the actual, final regulations are

3 See Doje Cedain, “The Dalai’s Disregard for Precedence,” *China’s Tibet* 7.3 (1996), pp. 2-6.

4 The very first of the regulations specifically refers to the need to avoid deceit (*ham-rdzun*) in choosing the incarnations of high lamas. See Liao Zugui 廖祖桂, Li Yongchang 李永昌, and Li Pengnian 李鵬年, “«Qinding Zangnei shanhou zhangcheng ershijiu tiao» banben kaolue (1)” «欽定藏內善後章程二十九條» 版本考略 (一), *Zhongguo Zangxue* 中国藏学 2004.2, pp. 36-37;

5 See the various statutes derived from the regulations in Songyun 松筠, *Wei-Zang tongzhi* 衛藏通志 (Taipei, 1965), 12.1a-17a.

6 Liao Zugui 廖祖桂, Li Yongchang 李永昌, and Li Pengnian 李鵬年, “«Qinding Zangnei shanhou zhangcheng ershijiu tiao» banben kaolue” «欽定藏內善後章程二十九條» 版本考略, *Zhongguo Zangxue* 中国藏学 2002.3, pp. 50-54; 2004.2, pp. 30-43; 2004.3, pp. 69-87; and 2004.4, pp. 57-75

7 See the long 19-point memorial on reforming Tibetan affairs composed in 1789 by Heshen and others in *Zhongguo Zangxue yanjiu zhongxin* 中国藏学研究中心, et al., eds., *Yuan yilai*

available only in these Tibetan copies, one of which can be found in the volume *Xizang lishi dang'an huicui* 西藏历史档案荟萃 [= *Bod-kyi lo-rgyus yig-tshags gces-bsdus*; *A Collection of Historical Archives of Tibet*].⁸

The articles covered a wide variety of subjects, including military affairs, taxation, and, as noted, the appointment of secular officials and the selection of high-ranking incarnate lamas. During the time the regulations were being drawn up one of the Tibetan ministers considered responsible for the Gurkha war was being investigated in Beijing. I have elsewhere commented on Qianlong's observations on that case and on Tibetan official corruption and incompetence in general during this period.⁹

The regulations for selecting Lamas were quite clear: the names of the candidates were to be put into a Golden Urn granted by the emperor as soon as those names were adduced by the four great oracles of Tibet. If all four agreed on one candidate, then that candidate's name would be entered into the urn, along with a blank wooden tally slip. The choosing of the blank slip would eliminate the chosen candidate, regardless of the inclinations of the oracles. When used in the cases of high Dge-lugs-pa incarnations, the names of the candidates were to be written in Manchu, Chinese and Tibetan.¹⁰

The position of some has been that the use of the Golden Urn was generally ignored or carried out in a few rare cases simply pro forma.¹¹ While Qing authority went into a deep decline after the mid-19th century, the dynasty did exert influence in Tibetan affairs. And in the 19th century the Golden Urn was used in selecting incarnations. Indeed, in 1814/1815 the Qing resident officials in Tibet, the *Amban* (Ch. *zhu Zang dachen* 駐藏大臣), had a register of incarnate lamas compiled bearing the title *Bod dang/ Bar-khams/ Rgya Sog bcas-kyi bla-sprul-rnams-kyi skye-phreng deb-gzhung*.¹² The register contained the names and different incarnations of the lamas within the various incarnation lineages and, as concerned the most recent incarnations, noted whether they had been recognized via the use of the Golden Urn. And in fact, the lamas who were young enough to have been affected by the 1793

Xizang difang yu zhongyang zhengfu guanxi dang'an shiliao huibian 元以来西藏地方与中央政府关系当案史料汇编 (Beijing, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 641-654. See the memorials by Fu Kang'an on pp. 713-723. On Heshen, see Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Qing Period* (Taibei, 1970), pp. 288-290; on Fu Kang'an see pp. 253-255;

8 *Xizang zizhiqu dang'anguan* 西藏自治区档案馆 [= *Bod rang-skyong-ljongs yig-tshags-khang*; The Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region], *Xizang lishi dang'an huicui* 西藏历史档案荟萃 [= *Bod-kyi lo-rgyus yig-tshags gces-bsdus*; *A Collection of Historical Archives of Tibet*] (Beijing, 1995), doc. 50.

9 Elliot Sperling, "Awe and Submission: A Tibetan Aristocrat at the Court of Qianlong," *International Review of History* 20 (1998), pp. 325-335.

10 Liao Zugui, et al., *op. cit.*, 2004.2, pp. 36-37.

11 E.g., Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet. A Political History* (New Haven, 1967), pp. 174-176; and Hugh Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York, 1962), pp. 70-71.

12 *Bod dang/ Bar-khams/ Rgya Sog bcas-kyi bla-sprul-rnams-kyi skye-phreng deb-gzhung*, in *Bod-kyi gal-che'i lo-rgyus yig-cha bdams-bsgrigs* (Lhasa, 1991), pp. 281-369. The register was revised in 1820/1821.

regulations had been recognized using the Golden Urn. These included quite a number of important lamas, such as the Karma-pa.¹³

With regard to the use of the Golden Urn in the recognition of the Dalai Lamas, we have evidence from the biographies of the 9th through the 13th Dalai Lamas that indicates that the authority of the Qing in Tibet during the 19th century was such that due acknowledgement had to be accorded the Golden Urn as a procedural tool mandated by the emperor. As will be seen below, it was indeed used in confirming the recognition of most of the Dalai Lamas during this period. With regard to the Panchen Lamas, we find evidence that is particularly unequivocal when we look at the recognition of the 8th Panchen Lama, Bstan-pa'i dbang-phyug (1855-1882), the first to have the Golden Urn figure in his recognition. Given that the present *contretemps* over the issue began with the recognition of the present Panchen Lama in 1995, it is appropriate to look closely at the circumstances of the use of the Golden Urn when it was first introduced into the process of recognizing a Panchen Lama. But such appropriateness aside, the account of the recognition of the 8th Panchen Lama is important for what it tells us about the attitudes of the Tibetan clerics participating in the process with regard to the use of the Golden Urn.

The nuances derived from examining this particular instance of the urn's use add an important element to the usual understanding that the Golden Urn was implemented simply as one of many measures intended to deal with a debilitatingly corrupt Tibetan state of affairs. This is surely a part of the issue. But there is more. And it is linked to the religious identity of the Qing ruler, specifically the Qianlong Emperor. For this we need only turn to the biography of the 8th Panchen Lama and its description of the circumstances of the lama's discovery, recounted in large part in a missive from one of the administrators at Bkra-shis lhun-po in the period following the death of the 7th Panchen Lama in 1853. The missive, meant for presentation to the Qing *Amban* in Lhasa is quoted in the biography:

[39r] Thus, the master, Dbyings-sa No-min-han, etc., came and then from among the Brul-tshang, Ri-sbug and Rtsed-gdongs boys, the three who had been investigated, as well as the two children from the Dbus region of Tshag-gur-zhag-pa and Dngos-grub sdings who [emerged] through examinations by the regent Rwa-sgreng, the great Vajradhāra, along with the high steward and aristocratic monk, Mgon-po, there were [finally] two, the aforementioned Brul[-tshang] child and the [Tshag-]gur-zhag child, who were, through it all, greatly miraculous. And via a message the Great Emperor was also asked to attend to the recognition of these two.

Thus, in the Fire-Dragon Year [1856-1857], so that the recognition could be well prepared beforehand, the venerable Dbyings-sa, in connection with the orders, had the *rtse-phyag mkhan-po* Dka'-chen chos-mdzad go to *gung*

13 Ibid, p. 291-292.

Bshad-sgra's residence in Shel-dkar, specifically to request his impressions of what was in the messages [Tib. *wang-zhu* = 文書] along with other instructions. Similarly, [39v] the venerable lord, *gung* Bshad-sgra, also, with regard to route descriptions, places of residence, etc., i.e., Chinese and Tibetan ways of doing [such things], promulgated secret instructions that stood by themselves and transmitted them to the ears of the venerable Dbyings-sa. Again, together with the great steward Dpal-ldan shes-rab, he travelled to Lhasa; on that occasion he had to come to hear a report of the message of the Great Emperor, transmitted via the senior *Amban*.

Starting on the 22nd day of the 6th month of the Fire-Dragon Year [July 24, 1856], in conjunction with the trip to Lhasa, he presented a missive to the high officials stationed in Lhasa by imperial order, i.e., the [senior and assistant] *Amban* together as follows:

Rnam-rgyal chos-'phel, the *Ze-le-spen no-min-han* of Bkra-shis lhun-po has written: "With regard to the supreme incarnation of the Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni, the excellent, golden words of the Heavenly Divinity, the Mañjuśośa Emperor and Great Lord, have come upon the crown of our heads and holding in our hearts the instructions of the [previous] Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni himself and adhering diligently to the rites of dharma practice, we divided up and dispatched people to investigate what miraculous children there are..." etc. And so the parents, times of birth, and the signs accompanying the births of the two children from Brul-tshang and Tshag-gur-zhag were recorded. Afterwards a request was made to the Precious Dalai Lama, Refuge and Protector, to look into the matter and determine whether the Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni, Refuge and Protector, was unmistakably to be found among these two children. [40r] On the 13th day of the 12th month of the Wood-Hare Year [January 19, 1856] he responded: "I've diligently investigated and the incarnation of the Omniscient Panchen is among the two children; this is quite likely. Thus it can be reported to the Emperor..." etc.

Afterwards, on further investigation, [it was ascertained that] after the 6th Panchen Er-te-ni Blo-bzang dpal-ldan ye-shes had travelled to meet the Great Lord Qianlong [Tib. Gnam-skyong] and on that occasion passed away in the imperial capital, his incarnation, the 7th, Blo-bzang dpal-ldan bstan-pa'i nyi-ma phyogs-las rnam-rgyal dpal bzang-po, was born and the suspected candidates, and the bases for their being suspected and all, were reported via the imperially-appointed high officials [i.e., the *Amban*] to the Emperor, in response to which there came an excellent imperial edict [dated] the 20th day of the 12th month of the 47th year of Qianlong [=January 22, 1783]:¹⁴ "No sooner had I opened and looked at the missive presented

¹⁴ It is assumed that the date here is given according to the Chinese calendar, given the use of the reign title Qianlong. If it is the Tibetan calendar that is meant the date would be January 23, 1783, one day later.

to me about deciding upon the unmistakable incarnation of the very Panchen Lama who had been here in Beijing [*Pi-cin nge-can* = *Pi-cin nges-can*] than I saw immediately that there had been born, on the 8th day of the 4th month of the Tiger Year [May 20, 1782],¹⁵ a child in Bsname-skyid gshong in Gtsang to the father *sde-pa* Dpal-ldan don-grub and the mother 'Chi-med rgyal-mo. Immediately I thought 'this is the incarnation!'" With the wisdom of great insight [the Emperor] discerned the matter and [40v] immediately made for [the child's] nomination to the throne, as made clear in the text. And with [shouts of]: "Long life to the one and only Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni!" I and other followers and attendants [after reading the Emperor's words] made prayers for [the sought-for Panchen Lama's] long life, for his extensive works, etc., and that in the future, when this very Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni came [back] to work for the benefit of others, his incarnation would be identified correctly. Later instructions [from the 6th Panchen Lama] had said that: "If it is suspected that a most miraculous child has appeared as my rebirth, when a report is made to the Great Lord Emperor, then in accord with the order that the decision on my recognition shall be made by the Divine Heavenly Father, the Great Lord Qianlong [Tib. Chan-lung], the grace of investigation and recognition of the candidate suspected to be the incarnation [*skye-srid*] by the Great Lord Emperor with his complete wisdom shall be sought; and however the instructions come down, if the birth is recognized and decided thusly all will be fulfilled."

Thus was it stated. And so, with regard to the present incarnation and in harmony with earlier good customs, the [previous] Paṅ-chen Er-te-ni himself has taught that imperial orders obtained concerning investigation by the Great Emperor through his complete wisdom were the most revered hope of all humble subjects. And now that we have come to request, as we must, an investigation of the two aforementioned greatly miraculous children who are suspected candidates, apart from other children whose good signs are not clear, although we must request an investigation [by placing] the names of [only] those two aforementioned [children] within the precious Golden Urn, [41r], we are [formally] requesting that permission of the Great Lord, the Emperor, as per his imperial orders. And so, for that purpose we send our request via the [two] *Amban* together, in a report for the Great Lord, the Emperor, for His investigation, with proffers of our immediate gratitude on this date in the Fire-Dragon Year.¹⁶

15 Here it is assumed that the Tibetan calendar is being used, given the animal designation for the year. However, since it is a Qing imperial edict that is being cited, it is quite possible that a Chinese date is meant. If that is the case, the date would be one day earlier: May 19, 1782.

16 Blo-bzang bstan-'dzin dbang-rgyal, *Rje-btsun Blo-bzang dpal-ldan chos-kyi grags-pa bstan-pa'i dbang-phyug dpal-bzang-po'i rnam-thar dad-ldan pad-tshal bzhad-pa'i nyin-byed snang-ba* (Bkra-shis lhun-po blockprint [available from the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center], completed

on Dec. 10, 1888 (f. 333r: *Sa-Mo-Glang-gi bgrang-bya 'i tshim-byed zla-ba 'i dkar-po 'i phyogs*)), ff. 39r-41r: *De-ltar Dbyings-sa No-min-han sku-ngo sogs phebs-nas rtsad-gcod gnang ba 'i Brul-tshang/ Ri-sbug Rtsed gdong bcas-su yod-pa 'i sras gsum dang/ rgyal-tshab Rwa-sgreng Rdo-rje 'chang chen-po/ gsol-che/ las-cha rje-drung Mgon-po bcas-nas thugs-zhib skyangs-pas Dbus-khul Tshag-gur-zhag-pa dang/ Dngos-grub-sdings gnyis-kyi sras bcas-kyi khongs-nas-kyang gong-du brjod-pa ltar Brul-sras dang/ Gur-zhag-pa 'i sras gnyis snga phyi kun-tu ngo-mtshar che-zhing/ de-nas 7Gong-ma chen-por yang de-gnyis snyan-sgron thog ngos-'dzin bzhed-bskyangs-te/ de-yang Me-'Brug-lo nang-du mdzad-bzhed-la sngon-tshud thugs-gra legs-'grig yong-ched bcas-la 7Dbyings-sa mchog-nas bka'-'brel-gyis rtse-phyag mkhan-po Dka'-chen chos-mdzad lags/ gung-shad sgra-ba Shel-dkar-du bzhugs yod-pa 'i sar wang-zhu 'i 'char-zin dang bcas gang-ci 'i bka'-slob zhu-bar ched phebs-bzhin [39v] mi 'i dbang-phyug gung Bshad-sgra mchog-nas kyang/ lam-gsung/ gzhugs-yul sogs Rgya Bod gang-ci 'i byed-phyogs skor-la nang-ma 'i bka'-slob gzhan-drang ma-mchis-pa stsal-ba rnam Dbyings-sa mchog-gi snyan-du zhib-lhongs zhu gnang mdzad-de/ slar-yang gsol-dpon chen-po Dpal-ldan shes-rab lags dang mnyam-sbrel-du Lha-ldan phyogs-su chibs-bskyod thog am-ban chen-po brgyud Gong-ma chen-po 'i gser-snyan sgron-rgyu 'i skor-la phebs dgos byung-ba ltar/ Me-'Brug zla-ba drug-pa 'i tshenyer-gnyis nyin-nas bzungs Lha-bskyod thog bka'-mngags Bod-bzhugs blon-chen am-ban lhan-rgyas-la/ wang-zhu phul-ba 'i tshig-gzhir/ Bkras-lhun Ze-le-spen No-min-han Rnam-rgyal chos-'phel-nas zhu-ba/ 7Pan-chen er-te-ni nyid-kyi mchog-sprul skor/ Gnam-gyi lha 'Jam-dbyangs 7Gong-ma bdag-po chen-po-nas gser-gyi bka'-bzang spyi-bor phebs-pa dang/ 7Pan-chen er-te-ni-de-nyid-nas bka'-slob gnang-ba snying-la bcangs-te chos-spyod sku-rim-la 'bad-zhus zin-pa 'i thog-nas/ yul-phyogs tshang-mar khye 'u ngo-mtshar che-ba ji-yod zhib-'jug byed mi-khag bgos-kyis btang-ba-rnam-nas zhes sogs Brul-tshang-gi sras dang Tshag-gur-zhag-pa 'i sras gnyis-kyi yab-yum 'khrungs-tshes 'khrungs-ltas sogs 'khod-rjes/ de-dag-gi gnas-tshul zhib-gsal thog khye 'u 'di-gnyis-kyi khongs-su skyabs-mgon Pañ-chen er-te-ni 'i sprul-sku 'khrul-med phebs yod-med [40r] 7skyabs-mgon Ta-lā 'i bla-ma rin-po-cher thugs-brtags zhus-par Shing-yos zla-ba bcu-gnyis-pa 'i tshes bcu-gsum nyin bka'-lan phyir-phebs-la brtag-pa nan-tan bgyis-par gong-gsal gnyis-kyi khongs Pañ-chen thams-cad mkhyen-pa 'i mchog-sprul yod ngo che-bas 7Gong-ma bdag-po chen-por gser-snyan sgron thus phebs-shing zhes sogs dang/ yang de-rjes zhib-na Pañ-chen er-te-ni sku-phreng drug-pa Blo-bzang dpal-ldan ye-shes gnam-skyong bdag-po chen-po 'i gser-zhal mjal-bar phebs thog-nas gser-gyi rgyal-khab chen-por zhing-du gshegs-pa 'i 7mchog-gi sprul-sku bdun-pa Blo-bzang dpal-ldan bstan-pa 'i nyi-ma phyogs-las rnam-rgyal dpal-bzang-po de-nyid 'khrungs-te dogs-gnas dang rting dang bcas bkas-mngags blon-chen brgyud gser-snyan rin-po-che sgron-bar Gnam-skyong dgung-lo zhe-bdun-pa 'i zla-ba bcu-gnyis-pa 'i tshes nyi-shu-la bka-yig phyir phebs-su/ Pi-cin nge-can-gyi Pañ-chen er-te-ni 'i sprul-sku 'khrul-bral nges-par thag-gcod-rgyu 'i skor zhu-shog phul-ba ngas kha-phye-nas bltas-ma-thag Stag-lo 'di 'i zla-ba bzhi-pa 'i tshes brgyad-la Gtsang-khongs Bsnam-skyid gshong-gi sar pha sde-pa Dpal-ldan don-drub dang/ ma 'Chi-med rgyal-mo gnyis-la bu gcig skyes-zhes-pa mthon-ma-thag nged-kyi dgongs-par sprul-sku yin 'dug snyam-du nges-byung-zhes-pa 'i gser-gyi bka' bzang-po phebs-nas ye-shes-kyi gzigs-pa chen-pos dpyad [40v] dpyad-de 'phral-du gser-khrir mnga'-gsol mdzad-pa deb gsal-la Pañ-chen er-te-ni de-nyid sku-tshe ring-zhing-zhes sogs sku-tshe ring-ba dang mdzad-'phrin rgyas-pas sogs dang/ yang de-rjes Pañ-chen er-te-ni de-nyid gzhan-don-du phebs skabs phran sku-bcar zhabs-zhu-ba-rnam-nas mchog-gi sprul-pa 'i sku nges rnyed yong-ba 'i gsol-ba btap-par/ bka 'i phyir-phebs-su ngos-kyi skye-bar dogs-pa 'i khye 'u ngo-mtshar che-ba byung-na dngos-gnas zhib-gsal 7Gong-ma bdag-po chen-po 'i gser-snyan-du sgron-tshe gnam-gyi lha yab-rje Chan-lung chen-pos ngos-rang ngos-'dzin thag-gcod-kyi bka'-phebs-pa ltar dogs-gnas skye-srid de'ang / Gong-ma bdag-po chen-po-nas rnam-mkhyen ye-shes-kyis*

And thus the 8th Panchen Lama was duly recognized:

On the 24th [day of the ninth month of the Fire-Snake Year: November 11, 1857] most of the high-ranking Tibetan and Chinese clerical and lay figures gathered and the Ministers resident in Tibet, the *Amban* He[tehe] and Man[qing] [i.e. the Senior *Amban* and Assistant *Amban*] took [charge] and when the recitations [of texts] ended the Golden Urn was shaken and [the tally stick] drawn, a buzz arose that there was only one name [that had emerged]: from the Golden Urn the name Rnam-rgyal dbang-'dus rgyal-mtshan came into the long fingers of the Senior *Amban* He[tehe] and immediately a *lha rgyal* [-lo] like the roar of a thousand dragons rose up.¹⁷

Returning to the question of context, we must conclude that the prescription of the Golden Urn stems not simply from a cynical assessment of Tibetan affairs, which is largely the way it is presently understood. An overwhelmingly important element is the religious positioning of the Qianlong Emperor, for the use of the urn is surely connected to the belief, described in the passages cited, that the emperor himself was capable of adducing which child was the true incarnation of a deceased lama. This goes a long way towards explaining why there was as much acceptance as there was of a Qing role in a process that was otherwise the exclusive domain of those who were properly initiated. The fact is, the use of the Golden Urn in the 19th century was not simply an object of systematic disregard, as some have described it; after all, the recognition of the 8th Panchen Lama took place in mid-century, well after the demise of Qianlong.

dpyad-do ngos-'dzin thugs-rje che-ba zhid gsol-ba btab-ste gser-gyi bka' ji-ltar phebs-pa de-bzhin skye-bar ngo-bzung thag-bcad byas-na don thams-cad 'grub yong zhes phebs byung lags-na zhes sogs rje'i skye-srid 'di skor sngar-srol bzang-po dang mthun-par Pan-chen er-te-ni den-yid-nas bka'-slob phebs-pa bzhin Gong-ma chen-po-nas rnam-mkhyen ye-shes-kyis dpyad-de gser-gyi bka'-bzang thob-pa zhid gus-'bangs tshang-ma'i mos-mthun-gyi re-ba'i gtso-bo lags-shing/ yang gser-bum brtag-dpyad zhu-dgos phebs-na dogs-gnas-kyi khye'u ngo-mtshar che-ba gong-gsal gnyis-las gzhan-ma khye'u ltas-rtags bzang-ba'i rigs mi-gsal 'dug-pa gong-gsal gnyis-kyi mtshan-byang gser-bum rin-po-cher brtag-dpyad [41r] zhu-dgos-kyang 7Gong-ma bdag-po chen-po'i gser-gyi bka'-bzhin zhus chog-pa zhu rgyu lags-na/ am-ban chen-po lhan-rgyas-nas dngos-gnas-kyi zhu-ba rnams Gong-ma bdag-po chen-po'i gser-snyan rin-po-cher zhib-gsal sgron-brgyud 'phral-du thugs-rje-che-ba zhu-rgyur/ de'i ched-du Me-'Brug zla-tshes-la phul/. I would like to acknowledge the generosity of my colleague Mr. Gedun Rabsal who kindly discussed this passage with me and offered suggestions on several points.

17 Ibid, f. 45v: *Tshe nyer-bzhi'i nyin Rgya-Bod mi-drag ser-skya phal-mo-che 'dzoms-thog Bod-bzhugs blon-chen He Sman am-ban zung-nas zhal-'don tshig-mtshams-thog gser-bum dkrugs-'don skabs byang-bu gcig-las med-pa gtam-gleng-ba byung-zhing/ gser-bum-nas Rnam-rgyal dbang-'dus rgyal-mtshan zhes-pa'i mtshan-byang He am-ban chen-po'i sug-rtser rgyang-thon byung-bas de-'phral der 'khod tshang-mas lha-rgyal 'brog stong ldir-ba ltar 'i then-pa byung/. Concerning the two *Amban*, see Josef Kolmaš, "The *Ambans* and Assistant *Ambans* of Tibet (A Chronological Study)," *Archiv Orientální-Supplementa* 7 (1994), pp. 53-54.*

The 9th Panchen Lama was similarly selected via the use of the Golden Urn. The biographical account of his life produced in the series *Bod-kyi lo-rgyus rig-gnas dpyad-gzhi'i rgyu-cha bdams-bsgrigs*, makes this clear, quoting from a letter from the *Bka'-shag* to the Dalai Lama on the matter discussing the schedule of events (including the day for the dispatch of the urn to the Potala for the ceremony) and then describing the ceremony itself on the 14th day of the 1st month of the Earth-Mouse Year [February 26, 1888], with the *Amban* producing the tally stickbearing the name of the child Lhun-grub rgya-mtsho to joyous shouts of "*Lha rgyal-lo*."¹⁸

Turning briefly to the Dalai Lamas, we see the use of the urn over the course of the 19th century, though not in every instance. The account of the recognition of the 9th Dalai Lama, Lung-rtogsrgya-mtsho (1806-1815), by his biographer, De-mo Blo-bzang thub-bstan 'jigs-med rgya-mtsho, does not mention the Golden Urn specifically. Yet while one might try to assume that this should provide a counter argument about the imperial vessel, there is a clear indication that the *Amban* had the final say on the manner in which the recognition proceeded. Thus, the regent wrote that "The *Amban* Yu suddenly said to me 'Provide the instruments of recognition.' The manner of it was like that of sentient beings testing a Buddha. Though I was greatly frightened and anxious, I could not disobey the word of the *Amban* and so gradually brought them out..."¹⁹ There follows an account of items brought out for the young Dalai Lama to accept or reject as being previously connected to or owned by him. The procedure was successful and on that basis, we are told, the two *Amban* notified the emperor that this child was indeed the incarnation of the Dalai Lama.

The biography of the 10th Dalai Lama, Tshul-khrims rgya-mtsho (1816-1837), attests to the actual use of the Golden Urn, stating that "in accord with the judgement that the Father and Lord Emperor had previously rendered regarding the incarnation of the Dalai Lama, it would be compatible with tradition if the matter were examined through the Golden Urn."²⁰ We may see here a harkening back to the shadow cast by the tradition of Qianlong.

18 *Pañ-chen sku-phreng dgu-pa Blo-bzang thub-bstan chos-kyi nyi-ma gang-gi dgung-tshigs dang-bstun-pa'i mdzad-rnams rags-bsgrigs* (Beijing), pp. 15-17. A study of the 9th Panchen Lama's recognition is being prepared by Dr. Fabienne Jagou.

19 De-mo Blo-bzang thub-bstan 'jigs-med rgya-mtsho, *Rgyal-ba'i dbang-po thams-cad mkhyen-pa Blo-bzang bstan-pa'i 'byung-gnas ngag-dbang lung-rtogs rgya-mtsho dpal-bzang-po'i zhal-snga nas-kyi rnam-par thar-pa mdor mtshon-pa dad-pa'i yid-'phrog* (Dharamsala, 1998), pp. 647-648: "...Yu 'i am-ban nas phran-la glo-bur-du ngos-'dzin-gyi yo-byed-rnams khyod-kyis stob-ces bka'-gnang-bar/ tshul 'di ni sems-can-gvis sangs [648] rgyas la tshod-bgam-pa ltar-du 'dug-pas/ shin-tu bsnyengs-pa che-ba dang va-nga-ba byung-rung/ am-ban-gyi tshig-las zlog ma-nus-pas rim-bzhin phul..."

20 Dar-han Blo-bzang 'phrin-las rnam-rgyal, *Rgyal-ba'i dbang-po thams-cad mkhyen-gzigs bcu-pa chen-po Ngag-dbang blo-bzang 'jam-dpal bstan-'dzin tshul-khrims rgya-mtsho dpal bzang-po'i rnam-par thar-pa ngo-mtshar nor-bu'i 'phreng-ba* (Dharamsala, 1998), p. 34: "Tā-la 'i bla-ma 'i skye-srid skor-la snga-dus Gong-ma yab-rje chen-po 'i bka'-bcad-mtshams-kyi dgongs-don-ltar gser-bum-du brtags-dpyad byas-na lugs-srol dang mthun-shing..."

Similarly, the 11th Dalai Lama, Mkhas-'grub rgya-mtsho (1838-1856), was also recognized through the use of the Golden Urn, though the only comment about it is that the procedure was done inside the Potala.²¹ The 12th Dalai Lama, 'Phrin-las rgya-mtsho (1856-1875), was recognized through the use of the Golden Urn as well, in this case with the names of three candidates placed in it at the time the lots were drawn.²²

Finally, in the case of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thub-bstan rgya-mtsho (1876-1933), the Golden Urn was not used because the indications of his being the incarnation of the previous Dalai Lama were felt to be clear. However, the decision to do this involved securing the agreement of the emperor, who was accordingly petitioned and then gave his consent.²³

We have seen that, contrary to what is sometimes said, the Golden Urn was indeed used. On the surface it would appear that this was in part because of the demands of the Qing emperor and in part because of the manifestation of religion and politics as a Tibetan system that endowed the Qianlong Emperor with serious religious authority. In those instances in which the Golden Urn was not used, the *Amban* were consulted and were part of the process by which the Qing court was kept informed of what was happening. Still, with the end of the Qing and the disappearance of the *Amban* the Golden Urn ritual would seem to have come to an end as well.

Thus, its reappearance in the most heated of circumstances elicits a good deal of curiosity. Following the fall of the Qing in 1911 there was in China a general denunciation of the Qing rulers as reactionary and divisive. This was the case in the early years of the Republic of China; writers in the early People's Republic of China have also described Qing policies with the term "Great Manchuism" (Ch. 大满族主义); i.e., "Manchu Chauvinism."²⁴ One cannot but note somewhat wryly that after almost a century of rhetoric on the part of both the Republican and Communist governments of China depicting the policies of the Qing upper strata as backwards and oppressive, the PRC has chosen to resurrect this one particular Qing institution and force it on Tibet, maintaining that it is absolutely necessary in choosing an incarnation. Naturally, this has meant ignoring the crucial basis for the use of the Golden Urn: acceptance of the ruler as an emanation of Mañjuśrī. Surely it is

21 Spyi-khyab He-te-thu-mergan mkhan-po Ngag-dbang bstan-dar, *Lhar-bcas skye rgu'i gtsug-nor 'phags-chen phyag-na padmo rje-btsun Ngag-dbang bskal-bzang bstan-pa'i sgron-me mkhas-grub rgya-mtsho dpal bzang-po'i rnam-par thar-pa ngo-mtshar lha'i rol-mo dbyangscan rgyud-du snyan-pa'i tambu-ra* (Dharamsala, 1988), p. 307

22 Mtshan-zhabs bla-ma Blo-bzang ngag-dbang, *Lhar-bcas srid-zhi'i gtsug-rgyan rgyal-mchog ngur-smrig 'chang-ba bcu-gnyis-pa chen-po'i rnam-par thar-pa rgya-mtho lta-bu-las mdo-tsam brjod-pa dwangs-shel me-long* (Dharamsala, 1998), p. 485.

23 Phur-lcog yongs-'dzin Thub-bstan byams-pa thul-khrims bstan-'dzin, *Lhar-bcas srid-zhi'i gtsug-rgyan Gong-ma rgyal-ba'i dbang-po bka'-drin mtshungs-med sku-phreng bcu-gsum-pa chen-po'i rnam-par thar-pa rgya-mtho lta-bu-las mdo-tsam brjod-pa ngo-mtshar rin-po-che'i phreng-ba* (Dharamsala, 1998), pp. 25-26.

24 Huang Fensheng 黄奋生, *Xizang qingkuang 西藏情况* (Shanghai, 1953), p. 111.

unnecessary to point out that this element is absent in the relationship between the highest leaders of the People's Republic of China and Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy.

This brings us back to the list of incarnate lamas described above. As already mentioned, the 14th Karma-pa, Theg-mchog rdo-rje (1798-1868), is noted as having been chosen through its use.²⁵ Given what we know about the use of the Golden Urn, it is interesting to note that while the 14th Karma-pa was recognized through the use of the Golden Urn at the beginning of the 19th century, all reports of the recognition and enthronement of the 17th Karma-pa, O-rgyan phrin-las rdo-rje (1985-), indicate that this was not the case with him. Detailed accounts of his discovery and enthronement make no mention whatsoever about recourse to the Golden Urn.²⁶ It would appear that its use with regard to the incarnation of the Panchen Lama represents an anachronistic resurrection of the Qing method of recognizing incarnations rather than an element of continuity with earlier traditions.

It is hard not to see something cynical in this: the use of the Golden Urn in recognizing Tibetan incarnations is clearly meant to impart legitimacy to Chinese control over the incarnation of high lamas (with a particular eye to the Dalai Lama's next incarnation) through the establishment of historical continuity. The PRC, in excoriating the Dalai Lama for not accepting its use of this Qing procedure, is consciously manipulating an element in earlier Sino-Tibetan relations. Certainly there has arisen no new vogue in China for Qing institutions elsewhere in the PRC. It is impossible to ignore here China's desire for historical precedent as a simple legitimizing element for its administration of Tibet. The fact is, the use of the Golden Urn is one of the few elements of history that Chinese authorities feel they can call on to reinforce the modern Chinese notion that China's central government enjoyed primacy in Tibetan affairs from the Yuan period (1271-1368) up to the present. The notion that Tibet somehow warrants the restoration of this one element of Qing rule is best viewed as part of a larger struggle to bring history and historical precedent to bear on the legitimacy of PRC policies and rule in Tibet today.

In questions concerning the status of Tibet the "verdict" of history is what is invoked in China to establish the legitimacy of Tibetan status. As such, an historical precedent for Central Government control over the recognition of incarnations is essential for establishing legitimacy through continuity. But in this instance what we have is, as noted, a resurrection rather than a continuation.

25 *Bod dang/ Bar-khams/ Rgya Sog bcas-kyi bla-sprul-rnams-kyi skye-phreng deb-gzhung*, in *Bod-kyi gal-che 'i lo-rgyus yig-cha bdams-bsgrigs*, p. 292.

26 See Blo-bzang shes-rab, et al., *Karma-pa sku-phreng bcu-bdun-pa* (Lhasa? 1993?); and Zhou Dunyou, "New Master in the Curpu Monastery," *China's Tibet* 4.1 (1993), p. 7: "After the death of the 16th Living Buddha Garmapa, the Curpu Monastery sect adherents, following his testament and religious practices and rituals, found his successor, the reincarnated soul boy Ogyain Chilai, in Qamdo Prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region in May 1992." The article gives a detailed account (pp. 8-9) of the installation ceremony with not a word about the Golden Urn.

TIBETAN NOMADIC TRADE, THE CHINESE ‘XIEJIA’ SYSTEM AND THE SINO-TIBETAN BORDER MARKET IN STONG ‘KHOR/ DAN’GAER IN 19th/ 20th CENTURY A MDO*

BIANCA HORLEMANN

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the significance of the Chinese ‘*xiejia* 歇家 (hostel)’ system for Tibetan nomadic trade in A mdo¹ and specifically in sTong ‘khor during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The A mdo *xiejia*—literally: ‘house of repose, hostel,’ but also ‘innkeeper’—provided food and lodging and also served a variety of functions in trade relations between nomadic traders and such counterparts as wool merchants from Inland China and foreign trading companies. Furthermore, the *xiejia* were obliged to fulfill several semi-official tasks such as assisting in the control of trade and serving as interpreters or mediators in conflicts, first in the interest of the Qing (1644–1911) administration and after 1911 in the interest of the local warlords.

Pastoral societies are not self-sufficient entities living in closed economies. Nomads interact through direct trade and barter with both agricultural and urban societies and also mediate and participate in the trade between sedentary societies in the form of transport and middlemen. In the case of Tibet in general and A mdo specifically the most essential economic exchange traditionally consisted of bartering

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Chinese is transcribed in *pinyin* and Tibetan in Wylie. Exceptions are made for terms commonly known in westernized forms, e.g., lama for *bla ma*. Chinese characters are provided after the first occurrence of the *pinyin* term. If this first occurrence is in a footnote, then the characters are still provided once in the main text.

1 The incorporation of part of the region traditionally called A mdo by Tibetans into the Chinese provinces of Qinghai 青海 and Gansu 甘肃 began under the Guomindang 国民党 regime after the fall of the Qing 清 Dynasty in 1911 and was further cemented under communist rule after 1949.

wool, salt² and horses³ obtained from the nomads, for grain and tea⁴ obtained from the sedentary societies. In addition luxury items such as hides, musk, rhubarb and other medicinal herbs were exchanged for flour, sugar, tobacco, paper, leather, saddles and harness, boots, felt hats, silk and cotton, iron pots, articles of hardware, swords, fire-arms, gold dust and precious stones. Trade was often carried out on the spot whenever the opportunity arose, or nomads traveled to markets near and far which were held regularly and during special occasions in villages, at fairs and at monastic centers. Tibetan pastoralists also frequently combined pilgrimage with trade.⁵

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the most important permanent markets in A mdo were located in Zi ling/ Xining 西宁, in Len ju/ Lanzhou 兰州 and in sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer 丹噶尔 (modern Huangyuan 湟源), the latter a small walled town about 50 km west of Xining. Conveniently situated on a nexus of major trading routes in the Sino-Tibetan borderland, sTong 'khor was also the seat of one of the Dalai Lama's commercial agents, the *tsong spyi*.⁶ Apart from sTong 'khor, the market towns of bSang chu/ Xiahe 夏河 and Ru shar/ Lushaer 鲁沙尔 near the two large monastic centers of Labrang⁷ and Kumbum,⁸ respectively, were busy market places, especially when major religious festivals drew large crowds of pilgrims. In addition, nomadic trading activities were carried out on a smaller scale in many other villages, big and small, in the Sino-Tibetan border area. For example, Tibetan nomads whose pastures were situated near Tibetan farming areas, usually bartered with their

2 Apart from wool and cattle, salt also constituted a major nomadic trading good in A mdo and beyond. The well-known Qinghai salt traded in inland China and Khams, mainly came from the Chaka 茶卡 Lake near Dulan 都兰. This salt trade was under Mongol control from the end of the Ming 明 Dynasty to 1724 when the Qing Dynasty established a salt office. The salt administration obviously was mostly nominal and ceased to function altogether after 1742 until it was re-established in 1907/08. Salt remained a major trading good well into the 1940s. See Yang 1746:436–437, Zhou 1970:197–199, Zhou 2000:20–21, Li 2003b:40–42, Mian 2007:28–30, van Spengen 1995:23, Rockhill 1891:111 and *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:253. Grenard claims that in 1894 the Golok (Tib. mGo log) nomads also traded salt from the Ngoring Nor (Tib. mTsho Ngo ring) and Kyaring Nor (Tib. mTsho Skya ring) on which they held a monopoly. This is also confirmed by a 1921 source. See Grenard 1904:196 and Anonymous 1921:516.

3 A mdo horses, especially those from the Kokonor and Liangzhou 凉州 area/ modern Wuwei 武威, were especially renowned in Tibet and China. For more information on the traditional horse and tea trade see below.

4 Tea for the A mdo markets in sTong 'khor/ modern Huangyuan 湟源 and Xining 西宁 usually arrived via Songpan 松潘, located on the A mdo - Khams border; see van Spengen 1995:26–27 and Rockhill 1891:112.

5 See van Spengen 1995:18, 20–21, Grenard 1929:370–371 and *ibid.* 1904:284–287.

6 See Grenard 1904:287 and *ibid.* 1929:371 for more on the Dalai Lama's trade agents.

7 Tib. *Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil*/ Chin. *Labulengsi* 拉卜楞寺.

8 Tib. *sKu 'bum byams pa gling*/ Chin. *Taersi* 塔尔寺.

sedentary Tibetan neighbors.⁹ Furthermore, Muslim Hui 回¹⁰ and Salar 撒拉¹¹ as well as Han 汉 Chinese merchants from the sedentary areas in A mdo traveled directly to the nomad camps to trade. In 18th/19th century Chinese sources these traders are referred to as *yang ke* 羊客, i.e., 'itinerant sheep traders', presumably because they originally traded their merchandise for sheep and goats (Chin. *yang* 羊).¹² Local A mdo products such as wool, felts, salt and medicinal plants were in demand in China as well and also attracted traders from outside of Qinghai 青海 and Gansu 甘肃. Most prominent among the out of province-traders were those from Shanxi 山西 and Shaanxi 陕西 provinces. They often had ties to big trading houses in their home provinces and were well organized in societies such as the *Shanshaan huiguan* 山陕会馆. They thus had the funds, connections and experience for long distance trade from A mdo into central China and beyond. The Shanshaan traders as they were called, usually had their main base in Xining and dependencies at all the major trading markets in Gansu and Qinghai.¹³

Traditionally, in A mdo and elsewhere in Tibet, important trading relations were also formed between Tibetan monasteries, i.e., monks and incarnate Lamas, on the one hand and Muslim and Chinese traders on the other. For example, Buddhist pilgrims donated livestock, salt, precious stones, medicinal plants, etc. to monasteries, which were partly traded on by the Buddhist clergy to markets in Gansu and Sichuan 四川. The monasteries also offered storage facilities for traders and some references suggest that monks were involved in the trade of grain and even in the forbidden but profitable arms' trade. Thus, monasteries not only served as convenient locations for

9 See Ekvall 1939:73–74, 80–81.

10 The about 10 million Hui presently living in China are supposed to descend from Arabian and Persian merchants who came to Chinese seaports to trade already in the 7th century and eventually founded new families with Chinese wives. Due to the considerable admixture of Chinese blood, these Muslim merchants assimilated linguistically and culturally to their new Chinese homeland with the exception of their religious beliefs. However, only from the early Ming Dynasty did the Hui start to form Muslim communities near mosques. Their commitment to Islam became and has remained the main common marker of the so-called Hui minority while culturally and linguistically they are as diverse as the local Chinese communities in which they live (Gladney 1996:26–36).

11 The Salar are a Turkic speaking Muslim minority numbering about 100,000 people. They live mostly in the Qinghai-Gansu border region on both sides of the Yellow River, namely in Xunhua Salar Autonomous County 循化撒拉族自治县 and Hualong Hui Autonomous County 化隆回族自治县 of Qinghai and the adjacent Jishishan Baoan, Dongxiang and Salar Autonomous County 积石山保安东乡撒拉族自治县 of Gansu.

12 Apart from the traveling merchants who were generally designated as *ke shang* 客商 in Chinese, 18th century Gansu and Qinghai itinerant traders called *yang ke* appear to have had trade relations mainly with the then economically and politically dominant Mongol tribes of A mdo and less with the Tibetans; see La 2009:173, *Qinghai tongshi* 1999:388 and *Hexi kaifa shi yanjiu* 1996:421. According to one source, these itinerant traders were later, i.e., in the early 20th century, designated as *zang ke* 藏客; see Pu/ Yi 1981:40.

13 See Cui 2007:157–158, *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:231–232 and Li/ Wei 2004.

trading activities of third parties but also monks, both low and high ranking, were involved in trading transactions; some privately, others in the interest of the monastery.¹⁴

Furthermore, Chinese and Muslim petty traders, the so-called *diaolangzi* 刁郎子—literally: ‘cunning foxes’—came in regular contact with Tibetan nomads at the various market places in A mdo. They offered everyday use items such as boots, knives, pots, etc. The *diaolangzi* were notorious for cheating their customers and specifically the pastoralists, who were often unaware of market prices.¹⁵ Suzy Rijnhart, a missionary who lived in sTong ‘khor in 1896, reported:

“Without the western gate, every day are to be found Chinese merchants squatted for some distance along both sides of the road, with their small stock of goods spread underneath an awning – thread, beads, bread and other things. These petty merchants are patronized by the poorer classes of people whom they fleece in every way possible. In this respect they are especially severe on the Tibetans.”¹⁶

Within this general frame of Tibetan trade the *xiejia* institution only constitutes a specific example of former Tibetan-Muslim and Tibetan-Chinese economic relations on the Sino-Tibetan border. It does, nevertheless, deserve more scholarly attention since during the 19th/ early 20th centuries the *xiejia* was of special relevance for A mdo Tibetan nomads and for shaping socio-economic relations among ethnic groups in Qinghai and Gansu at a time of frequent interethnic conflicts. Although the *xiejia* system in A mdo is occasionally mentioned in 19th and early 20th century missionary reports and western travelogues, much written material is available in Chinese gazetteers, official documents and travelogues. In contrast, written Tibetan material has not yet come to my attention.¹⁷ A number of illuminating, article-length studies on the *xiejia* system have been published by Chinese researchers.¹⁸ These usually focus on

14 For more general information see, for example, van Spengen 1995:45–46 and *Qinghai tongshi* 1999:388–389. For specific examples concerning A mdo monasteries such as Kumbum, Labrang, Rong bo dgon, gSer khog, etc. see, for example, Filchner 1906:10, 19–23, 68, Grenard 1904:200, Schram 2006:346–351 and Nayancheng 1853:4/40, 42–43.

15 See Pu/ Yi 1981:40–41 and Yuan 2007:37. The latter writes *diaolangzi* with 吊 rather than 刁.

16 See Rijnhart 1901:134. The *diaolangzi* were also present in sTong ‘khor during the mid-19th century when the Fathers Huc and Gabet visited and became their victims; see *ibid.* 1987/2:17. Similar descriptions for the early 20th century and the late 1930s are found in Fergusson 1911:9 and Haack 1940:12.

17 Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to conduct interviews with senior Tibetans in A mdo who might still be able to contribute oral accounts on this topic.

18 See, for example, Hu/ Huo 2006, Hu 2007a and 2007b, Li/ Wei 2004, Ma 2007, Ma/ He 1994, Pu/ Yi 1981, Wang 1987 and Xu 2006. Mian 2005b must be used with caution because some of his references and quotations are misleading or mistaken; see, for example, p. 236 fn. 2 and p. 237 fn. 3. In the first instance, I could not locate the quotation in chap. 10 of the *Xiningfu xuzhi*

certain aspects of the *xiejia* institution during certain time periods and do not cover its development from its earliest to its last occurrence, which this article endeavors to do.

II. THE *XIEJIA* INSTITUTION AND ITS ADVENT IN A MDO

As mentioned above, *xiejia* literally means 'house of repose, hostel' and also designates the 'innkeeper, owner.' For central China the *xiejia* (or *xiedian* 歇店) are first mentioned in 15th century Chinese sources simply meaning 'guesthouses,' *kedian* 客店. During the second half of the 16th century the *xiejia* in central China had changed from pure inns providing food and lodging for travelers and traders into institutions serving a variety of semi-official functions in local trade relations, tax collection and even in legal affairs. These were the so-called *guan xiejia* 官歇家, i.e., officially acknowledged *xiejia* in contrast to the *si xiejia* 私歇家, i.e., 'private' or 'illegal' *xiejia*.¹⁹ Whereas the former were usually found at the prefectural or sub-prefectural seats of local officials, the latter were mostly situated in the vicinity of minor trading routes in remoter places to evade official control and duties.²⁰ While this system was slowly abandoned in central China during the 18th century, it gradually gained more relevance along the Sino-Tibetan border in A mdo when the *xiejia* inherited certain duties of the former tea and horse trading administration (*cha ma si* 茶马司) such as keeping registers of traders and trading transactions. The *cha ma si* administration had been in place since the 11th century in order to regulate border trade, specifically the trade of Tibetan horses for Chinese tea. The longstanding policy of fixed exchange rates for Tibetan horses and Chinese tea was officially abandoned in 1735 and thereafter, the *cha ma si* administration was gradually dissolved.²¹ Although *xiejia* are occasionally mentioned for some Chinese border provinces by the mid-18th century,²² repeated references to the *xiejia* in A mdo begin to appear only in 1822 when Nayancheng,²³ the Manchu Qing governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu,

西宁府续志 and in the second instance the quotation "*Xining you Keshimier shangren de mouxie jingjiren* 西宁有克什米尔商人的某些经纪人...", i.e., "in Xining there are agents of Kashmiri merchants...", is not found in the entry on the *xiejia* in the encyclopaedic work *Qing bai lei chao* 清稗类钞. Mian might have confused it with another entry called "*Xizang shangye* 西藏商业," i.e., "Commerce in Tibet" which, however, reads "*Xizang jumin you zi Kashmirier yiwang Lasa er jingshangzhe* 西藏居民有自克什米尔移往拉萨而经商者..." i.e., "among the residents of Tibet are those who have moved from Kashmir to Lhasa in order to trade...".

19 See Xu 2006:53–55, Hu/ Huo 2006:22–26, Hu 2007a:88, *ibid.* 2007b:50 and *Ming Xizong Zhe Huangdi shilu* 69/1208, 75/1295 for examples of the early 17th century.

20 See Nayancheng 1853:4/39–40 and *Qing Xuanzong Cheng Huangdi shilu* 42/471.

21 See, for example, Yao 1989:757, Ma/ He 1994/4:27, Ma 2007:81, Wei 2002, Rossabi 1970 and Smith 1991.

22 See, for example, *Qing Gaozong Chun Huangdi shilu* 135/1248, 138/1272, 257/2410, 376/3730.

23 Nayancheng was repeatedly appointed as Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu, i.e., *Shaan Gan zongdu* 陕甘总督, and as Grand Minister Superintendent of Qinghai, i.e., *Zongli Qinghai shiwu dachen* 总理青海事务大臣, namely in 1804, 1809 and 1822. The latter office was also

considered certain trading activities of the *xiejia* and of the itinerant traders, the *yangke*, to be illegal. He then introduced new measures for more efficient control of the Sino-Tibetan border trade and, simultaneously, of the Mongol and Tibetan border tribes. Before and during Nayancheng's appointment as governor and *amban*, Tibetan nomads from south of the Yellow River repeatedly pushed north towards Lake Kokonor in search of better pastures and thereby displaced some of the local Mongol tribes. Since this led to frequent armed conflicts, Nayancheng tried to put pressure on the tribes by regulating the trade relations vital to both the Mongols and the Tibetans. Furthermore, he suspected the *yangke* of selling weapons, gunpowder and bullets to these nomadic adversaries. Nayancheng thus instituted strict regulations on the *yangke* prohibiting travel to nomad camps and only permitting trade at three fixed market places, i.e., in sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer, gSer khog/ Datong and Khri kha/ Guide. Furthermore, the *yang ke* were obliged to apply for official permission to trade and were required to state exactly when, where and how much they wanted to trade. Han and Hui merchants who disregarded these regulations, the so-called 'traitors' (*jian min* 奸民 or *han jian* 汉奸), faced severe punishment. Also some of the *xiejia puhu* 歇家铺户, i.e., inns with attached shops, in Guide and Xunhua who privately sold grain and tea to the nomads, fell into this category.²⁴ These events, however, indicate that the *xiejia* institution must have been firmly in place in A mdo before 1822.²⁵

In A mdo the *xiejia* were usually run by Muslims or by Han Chinese from Gansu, Shaanxi or Shanxi provinces who exclusively served Tibetan, Mongol or Monguor²⁶ customers and who possessed the necessary language skills for communication.²⁷

commonly called *Xining banshi dachen* 西宁办事大臣, i.e., Qinghai or Xining *amban*. The *amban* was the resident Qing court representative in charge of administering Tibetan and Mongol affairs that affected Chinese interests.

24 See Nayancheng passim, and especially *ibid.* 1853:4/39–41, *Qing Miaocong Yi Huangdi shilu* 21/375, *Qing Wenzong shilu* 293/3237 and *Qing Xuanzong Xian Huangdi shilu* 42/471, 44/489–490 and 50/560.

25 Some indirect evidence for the existence of the *xiejia* in 18th century A mdo is provided by the Catholic missionary Maoletti (1669–1725) in a description of Toba, i.e., Duoba 多巴/多坝, situated half way between Xining and sTong 'khor. In this account Toba is mentioned as a cosmopolitan trading place for Mongols, Tibetans, Indians, Persians, Turks, Armenians and Muscovites while another 17th/18th century source referred to the many guesthouses in Duoba being run by Hui from Xining as well as by Tibetans. It seems quite likely that these guesthouses were in fact *xiejia*. See Szcześniak 1959:312, Mian 2005a:56 and Hu 2007a:103.

26 The Monguor are speakers of Mongolic languages in Qinghai and Gansu who have been officially classified as Tu 土 or Tuzu 土族 such as the Tongren Tu 同仁土, the Huzhu Tu 互助土 and the Minhe Tu 民和土. Monguor speak mutually unintelligible dialects/ languages, dress differently and have acculturated differently according to the respective dominant ethnic groups in their neighborhood. The main common denominator seems to be their adherence to Tibetan Buddhism while other speakers of Mongolic languages who are Muslims such as the Dongxiang and the Baoan, are classified under specific ethnonyms. See Fried 2009 and Fried 2010.

27 The *xiejia* system in A mdo was also in place for local Mongols and for some time also for the Monguor. They are, however, not treated in this paper.

Thus Han Chinese traders and travelers had their own inns—which were not designated as *xiejia*—in which Tibetans, Mongols and Monguor were not allowed to stay. Providing food and lodging free of charge, the *xiejia* owners made a profit by serving as middlemen in trade transactions between Tibetan nomads and traders from Inland China and later also from abroad. They charged a commission which constituted a certain percentage of the traded goods.²⁸ Furthermore, the *xiejia* also offered other trade related services such as storage, transport of goods and loan giving. While in the early and mid-19th century the Tibetan tribes had fixed *xiejia* at which they were obliged to stay, the system became more flexible towards the late 19th century. By 1904, for example, Tibetans could choose freely from among a number of *xiejia* at the important border market of sTong 'khor. However, they were still not allowed to stay at hostels for Chinese merchants or travelers.²⁹

One of the earliest and most detailed accounts by foreigners on the *xiejia* is provided by the two Lazariste Fathers Huc and Gabet who traveled in A mdo in 1845:

“It is the custom, we may say the rule, at Si-Ning-Fou [Zi ling/ Xining], not to receive strangers, such as the Tartars, Thibetians, and others, into the inns, but to relegate them to establishments called Houses of Repose (Sie-Kia), into which no other travelers are admitted. We proceeded accordingly to one of the Houses of Repose, where we were exceedingly well entertained. The Sie-Kia differ from other inns in this important particular, that the guests are boarded, lodged, and served there gratuitously. Commerce being the leading object of travelers hither, the chiefs of the Sie-Kia indemnify themselves for their outlay by a recognized percentage upon all the goods which the guests buy or sell. The persons who keep these Houses of Repose have first to procure a license from the authorities of the town, for which they pay a certain sum, greater or less, according to the character of the commercial men who are expected to frequent the house.”³⁰

Apart from paying taxes and buying official permissions to run a *xiejia* (varying from 60 to 100 *liang*/ Taels in 1905), the *xiejia* were assigned other administrative duties. For example, they were required to report to the border officials and to keep registers

28 Millward 1989:9 mentions a commission of 2 percent, but he does not provide sources.

29 For a general account of the *xiejia* see Pu/ Yi 1981:37–40 and Xu 1983:76–77. For the existence of fixed *xiejia* in 1823 see Nayancheng 1853:4/41 and Huc/ Gabet 1987/2:17 for 1845. For the changed situation in 1904 see Tafel 1914/1:180. Kozlov wrote in 1908: “As born merchants the Chinese can easily adjust to the needs of their clients. Each firm has its own set of clients: Mongols, Tanguts or Tibetans, who are generously hosted by the merchants during their stay in Xining;” see Koslow [Kozlov] 1955:192. (My translation from German.)

30 See Huc/ Gabet 1987/I:386.

about their customers and the trade transactions concluded at their hostels.³¹ Furthermore, they had to serve as interpreters and mediators in conflicts between Tibetan tribes and the local Chinese government.³² The *xiejia* were also held responsible by the Qing officials for the conduct of their customers while in sTong 'khor and in the other official market places in A mdo. Furthermore, the Tibetan tribes who regularly came to the markets, had to redeem officially reported misdeeds of any of their tribal members, including the disobedience of whole tribes. Tafel, for example, mentions that the Qing *amban* in Zi ling/ Xining had excluded the Golok (mGo log) tribes from trading in sTong 'khor as punishment for a Golok raid on Przhevalsky's expedition in 1884. Although the Hormuka (Hor skor?) sub-tribe of the Goloks had repeatedly offered to officially submit to the *amban* in order to regain market access in sTong 'khor, their submission was rejected. Had any *xiejia* in sTong 'khor hosted a trading caravan of the Golok tribes in spite of the official prohibition, they would have been heavily fined and their inns closed.³³

One source claims that the *xiejia* also had to make arrangements for the transport animals of Qing officials while traveling in Qinghai, and on request the *xiejia* also issued letters of introduction or protection to traders or other travelers who intended to travel to or through the territory of the Tibetan tribes associated with a specific *xiejia*.³⁴

As already indicated, the *xiejia* institution in A mdo was not static, but its role developed and changed over time. Several accounts from the late 19th/ early 20th centuries describe the *xiejia* not so much as hostel owners but as merchants and brokers or as itinerant traders such as the former *yangke*.³⁵ For example, while the gazetteer *Dan'gaer tingzhi*—published in 1910—treats the *xiejia* primarily as inn owners/brokers, the *Qing bai lei chao*—printed in 1917—treats the *xiejia* as combined inn owners/ brokers and as itinerant traders.³⁶ By the 1930s, however, the term *xiejia* was apparently used almost exclusively in the sense of 'itinerant trader'.³⁷ It thus

31 See Tafel 1914/1:180, 184, Zhou 2000:20 and fn. 20.

32 For examples see Tafel 1914/1:180-181, 184, *ibid.* 1914/2:72-73 and Rockhill 1891:51.

33 See Tafel 1914/1:177-181, 204, 316-317, *ibid.* 1914/2:72-73, 100.

34 See Xu 1983:76-77.

35 These changes in the mode of doing business of the *xiejia* need further exploration. It appears at first glance that Muslim itinerant trading activities especially intensified after the resettlement of many Gansu- and Shaanxi-Muslims in the aftermaths of the two so-called Muslim rebellions of 1862-1873 and 1895/96. The resettlement into remote, barren areas in Gansu and Qinghai forced many Muslim farmers to take up sideline occupations in order to feed their families. Thus, many Muslim families increasingly specialized on itinerant trade and other professions.

36 See Yang 1989:287 and Xu 1983:76-77. Zhou 2000:20 who traveled in Qinghai in 1914, describes the *xiejia* as having changed from mere middlemen to some sort of wholesale traders making enormous profits. Zhou, however, does not mention itinerant trade in connection with the *xiejia*.

37 See Zhou Zhenhe who traveled in Qinghai in the early 1930s; *ibid.* 1970:204-205. Also in Lipman's account of the *xiejia*—where he translates *xiejia* as 'lodgers'—he refers to itinerant

appears that during a transitional period at the end of the 19th/ beginning of the 20th century the *xiejia* still existed both in the traditional way described above and in the form of brokers and merchants who had already stopped keeping hostels.³⁸ The great political and economic changes of the 1920s such as the growing monopolization of trade in Qinghai by the warlord clan of Ma Qi 马麒 and the decline of the international wool trade, meant that the *xiejia* institution became superfluous and thus gradually disappeared without ever having been officially dissolved.³⁹

Despite its historic relevance for the A mdo Tibetan nomads, a specific Tibetan term for *xiejia* is difficult to recover due to the lack of written Tibetan sources on this topic.⁴⁰ It seems possible that the general Tibetan term *gnas tshang* ('inn, place to stay') or *ten khang* (Tib. *ten* being the phonetic transcription of Chin. *dian* 店) might have been used for the *xiejia* in the sense of 'hostel,' or the terms *tsong dpon* or *mkhar dpon* in the sense of 'middleman, broker'.⁴¹ Zhou Zhenhe stated that the Tibetan term for *xiejia* was '*kewa* 客哇' which may be the Chinese phonetic transcription for a variety of Tibetan terms as, for example, *khe pa*, 'vendor.' It should be noted that Zhou obviously referred to the itinerant traders of the 1930s and not to the hostel keepers.⁴² Related to itinerant Muslim traders of the 1930s, Ekvall provides the term '*wa-ka*' literally meaning 'kettle' and denoting the members of a caravan unit who shared the same campfire. *Wa-ka* is thus equated to the Chinese *guozi* 锅字, 'pot, kettle', which, in turn, is a term borrowed from Tibetan for this specific context.⁴³ Fesmire, a Protestant missionary who lived on the Gansu-Tibetan border in the 1920s/30s, provides another presumably Tibetan term, namely '*sang sa*'. This seems

merchants who stay at the camps of Tibetan nomads as described by Ekvall (1939) in *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*. However, Ekvall does not refer to these traders as *xiejia* but only mentions the guest - host relationship; see Lipman 1981:117-120.

38 Rockhill claims that by 1888/89 the *xiejia* were only brokers and traders and that they no longer kept hostels. Furthermore, their positions were hereditary; see Rockhill 1891:51 fn.1. The same statement is made in *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:244, fn. 1. However, the "Description du Kansou" written in 1892 by the missionary Steyaert, contains the note that in Xining there were still special inns for foreigners, i.e., for non-Chinese, which seems to allude to the traditional *xiejia*; see Steyaert 1892:8. Schram, who was stationed in Xining from 1912 onwards, mentioned special inns in Xining accommodating Tibetan and Mongol nomads free of charge; see Schram 1913:2. Teichman, in contrast, mentioned *xiejia* in bSang chu/ Xiahe in 1915/16, describing them as itinerant Muslim traders and not as innkeepers; Teichman 1921:144.

39 For a more detailed account concerning the political and economic changes see section IV on sTong 'khor and section V on the wool trade.

40 The few, mostly middle-aged and younger A mdo Tibetans who I asked about the traditional *xiejia* institution, were unaware of its former existence and could not provide a specific Tibetan term.

41 The terms *gnas tshang* and *ten khang* have been suggested by an A mdo Tibetan scholar in a personal communication. For the terms *tsong dpon* and *mkhar dpon* see Rockhill 1891:110.

42 See Zhou 1970:205.

43 See Ekvall 1939:53, 62.

to be another phonetic spelling. The correct Tibetan form might be *zangs sa*, ‘place of/ for the copper pot?’ and thus seems to accord with the Chinese term *guozi*.⁴⁴

Institutions similar to the *xiejia* and the *yangke* also existed in Sichuan and Yunnan 云南 provinces in the border region of Khams. In Sichuan, for example, we find the Chinese designation *guozhuang* 锅庄 (a variation of *guozi*) for itinerant traders in nomad areas and, for those who originated from Shaanxi province, the term *laoshaan* 老陕.⁴⁵ In Yunnan, the institution similar to the *xiejia* seems to have been called *madian* 马店.⁴⁶ In these cases I am unaware of the Tibetan equivalents. Apparently, there existed various Tibetan terms for the Chinese *xiejia*, and these also differed locally.

III. LOCATIONS OF *XIEJIA* IN A MDO

As mentioned above, references to *xiejia* in A mdo are mainly found in Chinese sources starting from 1822, first in connection with the reforms initiated by the governor-general Nayancheng and later in general accounts on trade in Qinghai and Gansu. According to Nayancheng’s reports to the throne from 1822 and 1823, *xiejia* were established in the major market places of Zi ling/ Xining, sTong ‘khor/ Dan’ gaer/ modern Huangyuan, rDo sbis/ Xunhua, Khri kha/ Guide, gSer khog/ Datong and Ba yan mkhar/ Bayanrong/ modern Hualong 化隆.⁴⁷ For example, in 1823 eighteen officially registered *xiejia*, so-called *guan xiejia*, catered to the Mongols in Xining, twenty-one to the Tibetans and four to the Monguors/ *Tu min*.⁴⁸ In contrast, gSer khog had only a few *xiejia* for the Mongols and none for Tibetans.⁴⁹ In the area of Ba yan mkhar, rDo sbis and Khri kha there were only about eight *guan xiejia* in 1823, but many private, unregistered *xiejia*.⁵⁰

44 See Fesmire 1922:3.

45 For *guozhuang* see Millward 1989:31 fn. 8. A *laoshaan* is described by Teichman as follows: “He turned out not to be a Tibetan at all, but a *Lao Shan*... These hardy and courageous traders have been established in this valley [i.e., Tzako Valley in Khams] ... for many years for the purpose of tapping the trade of the grass-country nomads... They are completely Tibetanised in dress and customs, and the second and third generation appear to become Tibetans altogether. The *Lao Shan* are to be found all over the Szechuan-Tibet frontier... They have their counterpart on the Kansu border in the *Hsieh Chia*, the Mahomedan middlemen who monopolise the Kokonor trade in a similar way.” See Teichman 1922:76–77, 86, 96.

46 Personal communication from a Chinese scholar.

47 See *Qing Xuanzong Cheng Huangdi shilu* 412/471 and Nayancheng 1853:4/41.

48 See Nayancheng 1853:4/41. Two decades later, in 1845, Huc and Gabet mentioned numerous *xiejia* in Xining. Since they pretended to be Mongols, they stayed in a *xiejia* for Mongols; see Huc/ Gabet 1987:386–387.

49 See Nayancheng 1853:4/41–43.

50 See Nayancheng 1853:4/39–40. For late 19th/ early 20th century *xiejia* in Khri kha/ Guide and Xunhua see also Gu/ Lu 1934:259–260 and Rockhill 1894:89, 93–94.

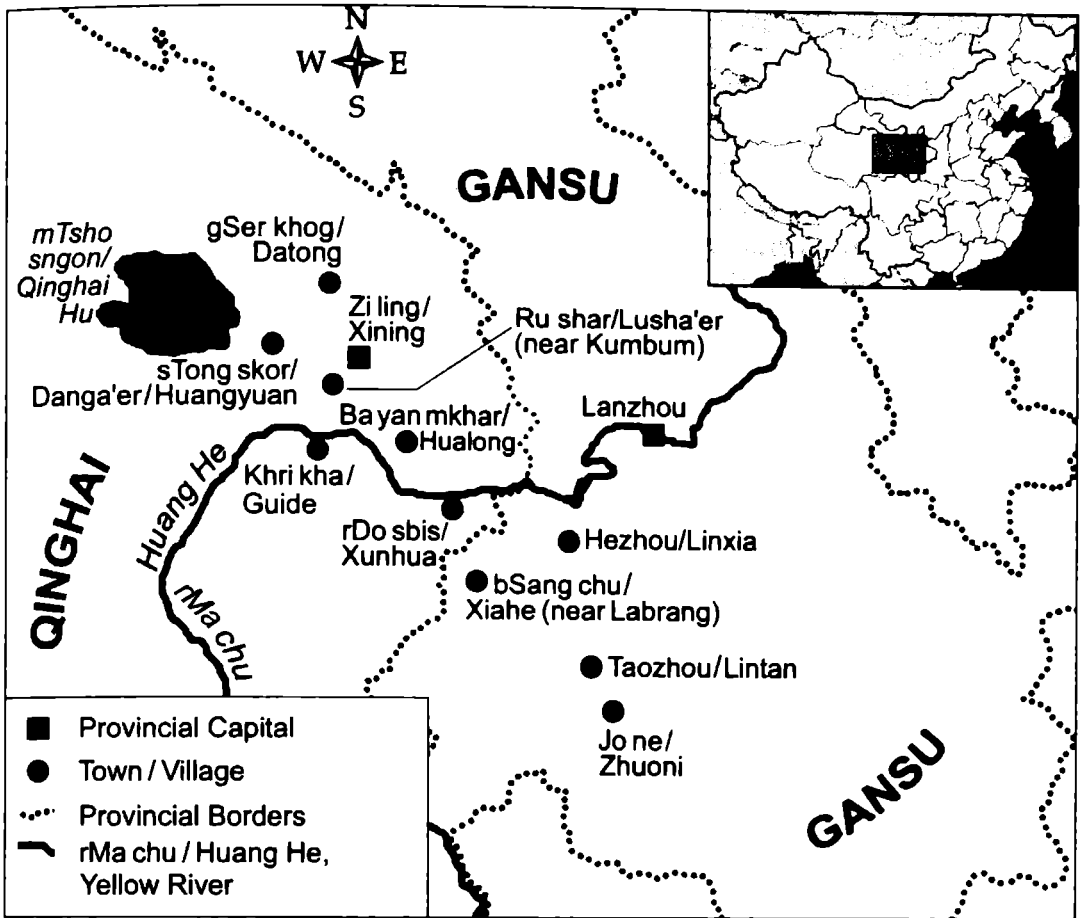


Fig. 1: Important Trading Centers in 19th/ Early 20th Century Northeast A mdo
(map draft: B. Horlemann, map maker: A. Gruschke)

Hostels run by Muslims are also frequently mentioned in market places near monastic centers such as bSang chu/ Xiahe near Labrang Monastery⁵¹ and Ru shar/ Lushaer 鲁沙尔 near Kumbum Monastery⁵² as well as in Gan lho/ Heicuo 黑错/ modern Hezhou 合作 and in border towns such as Old Taozhou 洮州/ modern Lintan 临潭 and Hezhou 河州/ modern Linxia 临夏, but there are no indications that they were *xiejia* in the sense described above. They were likely normal inns open to all travelers.

51 David-Neel mentioned a multi-functional Muslim inn in Sasoma (near Labrang) in 1920 with a shop for Tibetans which also provided loans. However, she did not call it a *xiejia*; see David-Neel 1933:52. Muslim inns are also frequently mentioned for bSang chu/ Xiahe, but they are not called *xiejia* either. Apparently, in bSang chu/ Xiahe those who served as brokers or middlemen in the wool trade, were also not called *xiejia* but 'zhuangke'; see Dang/ Chen 1987:51–52.

52 For the strong presence of Muslims and Muslim traders in Ru shar/ Lushaer see Ma 2004:139 and Filchner 1906:21–23. Schram 1912:2 mentioned the construction of a new inn in Lou sa, i.e., Ru shar/ Lushaer, built exclusively for Tibetans, but he did not refer to it as a *xiejia*.

IV. THE *XIEJIA* OF sTONG 'KHOR/ DAN'GAER

In order to obtain a more detailed picture of the *xiejia*'s relevance for nomadic trade in A mdo, sTong 'khor is examined more closely. As mentioned above, this important market place in the Sino-Tibetan borderland was situated about 50 km west of Xining (see map) at an altitude of 2,680 m. From sTong 'khor major trading routes branched off to Yul shul/ Yushu and Lha sa, Tsaidam, the Gansu Corridor and via Xining and Lanzhou to inland China. sTong 'khor was also connected to Khri kha/ Guide, Labrang and Kumbum through minor trading routes. Given its convenient location and its fame as a market place it is not surprising that sTong 'khor is frequently mentioned by foreign explorers and travelers such as Huc and Gabet, Przhevalsky, Kozlov, Grenard, Kreitner, Hedin, Rockhill, Tafel, Filchner, Teichman, Pereira and others who all stopped in sTong 'khor, usually in order to buy provisions and to make preparations for expeditions to central Tibet.⁵³ They refer to sTong 'khor by a great variety of names such as Donkyr/ Tonkyr, Tonkerr, Dankar/ Tankar, Tenkar, Tanko, Tang-Keou-Eul, etc. Also a number of Christian missionaries visited or lived in sTong 'khor such as the Polhills, the Rijnharts, the Urechs and the Plymires.⁵⁴ Several Chinese travelers, anthropologists and Guomindang/ Kuomintang officials have also left reports about sTong 'khor.⁵⁵

In the aftermath of the anti-Qing rebellion of the A mdo Mongol aristocrat Lobsang Tenzin⁵⁶ in 1723/24, sTong 'khor received the official status as a border market by the Qing Dynasty in 1727 and thus began replacing neighboring Duoba 多巴⁵⁷ which, at least since the late 17th/ early 18th centuries, had been a key regional market for the much sought after Qinghai salt. By 1742, sTong 'khor appears to have become the major entrepôt for the Qinghai salt trade which apparently continued to be dominated by Mongols until at least the early 19th century.⁵⁸ A Qing official was placed in sTong 'khor in 1744 to control the market fairs that had been held annually in the second and eighth lunar months and later more often until, in the mid-18th century, restrictions were lifted altogether.⁵⁹ Presumably, the establishment of the first *xiejia* in sTong 'khor took place at about the same time or shortly thereafter and thus already long before 1822 when, to my knowledge, *xiejia* are for the first time explicitly mentioned

53 See, for example, Grenard 1904:201–202, Kreitner 1881:741, Hedin 1898:1173–1176, Filchner 1938:62–73 and Pereira 1925:107–111.

54 See, for example, Marston 1905:111, Rijnhart 1901:133–169, Plymire 1959 and Urech 1934.

55 See, for example, Chen 1936, Fan 1936, Gu/ Lu 1934, Ma 1936, Shao/ Gao 1936 and Zhou 1970.

56 Tib. Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, Chin. Luobuzang Danjin 罗卜藏丹津.

57 For Duoba see also fn. 25.

58 For the salt trade and the salt monopoly in Qinghai see fn. 2 as well as Yang 1982:436–437, Mian 2007:28–30, *Qing Shizong Xian Huangdi shilu* 32/311 and *Qing Renzong Rui Huangdi shilu* 74/642, 113/1037, 115/1055.

59 See *Qinghai tongshi* 1999:386 and Wu 1995:265–284.

in connection with sTong 'khor.⁶⁰ sTong 'khor became the seat of a Qing dynasty sub-prefect/ *ting* 厅 in 1829. The latter event was probably connected to the continuing decline of Mongol power in A mdo and the successive return of Tibetan nomad tribes to the pastures north of the rMa chu/ Huanghe and south of the mTsho sngon po/ Qinghai Lake which had led to frequent conflicts and unrest among the Mongol and Tibetan tribes starting from the late 18th century.⁶¹ During the 19th century, the Dalai Lama's 'tribute missions' from Lhasa to Beijing, which were in fact official trading caravans, usually passed through sTong 'khor enroute to the Chinese capital. At least since 1894 the Dalai Lama had placed one of his commercial agents, the *tsong spyi*, in sTong 'khor to oversee this official caravan trade.⁶² With regard to the overall importance for Tibetan long distance trade sTong 'khor competed with Kangding 康定/ Daqianlu in Khams/ now Sichuan and Lijiang 丽江 in Yunnan where the other two *tsong spyi* of the Dalai Lama on the Sino-Tibetan frontier were settled.⁶³ While Kangding was the major market for the tea-wool trade in Khams and beyond, sTong 'khor was the main trading place for A mdo wool.⁶⁴ Rockhill estimated the Tibetan trade turnover for sTong 'khor in 1889 to be about 150,000 *liang*/ Taels while Grenard thought it was about 40,000 British Pounds (= ? Taels) in 1894 and Tafel about 400,000 *liang*/ Taels (about 1.3 million Reichsmark) in 1905/06.⁶⁵

It seems that sTong 'khor was a busy market place for the greater part of the mid-18th to the mid-20th centuries despite Mongol-Tibetan tensions in the early to mid-19th century⁶⁶ and the series of Muslim uprisings in Gansu and Qinghai from 1862 to 1872/73 and again in 1895/96.⁶⁷ As a consequence of Muslim uprisings between

60 *Han* 汉, i.e., Chinese, and *Fan* 番, i.e., non-Chinese, traders in sTong 'khor are already explicitly mentioned in 1742, but not as *xiejia*; see Yang 1982:436–437.

61 See Ma 2004:139, Mian 2005a:56 and *ibid.* 2007:29.

62 In about 1823, the annual 'tribute' mission of the Dalai Lama was guided by the *Kanbu lama* 堪布喇嘛 through sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer and on that occasion the *xiejia* were to report on the latter. This implies that the Dalai Lama did not have a *tsong spyi* in sTong 'khor yet; see *Qing Xuanzong Cheng Huangdi shilu* 50/560.

63 See Rockhill 1891:110 and Grenard 1904:287.

64 See van Spengen 1995:25 and Grenard 1904:292–93.

65 See Rockhill 1891:111, Grenard 1904:293 and Tafel 1914/1:178 fn. 1. Included in Tafel's estimate is the trade turnover of the Dalai Lama's trade caravans which amounted to about 100,000 Taels. In principle, one *liang* was equivalent to one ounce of silver, or to one Chinese Tael as it was called in English. However, the actual weight of one silver ounce in northwest China was not necessarily equal to one silver ounce in central China. Currency instability and its local variations posed significant problems for merchants and travelers.

66 For the Mongol-Tibetan conflicts see, for example, *Huangnan zangzu zizhizhou zhi* 1999:1355, *Qinghai sheng zhi* 2, 2001:108, *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:169 and Wu 1995. For sTong 'khor's continuing importance as a market place, see, for example, the account of Huc and Gabet who claimed that in 1845 sTong 'khor played a much more important role in commerce than Xining. See Huc/ Gabet 1987/I:386.

67 Interestingly, between 1862 and 1875 sTong 'khor was the sole place for newly submitted Tibetan tribes to receive the official trade coupons; thus trade might not have declined as much

1862 and 1873 some commerce had been diverted from sTong 'khor to Songpan 松潘 and other places. By the 1880s, however, sTong 'khor had obviously regained its former position as the major market in Qinghai. In the aftermath of the rebellions Muslim traders were excluded from trade in sTong 'khor for several years and therefore there was little or no Muslim commercial participation at that time.⁶⁸ Further disruptions followed with the anti-Qing Huangbiaohui 黄表会 Rebellion in 1910/11 led by Li Wang 李旺⁶⁹ and the devastating attacks against the town by the Muslim rebel troops of Ma Zhongying 马仲英 in February 1929.⁷⁰ However, these events apparently had no long lasting effects on sTong 'khor's economic role in A mdo. In fact, due to the booming wool trade of the late 19th/ early 20th centuries, commerce in sTong 'khor constantly increased and a most lucrative era for the local *xiejia* ensued. Even after the decline of the international wool trade in the 1930s, sTong 'khor remained an important market in Qinghai.⁷¹ The significance of the wool trade for sTong 'khor will be studied in more detail in the following section.

During the 19th/20th century, sTong 'khor had a multi-ethnic population ranging from ten to twenty thousand, composed of Han, Hui, Salar, Mongols, Tibetans and

as one would expect despite the Muslim rebellions; see *Qing Miaocong Yi Huangdi shilu* 21/375. However, Kreitner's description of sTong 'khor in summer 1879 as a large heap of ruins with no trade, no traffic and no Tibetan caravans from central Tibet contradicts this assumption; see Kreitner 1881:741. We should bear in mind that Kreitner's negative impression might have been due to the fact that summer was not the main trading and caravan season, which were spring and autumn.

68 See Yang 1989:284. For example, in 1882/83 the missionary van Hecke did not include Muslims ('*les Tartares*' as he usually called them) among the population of sTong 'khor, but only Chinese, Mongols, Monguor/ *Daldes* and Tibetans/ *Tangoutes*; see van Hecke 1882/83:108.

69 Li Wang 李旺, variant: Li Ming 李明, of Xichuan 西川 near Xining, founded a secret society called Huangbiaohui 黄表会 in Xining in order to topple the Qing Dynasty. The society had several thousand supporters and a center of activity was sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer where the salt tax bureau was destroyed by the rebels; see *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:180, *Qinghai sheng zhi* 2, 2001:116 and Li 2006:167–171.

70 Seventeen years old Ma Zhongying, the son of a cousin of Warlord Ma Qi, started a rebellion in Gansu and Qinghai in late 1928 which, he claimed, was directed against the growing dominance of the *guominjun* 国民军/ Nationalist Army faction of northern China's Warlord Feng Yuxiang 冯玉祥 in Gansu and Qinghai. The rebellion started in Xunhua and Hezhou where it received support from the Muslim population, and then shifted towards southern Gansu. From there Ma Zhongying's troops moved north again and, on Feb. 14th/15th, 1929 they attacked and looted Huangyuan/ Dan'gaer, allegedly killing about 2,400 of its inhabitants. After this attack on Dan'gaer, Ma Qi who had remained inactive, sent troops together with Sun Lianzhong 孙连仲—formerly army commander of the *guominjun*, then nominally governor of Qinghai since late 1927 and later governor of Gansu in 1929/30—and forced Ma Zhongying to retreat to Datong and Menyuan. See, for example, *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:207–208, *Qinghai san Ma* 1988:45, Li 2006:186–188, Li 1986:116–121 and Plymire 1929.

71 See *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:244–245, Fergusson 1911:8–10, Koslow 1955:219, Lipman 1981:130–131, Filchner 1938:65, *ibid.* 1941:81, Ma 2003:166 and Cressy-Marcks 1940:309.

Tu/ Monguor and their mixed marriage descendants. About half of the inhabitants were involved in agriculture and the other half in trading and small industry.⁷² Apart from the major nomad trading goods such as wool, hides and salt, also furs, musk, joss-sticks, rhubarb and other medicinal herbs were bartered by Tibetan and Mongol traders. Moreover, saffron, sugar-candy, dates, shells and amber came with Tibetan trading caravans from British India. The nomads mostly wanted grain, tea, cloth and items of everyday use. Among the latter were also leather, saddles, harnesses, boots, felt hats, flour, tobacco, paper, iron pots, articles of hardware, swords and fire-arms. Accordingly, trade was carried out through many different outlets. Besides the influential Shanshaan trading houses and the commercial agents of the foreign companies there were numerous local shopkeepers and peddlers (the aforementioned *diaolangzi*) and the *xiejia*. Among the many directly involved in trade in sTong 'khor—estimates for 1910 and 1927 mention circa 1,000 merchants—only a small fraction were *xiejia*. Apparently, their numbers ranged from 30 to 50.⁷³ Ethnically the *xiejia* owners were mostly Han Chinese, Hui or Salar. Originally, most Han *xiejia* stemmed from among the Shanxi and Shaanxi traders, but they were gradually replaced by local Han and Muslim families from Gansu and Qinghai. The Muslims dominated the *xiejia* business during most of the 19th and 20th centuries except for the years during and immediately after the Muslim uprisings of 1862–1873 and 1895/96 when the Muslim population was much diminished in numbers and the remaining Muslim families banned from residing in sTong 'khor.⁷⁴

In general Gansu and Qinghai Muslims were more flexible in adapting to Tibetan ways than the average Han Chinese. For instance, Muslim merchants usually spoke the local Tibetan dialects and adopted Tibetan dress and customs while trading in Tibetan areas. With regard to the *xiejia*, regardless of being Han or Muslim, they often had Tibetan wives or were already of mixed blood themselves, which facilitated intercultural communication with their clientele. Many *xiejia* established longstanding and close relationships with their Tibetan trading partners including pledges of

72 See Ma 2004:139, Rockhill 1891:109, *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:189, Tafel 1914/1:179 and Cressy-Marcks 1940:309.

73 See, for example, Yang 1989:287, Ma 2003:166, Tafel 1914/1:180, Xu 1983:77 and Pu/ Yi 1981:40. Zhou 2000:20 mentions only 13 *xiejia* for 1914, but this seems to be a misprint, i.e. 十三 (i.e., 13) instead of 三十 (i.e., 30). For 1912 the Belgian Catholic missionary F. Essens (1912:2) provided the following description: “Tan-ko-eul [sTong 'khor:] belle ville d'environ 1500 famille, avec t'ing [*ting*, i.e., sub-prefect], sie-t'ai [*xietai*, i.e., assistant administrator] – t'ou-seu [*tusi*, i.e., aboriginal officer] et tch'eng cheou ing [*chengshouying*, i.e., garrison commandant]. Faubourg sud-est et ouest. 20-30 famille de hoei-hoei [i.e., Huihui/ Muslims]. Grand commerce avec les sifan's [Xifan, i.e., Tibetans, Mongols] qui y viennent nombreux avec leurs caravans de mao-gniou [*maoniu/ yak*], chargés des sel, laine – peaux – beurre et y achètent leur farine de froment ou d'épeautre (tsamba) etc. 40 sie-kia [*xiejia*] pour loger sifan's et 8 fam. [famille] de iang-hang [*yang hang*, i.e., foreign companies].”

74 See, for example, Teichman 1921:172–174 and Rockhill 1891:109–110.

brotherhood and marital ties.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, when middlemen serve several masters and also seek profit for themselves, conflicts of interests are bound to occur and consequently *xiejia* were frequently accused of taking advantage of the inexperience and naivety of their customers and even of outright fraud.

“In outward show, the guests are well treated [by the *xiejia*], but still they are quite at the mercy of the landlords, who, having an understanding with the traders of the town, manage to make money of both parties.”

“The House of Repose, as we have already indicated, was kept by Mussulmen. One day, their Mufti who had recently arrived from Lan-Tcheou [Lanzhou] ..., attended at the house to preside over some religious ceremony... Sandara the Bearded [a Monguor], however, had an explanation of his own, which was, that the Grand Lama of the Hoi-Hoi [Hui, Muslims] attended on these occasions to teach his sectaries the latest improvements in the art of cheating in trade.”⁷⁶

However, it seems that Tibetan nomads also attempted to increase their profits, for example, by mixing sand into the wool or by drenching it in water in order to make the loads heavier.⁷⁷

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WOOL TRADE FOR THE A MDO TIBETAN NOMADS AND THE *XIEJIA* OF sTONG ‘KHOR

In 1875, according to Ma Xuexian, Qinghai provided a third of China’s wool production amounting to about 8 million *jin* 斤 (= Chinese pounds)⁷⁸ annually. The real Tibetan wool boom, however, came only after 1890 when wool was increasingly in demand for European and American carpet factories. This interest in Tibetan wool resulted in a quickly expanding wool market on the Sino-Tibetan frontier with sTong ‘khor as one of the main entrepôts for wool coming from or through A mdo.⁷⁹ The

75 See Xu 1983:77.

76 See Huc/ Gabet 1987/I:386–387, II:18.

77 See, for example, Millward 1989:7. The *xiejia* themselves are accused of using similar methods when selling wool to foreign merchants; see Pu/ Yi 1981:39.

78 For difficulties equating the traditional *jin* to kg see fn. 88.

79 According to Ma 2004:140, half of Qinghai’s wool trade was handled in sTong ‘khor. Apart from sTong ‘khor other major wool markets in Qinghai apparently existed in Datong/ gSer khog and in Guide/ Khri kha. In Gansu major markets for A mdo wool were situated in Hezhou/ modern Linxia as well as in bSang chu/ Xiahe near Labrang Monastery and probably in Old Taozhou/ near modern Lintan, although the latter apparently specialized more in hides than in wool. Furthermore, several ‘collection centers’ were distributed along the Sino-Tibetan border such as Ngul ra/ Oula 欧拉, Heicuo 黑错/ modern Hezuo 合作 or Baoan 保安 near Reb kong/ Tongren 同仁. It should be noted that references to ‘Qinghai’ or ‘Xining wool’ often also included the wool traded in the above-mentioned Gansu markets; see Yuan 2007:37.

wool collected in nomad areas was transported to sTong 'khor from various places in A mdo via relay stations⁸⁰ varying from ten to thirty stops. From sTong 'khor the wool was transported to Lanzhou and from there by mule or boat along the Yellow River to the railhead in Baotou 包头 where it was repacked on trains traveling to the coastal city of Tianjin 天津. By 1900 some 20 Tianjin based foreign trading companies from Great Britain, the United States, Germany and Russia had established purchase agencies in Xining or sTong 'khor to buy the wool more or less directly from the producers.⁸¹ The demand for Tibetan wool rose even more with the post-WWI economic boom, reaching its heyday in the mid-1920s. The Great Depression of 1929 and the growing Japanese influence in Manchuria during the 1930s, however, discouraged further western investment in northern China. In Qinghai the wool trade and wool price apparently decreased considerably after 1931 due to monetary restraints which forced many merchants into bankruptcy. The Japanese invasion of central China in 1937 finally severed the traditional northern Chinese trading routes. However, the decline of the wool trade in northern Chinese harbor cities such as Tianjin after 1929 seems to have affected sTong 'khor less than might be expected. The Qinghai markets started to recover in the mid-1930s and wool remained the major and most important export product of Qinghai province at least until the mid 1940s, although trade volumes and wool prices seem to have decreased in comparison to the 1920s.⁸²

Two economic measures taken by the Ma warlords in Qinghai apparently had the most long-lasting and far-reaching effects on sTong 'khor's wool trade. The first measure was the growing monopolization of commerce on the Sino-Tibetan border by the big and influential trading companies of the Ma warlords such as Deshunchang 德顺昌, Deyiheng 德义恒, Yiyuanxiang 义源祥, Xiehe shangzhan 协和高栈 and Dexinghai 德兴海. These had been established starting from about 1910 and, being based in Xining, Ru shar near Kumbum, Hualong/ Ba yan mkhar, Linxia, etc., they seem to have diverted business from sTong 'khor.⁸³ The second measure of the Ma Clan was the increasingly successful enforcement of tax payments on A mdo nomads. Instead of paying taxes in money, most pastoralists paid in kind, i.e., in wool and hides. These 'tax payments' were then collected, shipped and sold by the trading companies of the Ma warlords.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, we lack data for sTong 'khor's wool

80 Tib. *sa tshigs/ rgya tshigs*, Chin. *yizhan* 驿站.

81 See Yang 1989:274, 287, Yuan 2007:37, Liu 1995:78 and *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:244–245. Branch offices of these foreign trading companies were also found in Guide/ Khri kha, Hezhou/ modern Linxia, Xunhua/ rDo sbis, Datong/ gSer khog, Yong'an 永安 and Ebo 俄博. See Teichman 1921:172–74.

82 See Ma 2007:83 and Ma 2002:153. For figures see the table below.

83 See Ma 2007:83, Yang 2007:198–200, *Qinghai jianshi* 1992:233 and *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1984:284, 319, 323–325.

84 See Fan 1990:166, 170, Chen 2000:131, 138, Hunsberger 1978:177–178 and Yuan 2007:38–39 for more on the monopolization of the Qinghai wool trade by the Ma Clan.

market in the 1940s. This, however, might be further indication that by then, the heyday of wool trade in sTong 'khor was definitely over.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, even then Tibetan wool from Qinghai continued to be traded via Songpan, Lhasa and Kalimpong to India and to Russia via Xinjiang 新疆.⁸⁶

I have not found reliable comparative data for wool prices and trading volumes in sTong 'khor, although several authors do provide statistics for various years. In many cases the figures are probably mere estimates and information on how they were obtained, is often lacking.⁸⁷ Furthermore, we are ignorant of the price inflation rates and the exchange rates of the Chinese Tael (silver ounce, Chin. *liang*) over the decades, and information on the relation of the Chinese *jin* (Chinese pound) to the *dan* (picul) is contradictory (ca. 50 to 60 kg according to one source, 240 *jin* according to another).⁸⁸ In addition, different qualities of wool existed which were subdivided according to the place of origin, the age or race of the sheep, the shearing method and the season of shearing.⁸⁹ These categorizations which obviously also influenced the wool price, are not reflected in the available data on volumes and prices. Furthermore, in the 1930s prices began to be stated not only in Taels but also in 'foreign' *yan/yang yuan* 洋元, 'dollars'.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the few available snippets of data do, at

85 The pastoral industry in Qinghai suffered a serious setback in the early/ mid 1940s due to livestock epidemics which, of course, also had a negative effect on the wool production; see Hunsberger 1978:175–176 and Li 2003b:23–28.

86 See *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1984:324–325, van Spengen 1995:27–33, Lipman 1981:129, Millward 1989:2–13, Ma 2007:83, Li 2003b:33–34 and Hunsberger 1994:142.

87 Chinese travelers who, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, often came on official or semi-official reconnaissance tours to northwest China, mostly relied on 'official' data provided by the Ma warlords and their administration, while foreign travelers probably obtained information from local traders and other informants such as missionaries. See, for example, Shao/ Gao 1936, Li 2003a, Rockhill 1891 and *ibid.* 1894.

88 According to the modern metric system 1 *dan* is equivalent to 100 *jin*/ pounds and to 50 kg. Xu obviously equates the *dan* to the *tuo* 驮, which also means a 'load' of something, and then equates it to 200 *jin*; see Xu 1983:78. Shao/ Gao 1936:208 state that 1 *dan* is equal to 240 *jin* and according to Tafel (1914/1:347 fn.1) one picul (= 1 *dan*) equals 100 catty (= 100 *jin*), which is equivalent to 65 kg. Rockhill 1894:97 fn. has 1 *jin* = 1 1/3 lbs.

89 For a general description of these subdivisions see Yuan 2007:40 and for a detailed one see Zhou 1970:201–204.

90 The dollar was a widely used currency in 18th to mid-20th century China. Until the late 19th century the Mexican Silver dollar circulated in China concurrently with local Chinese currencies such as the newly issued late 19th century Chinese Silver *yan*. In the course of the international adoption of the gold standard, the Mexican Silver dollar was gradually replaced by the U.S. dollar which became the new dominant currency for reference. In the first half of 1930, the value of the *yan* fluctuated between 2.75 to 3.58 *yan* for 1 USD; see Kansu Echo 1930:22. According to Gu/ Lu 1934:267, thirty 'foreign' *yan*/ dollars was the minimum amount needed for subsistence in Xunhua county per person/ per year. That the monetary system was extremely complicated and that exchange rates were often used to the disadvantage of the inexperienced, is repeatedly mentioned by foreign travelers and also confirmed by [Golok] Ehoubao 1982:129-130.

first glance, roughly reflect the general trends for the A mdo wool trade as described above and are thus reproduced in the table below.

Table 1: Trade Volumes and Prices for Wool⁹¹

	Qinghai	sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer	Other	Sources
first half 19 th c.		Vol.: 1.2 million <i>jin</i>		Yang 1910:284
ca. 1860– 1875*		Vol.: 400,000 <i>jin</i>		Yang 1910:284
1875	Vol.: 8 million <i>jin</i>			Ma 2004:140
1889		Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 1.8 <i>liang</i> / Taels		Rockhill 1891:111
1891		Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 6 <i>liang</i> / Taels		Rockhill 1894:64
1900			Hezhou/ Gansu: Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = about 1.8 <i>liang</i> / Taels	Wei 2002:318
1904		Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 11–12 <i>liang</i> / Taels		Tafel 1914/I:347
1905/06		Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 9 <i>liang</i> / Taels		Tafel 1914/I:347 fn. 1
ca. 1910		Vol.: 600,000– 700,000 <i>jin</i> to several millions <i>jin</i> Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = about 30 <i>liang</i> / Taels		<i>Qinghai lishi jiyao</i> 1987:244–245, Yang 1910:274, 284

91 As already mentioned above, most figures are probably mere estimates and information on how they were obtained, is usually lacking. Furthermore, since information on the relation of the Chinese *jin* (Chinese pound) to the *dan* (picul) is contradictory (ca. 50 to 65 kg, i.e., 100 to 130 pounds, according to some sources, 200 to 240 *jin* according to others), I have refrained from converting them into a common unit. The same applies for the *liang*/ Tael and the *yuan*.

* Era of Muslim uprisings in Gansu and Qinghai.

	Qinghai	sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer	Other	Sources
1914		Vol.: 2.2 million <i>jin</i> worth 440,000 <i>liang</i> / Tael, i.e., 100 <i>jin</i> = 20 <i>liang</i> / Tael	Xunhua, Labrang & Longwu: Vol.: 1.3 million <i>jin</i> , Lusha'er, Shangwuzhuang: 1.5 million <i>jin</i> , Guide: 1 million <i>jin</i> , Ebo, Datong, Yongan: 1 million <i>jin</i> , Yushu: 1.5 million <i>jin</i>	Zhou 1919:18–20
1918–1927	Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 8–10 <i>liang</i> / Tael	Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 15–16 <i>liang</i> / Tael	Tianjin [seaport]: Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = about 40 <i>liang</i> / Tael	<i>Qinghai lishi jiyao</i> 1987:284, Zhou 1935:200
1924	Vol.: 7.5 million <i>jin</i>	Vol.: 5 million <i>jin</i> Price: 1 <i>dan</i> = 20 <i>liang</i> / Tael		Ma 2004:140, <i>Qinghai lishi jiyao</i> 1987:245
1924–1927			bSang chu/ Xiahe in Gansu: Vol.: about 7 million <i>jin</i>	Ma 2004:140
1926–1935			Tianjin/ seaport: 100 <i>jin</i> = about 20 <i>liang</i> / Tael	Zhou 1935:200
1934	Vol.: 6–7 million <i>jin</i> Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 6–7 <i>yuan</i> respectively 10 <i>yuan</i>		Gansu and Sichuan: Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 14–15 <i>yuan</i>	Yuan 2007:40
1935	Vol.: 4.3–6 million <i>jin</i> Price: 1 <i>jin</i> = 0.2 <i>yuan</i> , i.e., 100 <i>jin</i> = 20 <i>yuan</i>	Vol.: 2.2 million <i>jin</i> Price: 100? <i>jin</i> = 15– 20 <i>liang</i>	Xining: Vol.: 18,100 <i>dan</i> worth 14,769,000 <i>yuan</i> , Datong, Yongdeng and Guide: Vol.: 1 million <i>jin</i> each	Shao/ Gao 1936:208–209, 230 Chen 1936:131, 138

	Qinghai	sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer	Other	Sources
1936			Labrang: Vol.: 1,2 million <i>jin</i> Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 14 <i>yuan</i>	Ma 2002:56
1937	Vol.: 5 million <i>jin</i> Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 20 <i>yuan</i> **		Gansu and Qinghai: Vol.: more than 10 million <i>jin</i>	Ma 2002:216–217
(late) 1930s?	50 <i>jin</i> = 8 <i>yuan</i> , i.e., 100 <i>jin</i> = 16 <i>yuan</i>		Xining: Price: 100 <i>jin</i> = 5 <i>yuan</i>	[Golok] Ehoubao 1982:129, <i>Xining xian fengtu diaochaji</i> 2002:282
Before 1938			Qinghai, Xiahe and Ningxia: Vol.: about 350.000 <i>dan</i>	Li 2003:18–20, 32
1939	Vol.: 6 million <i>jin</i>		Labrang area: Price: 1 <i>jin</i> = 0.2 <i>yuan</i> , i.e., 100 <i>jin</i> = 20 <i>yuan</i>	Tang 1939:522 Li 1942:133 Fan 1936:170
1942			Qinghai, Xiahe and Ningxia: Vol.: about 200.000 <i>dan</i>	Li 2003:18–20, 32

In the first half of the 19th century sTong 'khor is supposed to have exported about 1.2 million *jin* of wool annually. This figure decreased to about 400,000 *jin* during and after the Muslim rebellions of 1862 to 1873.⁹² While Przhevalsky mentioned that barter trade was still common in sTong 'khor in 1872/73 using the sheep as the basis for trading calculations,⁹³ for 1889 Rockhill presented a wool price stated in currency:

** Ma 2002:217 has 100 *jin* = 200 *yuan* which is obviously mistaken. I interpret this to be 100 *jin* = 20 *yuan*.

92 See Yang 1989:284.

93 The 'sheep currency' worked in such a way that common trading goods such as livestock or grain, butter, etc. had fixed exchange rates: for example one horse of average quality was worth a certain number of sheep, while a good quality horse was worth more sheep. A yak, on the other hand, was worth so many horses and thus so many sheep. Another exchange rate also existed with butter as the base currency and was still in place in some nomad areas in the early

in 1889 one picul of wool was worth 1.8 Taels in sTong 'khor.⁹⁴ By 1891 the price was already up to 6 Taels for 200 *jin* (= 1 picul?) and by 1904 to 11 to 12 Taels.⁹⁵ In 1905/06 it fell to 9 Taels for reasons not stated.⁹⁶ In about 1910, however, the wool price allegedly reached 30 Taels per 100 *jin* and the trade volume of wool varied between at least 600,000 to 700,000 *jin* annually up to several million.⁹⁷ Between 1918 and 1927, the average wool price amounted to 15 to 16 Taels per picul, but could rise to about 20 Taels per picul as an example from 1924 demonstrates.⁹⁸ During the same year about 5 million *jin* of wool were exported from sTong 'khor being worth circa 1 million *liang*/ Taels, whereas the Qinghai wool export reportedly reached 7.5 million *jin* altogether.⁹⁹ According to a 1934 source the average wool price in Qinghai, where the Ma warlords held the monopoly, was officially 10 *yuan* for 100 *jin* but in reality merely 6 to 7 *yuan* while in Gansu and Sichuan the wool price is supposed to have reached 14 to 15 *yuan*.¹⁰⁰ By 1934 the trade volume of Qinghai wool had decreased to about 6 million *jin* annually and by 1935 to 4.3–6 million *jin* depending on the source. In 1935 about 2 million *jin* were still handled in sTong 'khor.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, it seems that at least until the early 1940s wool remained

1950s when the Chinese communists entered A mdo. Furthermore, nomads also used Tibetan measures such as *zho*, *srang*, *rgyab dar*, *kha*, etc. for calculating the prices of different goods. See Prejevalsky [Przhevalsky] 1876/II:120, Mian 2005a:58–59, Xu 1983:74, Ehoubao 1982:129–130 and Xing 1994:84–86. These various ways for calculating prices seem to have been in use concurrently.

94 See Rockhill 1891:111.

95 See Rockhill 1894:64 and Tafel 1914/1:347. However, Wei 2002:318 states that the wool price in Hezhou in 1900 was only 1.8 Taels for 100 *jin* of wool. Unfortunately, he does not provide a source for this figure.

96 At that time 1 Tael was equivalent to 3 English Shilling according to Fergusson 1911:8–10 and to 3 German Reichsmark according to Tafel. For further comparison: in Xining an average horse was worth 18 Taels in 1892 and 20–25 Taels in 1905/06; see Rockhill 1894:64 and Tafel 1914/1:347.

97 See *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:244–245. Yang 1989:274, 284 writes that 1 *jin* [sic] of wool was worth 32 *liang*/ Taels. This is obviously mistaken and I interpret this to refer to one picul instead. See also Zhou 2000:18 who reports that the Tibetans and Mongols in Qinghai sold 2.2 million *jin* of wool annually worth 400,000 *liang*/ Taels, i.e., receiving 20 Taels for 100 *jin* of wool.

98 See *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:284.

99 See Ma 2004:140 and *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 1987:245. Apparently bSang chu/ Xiahe near Labrang Monastery surpassed sTong 'khor's wool trading volumes from 1924 to 1927. Reportedly, bSang chu handled 7.5 million *jin* in 1924, 7 million *jin* in 1925 and 1926 and 7.5 million *jin* in 1927; see Ma 2004:140. For much lower figures for bSang chu/ Xiahe see Dang/ Chen 1987:52. However, their wool trade data is also somewhat contradictory. With regard to prices, a report about the economic situation of Tibetans in the Labrang area in 1939 stated that 1 *jin* of sheep wool was worth 0.2 *yuan* which equals the wool price mentioned for sTong 'khor in 1924; see Tang 1984:522.

100 See Yuan 2007:40 who refers to a report by a wool production inspection group sent by the Guomindang government in 1934. I have been unable to consult this report.

101 See Chen 2000:131, 138 for the average wool price in Qinghai and Shao/ Gao 1936:208–209, 230 for export volumes in about 1935.

the main export product of Qinghai province and still accounted for the major part of the Qinghai GNP.¹⁰²

While it is already difficult to obtain data on the trading volumes of wool and the respective wool prices in sTong 'khor at given times, it is even more difficult to conclude in which proportion the income of the Tibetan nomads increased along with the rising market prices. We can only assume that the wool prices paid to the nomads, if they were not identical with those mentioned above, rose at least proportionally, since the *xiejia* mainly profited from the rising market prices through the fixed percentage of commissions they received from the Tibetan traders plus 'presents' from the buyers. The *xiejia* may also have adjusted the costs of such services as transport, storage or loan giving accordingly. One indication that the A mdo nomads profited from the wool boom as well, was their growing demand for and their improving supply of comparatively expensive firearms. While in the second half of the 19th century their weapons were usually described as poor and outdated, this changed markedly in the early 20th century.

"Their guns are as old as the middle ages – the old fashioned match-lock."¹⁰³

"The possession of rifles, which they [the Goloks] acquire in the course of trade from the Mahomedan merchants of Kansu, has made them far more formidable than they used to be."¹⁰⁴

"And rifles are plentiful in Tibet. In addition to the Tibetan-made muzzle-loaders, there are many foreign high-powered guns. Some are of Russian or Japanese make, brought in by Mongol traders, with a number of regulation British Lee-Enfield rifles crossing the Indian border."¹⁰⁵

It is also striking that the A mdo nomads of the early 20th century are frequently described as rich or as well-to-do, and usually as better off than their sedentary compatriots. Apart from the nomads' weapons, the wealth, value and beauty of the

102 See Fan 1990:170, Li Gufan 2003a:133 and Li Zhuchen 2003b:18–20, 32. Li Gufan was in Xining in 1939 and reported that Qinghai still exported 6 million *jin* of wool annually. Li Zhuchen visited Qinghai and Gansu in 1942 and reported that the combined trading volume of Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia wool reached about 350,000 *dan* [35 million *jin*] annually before the anti-Japanese War and about 200,000 *dan* [20 million *jin*], i.e., 10,000 tons, in 1942.

103 See Christie 1895:2.

104 See Teichman 1922:77.

105 See Forman 1936:120, 229–230. See also Filchner 1906:14 fn. 2 and Kozlow 1925:111–112, 135, 179–180, 190 commenting on the clearly improved equipment with modern weapons of the Tibetan nomads in the first decade of the 20th century.

nomad women's jewelry is repeatedly mentioned admiringly by western observers.¹⁰⁶ Zhou Zhenhe also stated that while barter trade was still common in the early 1930s, wealthy nomads asked for silver in return for their wool.¹⁰⁷

Tang Niao provided the following data for the economic conditions in the Labrang area in Gansu province for 1939: on average a Tibetan nomad family kept 400 to 500 sheep and one sheep produced three to four *jin* of wool annually. Accordingly the wool of 400 sheep amounted to about 1,200 *jin* of wool. Since 1 *jin* of wool was worth 0.2 *yuan*, one family could earn about 240 *yuan* if it sold the whole lot. Tang further estimated that altogether an average Tibetan nomadic household earned at least 1,000 *yuan* annually by selling wool, hides and livestock.¹⁰⁸ In comparison, thirty *yuan* was estimated to be the minimum amount needed for subsistence in neighboring Xunhua County per person/ per year in 1934.¹⁰⁹ Although these figures may be debatable, they support the notion that Tibetan nomads in early 20th century Amdo were comparatively wealthy.¹¹⁰ With regard to nomads living in Qinghai province, the economic situation clearly deteriorated in the 1930s when the traditional *xiejia* system had more or less vanished and the trade monopoly of the Ma warlords was firmly established. Then the Qinghai pastoralists were forced to pay taxes in kind, which meant to sell their wool under market prices (as mentioned above), while prices for commodities such as cloth, tea, etc. had risen markedly.¹¹¹ Whether the Qinghai nomads were able to react by selling surplus wool and other products to markets in Gansu and Sichuan instead, needs further research.

VI. FINAL REMARKS

The *xiejia* institution played a vital role in nomadic trade in Amdo from at least the early 19th century onwards up to the 1920s/30s and had both advantages and disadvantages for the Tibetan pastoralists. From their perspective the traditional *xiejia* provided a convenient place to stay while in a market town. The *xiejia* offered accommodation, food and fodder free of charge and trading opportunities all under one roof. The drawback, however, was that the commercial success of the Tibetan trader depended to a large extent on the business connections and the honesty of the *xiejia*. The latter was also true for the 20th century itinerant *xiejia* who traveled to the Tibetan camps in order to trade. Furthermore, the rising wool prices and profits also

106 See, for example, Ekvall 1939:77–79, Hermanns 1949:53–57 and Forman 1936:33–34.

107 See Zhou 1970:205.

108 See Tang 1984:522. Millward 1989:30 n. 6, however, states that one sheep in Qinghai produced only two to three *jin* of wool annually.

109 See Gu/ Lu 1934:267.

110 Xuan Xiafu traveled in the Tibetan Labrang area in 1925 or 1926 and stated that a gun was worth three horses and that ammunition was extremely expensive as well; see Xuan 2002:98.

111 See Yuan 2007:40.

led to a growing commercialization of trade that entailed a gradual loss of the former strong personal relationships and trust between nomads and *xiejia*.

From the perspective of the *xiejia* owner operating a *xiejia* promised huge profits and included serving several, usually divergent interests at the same time. First, the *xiejia* was interested in making a profit accrued through commissions and services paid for by Tibetan traders, as well as through the substantial 'gifts' received from merchants who bought the Tibetan products. In order not to lose future business, the *xiejia* had to keep both his Tibetan customers and the Chinese or foreign business partners content. Furthermore, the *xiejia* had to fully comply with the requests and regulations of the Chinese border officials in order not to be treated as a *hanjian* 汉奸, 'traitor.' Nevertheless, *xiejia* often tried to circumvent their semi-official duties, especially in the early/ mid-19th century, as Chinese sources such as the *Pingshan zouyi* demonstrate.

For the Chinese border officials, on the other hand, the *xiejia* institution was a convenient means of indirect border control. The requirement of official permits to run a *xiejia* enabled the officials to hold the *xiejia* owner responsible for complying with his semi-official duties such as registration of trade transactions, mediation and interpreting services. Furthermore, the administration was able to exercise some indirect control over the market access of Tibetan nomadic tribes as mentioned above.

Tibetans actively traded within their own society and also participated in long distance trade with neighboring countries. Nevertheless, we repeatedly come across statements made by westerners, Chinese and even by Tibetans themselves that the Tibetans were—and still are—not very apt at professional trading and that the general population resented—respectively resents—the trading profession for religious reasons.¹¹² These remarks are often coupled with observations about the superiority of Muslim or Chinese merchants with regard to their Tibetan counterparts. Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted on Tibetan trade,¹¹³ making it difficult to judge to what extent a culturally or religiously motivated aversion against trade as a profession is, in fact, a Tibetan attitude. I suspect common prejudices and misinterpretations produce a twisted picture. While this paper does not resolve this issue, perhaps it will rouse more interest in this neglected topic.

112 See, for example, Grenard 1904:284–285, Liu 2002:94, Mian 2005b:236–237 and Fischer 2008b:24. When I asked Tibetans in Golog Autonomous Prefecture in summer 2000 why most shops and restaurants in the local townships were run by Muslims or Chinese and not by Tibetans, the reply often was that "Tibetans are not good at trade" or more specifically "we do not know how to deal with the formalities of opening a shop or restaurant." At the same time Tibetan traders from neighboring Nga ba were successfully conducting small scale business among the Tibetans in Golok.

113 See, for example, van Spengen 1995 and Fischer 2008a.



Fig. 2: (Muslim?) Traders in Tibetan Garb in Gansu/ Qinghai in the 1930s (Archivum Generale of the Societas Verbi Divini, Rome).



Fig. 3: Scene from a Border Market in Gansu/ Qinghai in the 1930s (Steyler Missionsbote May 1939, 66:8, 199).



Fig. 4: Tibetan Chief's Daughter [center] in Wedding Dress with Gold Threads worth 3,000 Silver Dollars, 1934 (Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton).



Fig. 5 and 6: Bridesmaids of Tibetan Chief's Daughter (Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton).

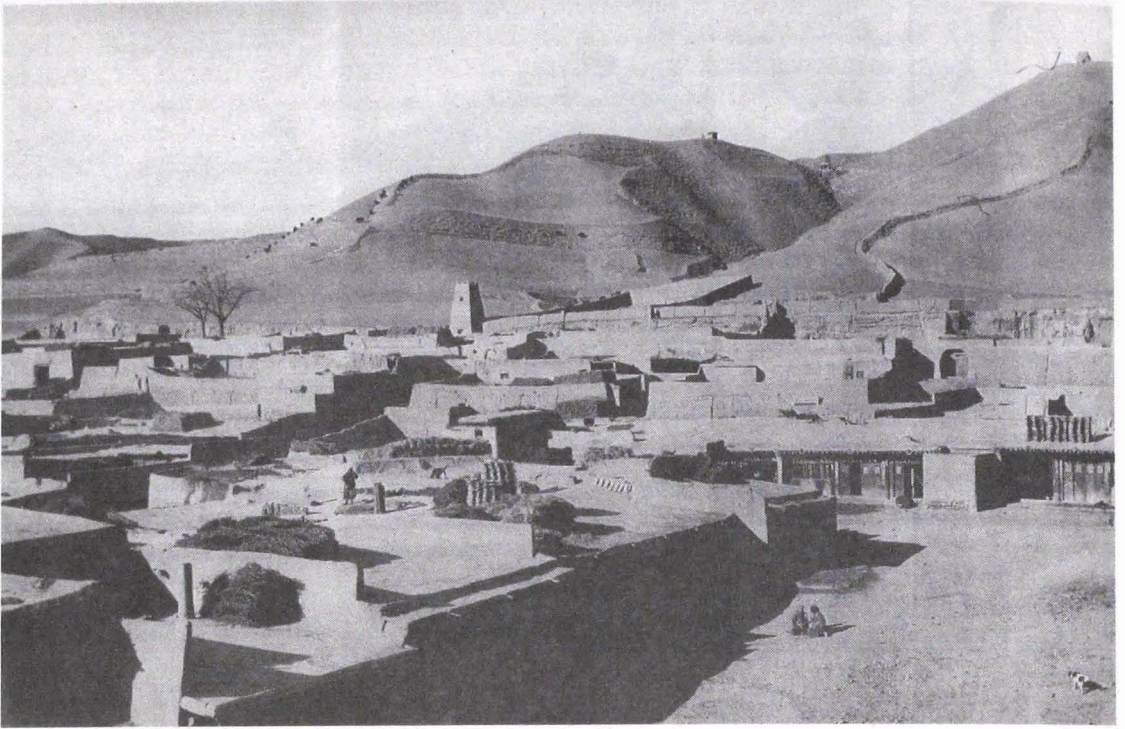


Fig. 7 and 8: sTong 'khor/ Dan'gaer in 1929
(Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton).

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TIBETAN AND SIKKIMESE RELATIONS: PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GAM PA DISPUTES AND THE GAM PA-SIKKIM AGREEMENT OF 1867

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2004 the current author, along with a number of colleagues, has been involved in the examination of the Sikkimese Palace archives, which includes documents from Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan and British India. The archives covers a variety of topics, historical periods and genres of literature (see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010 for further details). One such topic is the Sikkim-Gam pa disputes of the 1860s involving different communities along the Tibet-Sikkim border. The archives contain fifteen documents on these disputes, though it is the agreement (PD/4.1/004), which is the main subject of this paper, and provides the most detailed information regarding this series of disputes. This paper will show that the disputes centred on access to pasture lands and other territories and taxation payments given by Tibetan authorities to Sikkim as a form of compensation for the loss of Sikkimese taxable estates in North Bengal following the British annexation of what is now modern Darjeeling district in 1850. In addition this paper will argue that as a result of granting Sikkimese tax concessions in Gam pa the taxation responsibilities of the general population of Gam pa was increased leading to tense relationships between the border populations of northern Sikkim and southern Tibet. With an examination of the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement it will be shown that these tensions erupted into violence, murder and theft. This paper will then conclude by arguing that whilst disputes and conflict resolution may have been common in the Tibetan world generally, the case of the Gam pa disputes were politicised by the role of the British in Himalayan affairs and the fear of British expansion; a fear which dominated Manchu policy in Tibet following the second Opium War of 1856-1860.

AN OVERVIEW OF TIBETAN AND SIKKIMESE RELATIONS

From the vast number of letters and correspondence between Sikkim, Tibetans and the Manchu authorities found in the Sikkimese palace archive it is possible to piece together a general picture of the theories that shaped Tibetan and Sikkimese relations. This period in Tibetan history is characterised by de-centralisation of both power and

authority, but also by a matrix of theoretical, if not always practical, political hierarchies, which for the purpose of this paper can be described as the politics of subsumation. This is a reference to the Manchu presence in Tibet, and the Manchu understanding of Tibet as a tributary of the Qing Empire.¹ Similarly, Sikkim was also viewed within this matrix of subsumed political relations, as a tributary of Tibet. So as far as the Manchu Amban in Lhasa was concerned, there was a framework of hierarchical authority, subsumed under which was Tibet (and its sub-units) and Sikkim in turn was subsumed under Tibet. Similarly within both Sikkim and Tibet 'lower levels' of authority existed such as Tashilhunpo, Sa skya in Tibet or Lachen (*Tib. La chen*), Lachung (*Tib. La chung*) or the aristocratic estates in Sikkim, which were subsumed under the umbrella of either the Tibetan 'state' or the Sikkimese 'state'. However, with the exception of tax collection those subsumed units were not completely integrated into the Tibetan or Sikkimese state on a day to day level.² Yet there existed a theoretical legal framework, according to Goldstein, whereby cases could be appealed to Lhasa, though it is clear that most legal disputes were resolved locally.³

The history of Sikkim usually (and also for contemporary political reasons) precludes any discussion of Sikkim as a 'constituent part' of Tibet; and, given its high degree of autonomy and its independent history of state formation,⁴ the relationship between Sikkim and Tibet is also a complicated one. However, it is fair to say that, to a certain degree, Sikkimese authority was understood, mainly by the Qing Dynasty and the Amban in Lhasa, as being subsumed within the wider matrix of the authority

1 Personal communications with John Ardussi 1-3 September 2010.

2 The Sikkimese situation is slightly different to the Tibetan one. Sikkim, like Tibet, was politically fragmented into five monastic states, numerous aristocratic estates, areas with a form of self-government (Lachen and Lachung), and regions of disputed 'sovereignty' such as Ilam and Morang in Nepal or the plains of Northwest Bengal. Throughout Sikkim's history there has been a struggle for power between the landed-aristocracy on the one hand and the Chos rgyal on the other. However, all aristocrats understood their position as subservient to that of the king, though the political reality often oscillated between periods of defragmentation and direct royal authority and rule. Close inspection of the Palace Archives show that successive Chos rgyal's attempted to curb the power of the aristocracy through legislation and the direct appointment of officials within aristocratic estates. The extent to which these policies were successful depended on the strength, personality and concerns of the king as like Tibet it was often the case that the Chos rgyal was satisfied with a regular supply of income from the aristocratic estates and not in the direct administration of the state.

3 Goldstein 1971: 175, also notes that this right to appeal to Lhasa also existed for *mi ser*, under the different estates (be they aristocratic, religious or otherwise) in central Tibet.

4 It could be argued that the Sikkimese state was formed as a result of the migration of Tibetan religious refugees to Sikkim following the formation of the Tibetan state in 1642. Whilst, it is clear that those migrations took place and that those religious refugees validated (through religio-political theory) and legitimised the Sikkimese state, they did not form the Sikkimese state. The Sikkimese state was rather formed out of a series of secular alliances between different proto-states in western Sikkim. For details on the formation of the Sikkimese state see Mullard 2011.

of Lhasa and by extension the Qing Empire. This is attested to not only in the copious writings of the Ambans and Lhasa administration to the Sikkimese, involving the British in the Himalaya (see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010 for details of those letters), but also in the use of hierarchic kinship terms to define the relationship between Lhasa and the Sikkimese Chos rgyal's government. In legalistic and administrative documents from this period the relationship between Lhasa and the Sikkimese government is described as being that of the uncle and nephew (*zhang-tsha bo* or *dbon-zhang*) or father and son,⁵ with Lhasa as the father/uncle and the Sikkimese government as the nephew/son.⁶ Indeed a brief study of Sikkimese history indicates that there was a degree of reality to this hierarchic relation, as one of the major themes in Sikkimese history is the reliance on Tibetan assistance during times of war or instability, yet it is also true that the extent to which Lhasa intervened in Sikkimese affairs depended on the relative strength of the administration in Lhasa. It is here that Geoffrey Samuel's application of Tambiah's galactic polity (1993: 61-63) proves to be an important tool for understanding the relations at the inter-state level between the Sikkimese government and Lhasa as well as the relationships between Lhasa and other polities in Central Tibet. It is perhaps then more accurate to understand Sikkim, at certain times, as a state in orbit around Lhasa and, at certain times in its history, under the 'gravitational' influence of Lhasa, rather than a constituent part of Tibet, much the same way as one can understand Lhasa's relationships with other sub-units in central Tibet.

During the period of the Gam pa-Sikkim disputes one of the key issues for Tibet was the pressure applied upon them by the Qing to prevent British involvement in Tibet. This primarily resulted from British activities in mainland China, in particular the trade disputes between British Merchants and Chinese authorities. With the growth of a market for Chinese products (mainly tea and silks) in Europe, European traders had embarked upon trade with China. However, China refused to trade their products for European products choosing only to accept silver or gold bullion. This had a detrimental impact on the British economy as Britain did not have large enough reserves of silver to balance trade payments, which in turn forced the British to buy silver in order to purchase Chinese goods. It was only with the development of the clandestine trade of Indian opium that the British were able to turn the tables on

5 Often this "father-son" relationship is triangulated to include Bhutan which is identified as the "mother" establishing a three tiered hierarchic relationship with Tibet (the father) followed by Bhutan (the mother) and Sikkim (the son). The idea behind this is that all three countries should act to the other 2 countries in the way expressed through the kinship metaphor i.e. with love and respect and in the cases of those lower in the hierarchy with deference. This term was often used to defuse political conflict between the three states.

6 The use of this terminology has been eloquently discussed in Dotson (2009). In that paper Dotson discusses the kinship relations that become developed through the offering and receiving of marriage partners. Sikkim and Tibet shared this relationship with Tibetan aristocrats providing wives for the kings of Sikkim.

Chinese traders, demanding that payments for opium be made in silver, which was then used to purchase other Chinese products. Qing attempts to disrupt the opium trade led to the two opium wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60, resulting in a series of massive defeats for the Chinese, the annexation of Hong Kong Island in the First Opium War⁷ and Kowloon peninsula in the Second Opium War,⁸ an opening of ten further ports for European traders and rights for European diplomats to travel to Beijing. These events were largely responsible for the Qing policy of excluding Europeans from Tibet, a policy which had a knock on effect for Sikkim.

THE GAM PA-SIKKIM AGREEMENT

The Gam pa-Sikkim agreement was found in the Sikkimese Palace Archive (Document number: PD/4.1/004) by the current author and his colleague Hissey Wongchuk in 2009. The agreement was signed in 1867 and is 237 lines long and is divided into seventeen clauses (*don tshan*), with a preamble at the start and a concluding statement at the end, followed by the signatories. Unfortunately, the original agreement complete with seals was probably kept in Tashilhunpo or possibly Phag ri and the document from which this summary was made, was the copy probably given to the Sikkimese at the time of the signing of the original document. As it is a copy there are numerous scribal errors, which add to the general complexity of the text. There are also large *lacunae* which can be seen in the extract below. The treaty is presented in summarised form as given the length of the document it is not possible to present a full translation and edited transliteration of the document here.

The document begins with a preamble which states that despite the fact that the Sikkimese government wrote to Labrang (Tashilhunpo) about the dispute a suitable resolution has not been arrived at and so the various events relating to the disputes have been presented in the document in a series of clauses. The first clause states the primary reason for the series of disputes. It states that in 1849 Campbell, who held office in Darjeeling, and Hooker had entered Sikkim as they had been given authority by the British government [in Calcutta] to conduct a survey of the border regions. On account of that they illegally crossed the Sikkimese border with Tibet and entered regions under the authority of Gam pa rdzong. [The Sikkimese Chancellor probably fearing Tibetan retribution arrested the two British men and imprisoned them]. This led the British to annex the Sikkimese estates on the north Bengal plains, which led the Sikkimese government to lose Rs. 46,000 in taxation revenue. As a result of which the Tibetan Government compensated the Sikkimese with an annual stipend of 1000 *khal* of grain, salt and other produce. [Payment of this stipend was the responsibility of Gam pa rdzong.] However, the stipend has been discontinued and the Sikkimese wanted this to be reinstated.

7 This was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanking signed in 1842.

8 The Convention of Peking signed in 1860.

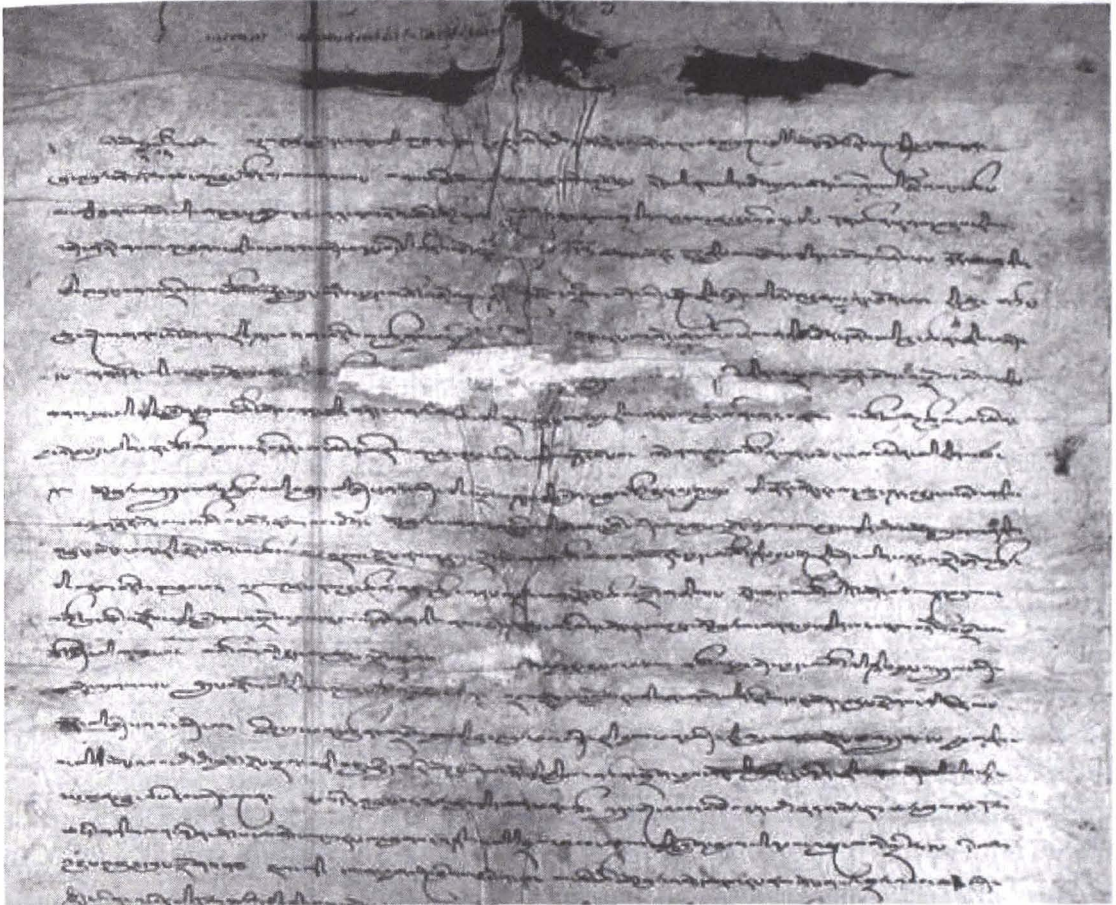


Figure 1: The opening sections of the Gam pa-Sikkim Agreement

The next clauses (clauses 2 and 3) deal with suspected murder cases. Clause two details a case in which thirty people from Lachen (in north Sikkim) had fled from Lachen to Gam pa to avoid harassment from Gorkha soldiers. However, the Lachenpas were arrested by the authorities in Gam pa and subsequently died in custody. Thereafter Yug gnam lcags [Sikkimese military official]⁹ who was travelling to Tashilhunpo for pilgrimage and offerings, held a meeting with the people from Rong [in Gam pa], who misinformed Yug gnam lcags regarding the legal process for murders. As the Sikkimese official was misled, the Sikkimese now (i.e. in 1867) requires that they are compensated for those murders. Clause three notes the death of two people from Lachung in North Sikkim, who were in Khra tshang in Southern Tibet.

Clause four details a series of land disputes between Sikkim and Gam pa. These disputes began when a group of people from Gam pa crossed the border and travelled

⁹ Yug gnam lcags was the son of Phyag mdzod Gar dbang head of the influential 'Bar phung family.

as far south as Lachen rgya 'u thang¹⁰ as a result the Sikkimese sent a petition to Tashilhunpo complaining about the illegal crossing. However, the officials of Tashilhunpo responded to the Sikkimese petition claiming that all territory North of Lachen valley belongs to Tashilhunpo [i.e. that it formed part of Gam pa rdzong]. Subsequently a representative from Tashilhunpo claimed the region of Mdzes mo and that at a later time even the region of Mon snying was claimed by a Labrang official called Dpal 'byor. On account of these land disputes the Sikkimese king referred the case to the Lhasa authorities.

Clause five notes that in 1864 a minor aristocrat, who held pasture lands in Gam pa, recognised some irregularities in the use of his pasture lands and made a petition to Tashilhunpo. It was subsequently decided that Sikkimese nomads can reside in the region of Lha mo 'dung for one month in the autumn but once the first snows arrive the nomads are not allowed to go past a certain place. When the Sikkimese nomads are not residing on the aristocrats pasture lands, the aristocrat is forbidden from allowing others the use of his lands, but once the Sikkimese have left the lands the aristocrat can pasture his private livestock for the rest of the year. Similarly during the winter grazing is permitted for one month, but the borders of the pasture lands cannot be crossed and once the month is over the nomads must leave the place. In addition the aristocrat has had his rights over the pasture lands in Lha lung extended from one month and five days to one month and twenty days. It has been agreed that the aristocrat and the Sikkimese nomads must abide by this decision but if the nomads from Lachen wish to appeal [in times of special circumstances] they must submit an application to Labrang directly.

Clause six is about an unpaid loan of 27 zho, which must now be paid to the Sikkimese King. Clause seven notes that the Lho nag pastures (north of the current Sikkim-Tibet border) belongs to the Sikkimese government and that the past annual tax payments of 20 sheep, 20 measures of butter, 20 loads of wool, 20 measures of mutton, 20 'bo¹¹ (1 'bo is equal to five 'bre) of salt as well as chang and other items which were halted by the people of Gam pa should now be re-continued.

Clause eight is about the southern border pasture lands of Sa dkar kyang shong¹² Phrag nag 'gugs chen, Rol g.yas, Sa dkar mo, and Yob bde. It notes that a person from Gam pa was using these lands illegally and that he must return the payment for this. It also states that the taxes that have been collected from the common people of these regions should be used to provide border security. It is also agreed that it is acceptable that the 15 households, whose taxes were designated as the donations for rituals which are for the benefit of the mchod yon relationship, be allowed to remain as nomads since farming did not prove profitable for them. Two households from the

10 Whilst nomads from Gam pa were allowed to pasture animals in Sikkim they were not permitted to go as far south as the valley of Lachen.

11 This is equal to 5 khal

12 Literally: *The valley of the wild as and white earth.*

15 have started paying their taxes to Ser rtogs monastery; this has been agreed as acceptable as it is still a contribution to the dharma. It has also been decreed that with the exception of those taxes of butter, wood and money raised during the summer months, Sikkim and Gam pa should not raise other taxes [on these regions] and that these rules regarding tax collection should never be changed. In 1831 The Sikkimese king issued a decree to the public in which it stated that the border people who are residing in Sikkim must follow the laws that were previously established by the Tibetans regarding border security and adds to this clause that whatever legal structures that were in place before must now be followed.

Clause nine is about a decree issued by the Central Tibetan government and the Ambans¹³ in 1863. The decree restricted cross-border trade on all of Tibet's borders and involved the screening of traders, by local officials, on the grounds of health and character. Under that law if local border officials considered traders to be of ill health and bad character he could prevent the individual from crossing the border. When Gam pa rdzong sent this decree to the Sikkimese government, the Sikkimese sent a complaint asking why the Lachen and Lachung people were put under such unprecedented restrictions and requested that this case be investigated with the view towards granting exemption to Sikkimese nomads who have always traditionally crossed the border. Gam pa rdzong now claims that the law was not meant to be implemented on Lachen and Lachungpas but was sent to Sikkim for their information. It has been agreed that Sikkimese nomads may freely cross the border without harassment. [the implication of this clause is that the Sikkimese nomads may have felt difficulties from people in Gam pa, who used the 1863 law as a reason to harass the Sikkimese nomads on account of the general hostility between Sikkim and Gam pa].

Clause ten begins with a statement that there exists an agreement between the Sikkimese and Tibetans, which prohibits theft and conflict. However, in contravention of this agreement there was a border conflict in Gam pa resulting in the death of up to 40 people from Lachen and Lachung. On the 8th day of the 8th month of the Water Pig Year the Sikkimese presented evidence implicating the perpetrator of these crimes. However, the authorities of Gam pa failed to apprehend the man responsible. As a result of which, the accused, who is named as Don 'grub, stole a horse (which belonged to a Sikkimese subject) and went to Darjeeling via Walung to sell the stolen horse. The official response from Gam pa at that time was that Don 'grub had passed away prior to the theft of the horse and so was never in Walung. This was disputed by the people of Lachen, who stated that they can provide an oath stating that Don 'grub was in Lachen. The Sikkimese requires that they are compensated for the murders and theft.

Clause eleven is about the failure of nomads to abide by the customs regarding the use of pasture lands. In the 11th month of the Iron Monkey Year (1860) a person

13 In the Tibetan this reads as *rgva bod*, which is literally China and Tibet, but clearly refers to the Manchu presence in Lhasa and the office of the Amban.

arrived at the Southern Tibetan pasture lands and stole dry wood. In the commotion some items were thrown into the river, resulting in the death of the eldest daughter of one of the nomadic families. In addition 200 male and female yaks, which belong to the nomads who paid taxes to the Central government, died. The animals that survived were placed under the authority of the person from Bung ru and this has been witnessed by all the representatives. The case of the dead nomadic woman was contested by Lha lung pa, who claimed that the woman had actually died at least one year prior to the incident mentioned above. The resolution is that this sort of thing should not happen again and that the customary laws regarding the use of pasture lands on the Sikkim-Tibet border should be continued as they were before.

Clause twelve recounts an event that took place whilst some people from Lachung were in Khra tshang for the purpose of trade. During their stay in Khra tshang the Lachungpas were attacked, beaten and stabbed resulting in serious injuries. The authorities of Gam pa failed to inform the Sikkimese government of this event and the Sikkimese demand an explanation as to why this was the case. It is resolved that there will be an investigation into the incident and it will be judged according to the law.

Clause thirteen is about a case of horse rustling in the Sikkimese royal estate of mDo khra¹⁴ by the ex-Chamberlain and the steward of Gam pa called dBang rgyal. The case was settled in Gam pa but the result of the settlement was not communicated to the Sikkimese government. The Gam pa authorities claim that the agreement was made with the Sikkimese governor (mgo dpon) [of mDo khra]. The Sikkimese requests an investigation into this case.

Clause fourteen is about a case of defrauding Sikkimese traders. This clause notes that there existed an agreement in which prices for goods were set. Generally the people of Rong (in southern Gam pa) have failed to pay the correct prices for goods, but more specifically dBang rgyal, from the old rdzong, failed to pay for the wood he bought. As a result it is agreed that an investigation should take place.

Clause fifteen is about a list of outstanding loans that was submitted by Ba ri Lama to Gam pa rdzong. Gam pa failed to take action against those who had defaulted on their loans. The Sikkimese argued that the authorities of Gam pa should collect the interest on those loans and pay them to the government. The Gam pa representative claimed that, whilst they agree that they did not fully investigate the issue, they did order the debtors to pay the money owed to Sikkim. The Gam pa authorities claimed that they had indeed sent a list of the money collected to Sikkim and that the Sikkimese government know of this letter. The Sikkimese refused to acknowledge this was the case and sent a petition for mediation of this dispute.¹⁵

Clause sixteen is about a tax collector (who is given the title Lo grong dpon nub) who was accused of illegally raising the taxation levels. This was in spite of the fact that numerous letters were sent regarding the illegal tax rises and he continued to

14 This is located in gTing skyes rdzong

15 This clause has no specific resolution.

raise taxes even though they were against the laws issued by the Panchen Lama. As a result of this the Sikkimese requested an investigation. The Gam pa authorities dispute this and claim that the tax collector had been authorised to raise taxes by the Rinpoche. It ends by stating that it is important to dissolve this issue like ice melting in water and think of each other as family members.

The seventeenth clause discusses a case in which a Lachen pa named rDo bsam grazed his animals in Lho nag, which the people of Gra lung claimed was illegal. As a result the people of Gra lung said that rDo bsam should give two dry-cows¹⁶ to them. So Gra lung sent a person three times to collect the cows but did not receive them. Then bSod nams bkra shis (from Lachen) sent a request to Gra lung and so it was agreed that in lieu of the cows 15 gold coins could be sent. It is then stated somewhat sarcastically that as this agreement was made without reference to each party's lord, that those parties must have been given some sort of special authority by Tashilhunpo or Lhasa to make such agreements. It is agreed that clarification of this case is needed as the implication of the text is that the agreement was illegal as it lacked official authority. It is agreed that if a decision is not made regarding this dispute, the actions of some bad people may, in the future, cause suffering amongst the common public which may cause the common people to lose faith in the Lama-Patron system and so two impartial mediators will be appointed to resolve this dispute.

There then follows the signatory section of the agreement. It states that during the time after the death of the Panchen Lama, the Sikkimese king and ministers were dissatisfied and that they were right to be upset. And so for the purpose of clarifying this dispute and for ensuring that it is solved in its totality the following people on the 25th day of the 9th month of the Fire Hare Year (1867) have affixed their seals. The seal of the Sikkimese representative, the former mGron gnyer of Sikkim [mGron gnyer mam rgyal], the seal of the representative of Lha rdzong, the representative of Tashilhunpo, the seal of the two rdzong dpon of Gam pa rdzong,¹⁷ the seals of the two mediators from Phag ri¹⁸ together with the secretary.

UNDERSTANDING THE DISPUTE

It is clear that the primary reason for the disputes between Sikkim and Gam pa revolve around issues of taxation and pasture land usage. However, the contexts of the disputes are the international changes that occurred as a result of the growing British presence in the Himalaya. In 1835 the British acquired the Darjeeling tract, an area of approximately 357 square kilometres, from the Sikkimese state. The enclave of Darjeeling was totally surrounded by Sikkimese territory on all sides, with the closest

16 This refers to a cow which cannot produce milk.

17 Note that there was in fact only one rdzong dpon of Gam pa of the 5th rank

18 It is unclear if these signatories were the actual rdzong dpon of Phag ri. Phag ri had two rdzong dpon[s] of the 5th rank.

British territory being Rangpur Division¹⁹ in modern Bangladesh, which served as the base of operations for British expansion in Assam and the Himalaya.²⁰ However, by the 1840s hostility between the British in Darjeeling and the Sikkimese increased. This was, until the recent discovery of the Palace Archive, understood as resulting from disagreements regarding the migration of Sikkimese subjects to Darjeeling and the flight of 'criminals' from Darjeeling to Sikkim. In addition to this well known problem, documents from the Sikkimese palace archive suggests that Campbell was also attempting to extend British control in the North Bengal plains, by raising taxes in the communities around modern Bagdogra and Naxalbari (Mullard in press). Tax collectors from these Sikkimese estates wrote a number of letters to the Sikkimese crown regarding these activities, which resulted in decreased taxation revenue for the Sikkimese government (see PD/1.1/037).²¹ This hostility ultimately came to a head when the Sikkimese Lord Chamberlain (*mgron gnyer*) captured Hooker and Campbell in the winter of 1849; an event recorded in the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement above. This angered the British authorities as it seriously damaged their prestige and led to the annexation of all Sikkimese territory south of the Rangit River; an area of land equivalent to 3149 square kilometres.²² In addition the British halted their annual payments for Darjeeling which, combined with the loss of the fertile India plains territories, an area which had hitherto provided the bulk of Sikkimese tax revenue (Mullard in press), and which the Sikkimese claimed amounted to an annual loss of Rs. 46,000 as mentioned in the agreement above: a figure which amounts to a relative value of approximately Rs. 16 million today.²³

19 In colonial times the eight districts of Rangpur Division were known as Rungpore. Technically the district closest to Darjeeling was the Panchagarh district, which is one of the eight districts of modern Rangpur Division.

20 Further details of British involvement in Assam and the events leading up to the suppression of Assam see *Memoir of the late David Scott esq. Agent to the Governor General, on the North East Frontier of Bengal*, compiled by Major A. White in 1832. Scott's expertise in Jungle warfare which he practiced on the Garo people of modern Meghalaya, was later used by the British in the conquest of Burma. Although Scott died young he was primarily responsible for extending British control over Assam and was also responsible for correspondence between Sikkim and British India prior to 1830.

21 There were also cases where officials of the Sikkimese state resided in British Indian territory but collected revenue and taxes from Sikkimese lands as is noted in PD/1.1/039.

22 For details of this event see McKay forthcoming and the Gazetteer of Sikkim (21)

23 This is based on a calculation of the relative value of the Indian Rupee of 1850 as Rs. 352.91, which itself is based on the value of GDP per capita over the time period. Using GDP per capita is more useful than using changes in the relative value of silver (the Rupee was a silver standard currency) as silver prices fell dramatically from 1871-1893, with the discovery of silver reserves in the USA. This led to a devaluation of the rupee as it was pegged to pound sterling which was a gold standard currency. If one were to use different measurements of relative value 1 1850s rupee would equal the following amounts in today's currency: GDP deflator = Rs. 114.96; nominal GDP = Rs. 1,229.28.

In one document (PD/1.1/040) compiled in 1846, three years prior to the arrest of Hooker and Campbell, the tax revenue for ten villages in the plains is recorded as being Rs. 19,324 6 anna and 5 paise, which is approximately 42% of the total loss of revenue stated in the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement. The villages named in this particular document are in the region of the Nepal-Indian Bengal border (encompassing an area from modern Bagdogra to Kharibari along Highway 31C), which was annexed by the British in 1850. Given that the figure noted in PD/1.1/040 make up a considerable portion of the lost tax revenue it seems clear that the figure of Rs. 46,000 mentioned in the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement is certainly plausible and may even be underestimated. Given that the figure of Rs. 46,000 is within the realm of possibility it is clear that loss of such a sum would have severely burdened the Sikkimese government and thus added an additional strain on Sikkimese-British relationships.

It is clear from the above document that the Sikkimese informed the Tibetans of the developments in 1849-50, which in turn resulted in the compensation payments from Gam pa. In '*Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*²⁴ (173-175) it clearly states that these payments were granted by the Tibetan government and that an agreement regarding the use of pasture lands was made between Tashilhunpo and Sikkim. However, when the fourth Panchen Lama died in 1853, Gam pa began defaulting on their taxation payments to Sikkim (*BGR*: 173-175). This was probably due to the fact that the tax burden was extremely high as is noted in a number of documents from the Sikkimese Palace Archive for other areas of Tibet with joint taxation obligations. In one such document (PD/1.1/004)²⁵ the people of Chumbi complain about the extremely heavy tax burden raised by both Sikkimese and Tibetan authorities on the people of the region, which led many common subjects to flee the region. It has already been mentioned in Goldstein (1968: 28) that the risk of Tibetan commoners fleeing their lands as a result of over taxation was very real and had resulted in the introduction of the Fire Sheep Land settlement, which was intended to reduce such a risk.

In the Gam pa-Sikkim agreement the issue of the tax burden is discussed a number of times. Clause eight, for example, prohibits both the Sikkimese and Gam pa authorities from introducing any form of new taxes and from increasing the levels of taxation beyond those taxes mentioned in the clause. The issue of illegal tax rises is also mentioned in clause 16, where a tax collector is accused of raising taxation illegally. Whereas the failure to pay taxes is the key theme in clause six.

It may be the case that the different disputes noted in the agreement resulted from the increased financial burden placed on the common people of Gam pa by the agreement of the Tibetan authorities to grant the Sikkimese taxation and pasture land rights. As if these regions were still required to pay taxes to the Labrang of Tashilhunpo the tax burden might have been too great for the common people, causing hostility

²⁴ Hereafter *BGR*

²⁵ This has been dated as 1796 in the catalogue though it is clear that this letter was written in 1856

between the people of Gam pa and north Sikkimese traders and nomads. Thus many of the other clauses which detail hostility, violence (in some cases murder) and theft between the local inhabitants of north Sikkim and Gam pa must be seen as a direct consequence of the increased financial burden placed on the common people of Gam pa. Therefore, the decisions taken at the macro-relationship level as represented as the relations between the governments of Lhasa, Tashilhunpo and Sikkim had implications on the relationships between, not only the common people of both Sikkim and Gam pa, but also on the relationships between Gam pa and Tashilhunpo and North Sikkim and the Sikkimese state. It is safe to say that whilst the decisions to grant Sikkim special rights in Gam pa helped to alleviate some of the financial burden the Sikkimese government felt as a result of losing its territories in the plains, they ultimately placed strained on the people of southern Tibet, which in turn affected the localised relations between nomads and traders on both sides of the Tibet-Sikkim border.

If indeed this was the case two questions arise. Firstly, why, if southern Tibet was being over taxed, did Tibetan authorities in both Tashilhunpo and Lhasa agree to give special rights to the Sikkimese; and secondly, why was the agreement particularly favourable to the Sikkimese? The answer to both these questions lies, ultimately, in the historical context of the time. The traditional relationships between Tibet and Sikkim noted above were in the process of changing dramatically as a result of British expansion in the Himalaya. Only six years prior to the signing of the Sikkim-Gam pa agreement the British led by Lt. Gawler and Ashley Eden invaded Sikkim and forced the Sikkimese Chos rgyal to sign a treaty which in affect gave the British a significant amount of control over Sikkim.²⁶ Similarly in Tibet, the twelfth Dalai Lama was in his minority and the Amban wielded considerable influence over the government in Lhasa. Given the Qing experience of British underhand dealings in the opium trade and fears of British expansionism in mainland China, it is well known that these fears percolated down to the Manchu Amban in Lhasa, leading to the policy of excluding Europeans from Tibet. These fears were confirmed when the British, having received Darjeeling in 1835, annexed the remaining Sikkimese territory south of the Rangit in 1850. As the Qing understood Tibetan-Sikkimese relations in terms of the politics of subsumation (that is Sikkim was considered to be a tributary of Tibet and thus the Qing Empire) and in light of recent developments in Canton following the first Opium War, it is conceivable to assume that the Ambans wanted the Tibetans to shore up Sikkim as a bulwark against British expansion into China via Tibet. It is thus likely that the reason for granting Sikkimese rights in Gam pa resulted from such concerns. Similarly the decisions in the Sikkim-Gam pa agreement and the general favourable outcome for Sikkim should also be understood within this wider context of ensuring the territorial integrity of Sikkim against British expansion. This wider political context thus influenced the outcome of the disputes as whilst it is possible to state that

26 For details see Moktan (ed) 2004: 12-16 for a copy of the Treaty of Tumlong signed in 1861 and McKay (forthcoming)

land and tax disputes happened frequently in Tibet, this particular dispute was politicised by the British presence in former Sikkimese territory and that the disputes occurred on the Sikkim-Tibet border: a region that was a serious concern for Tibetan and Manchu authorities alike. Indeed this concern is reflected in PD/9.5/065 in which the Amban writes to the Sikkimese king that a representative must be sent to Gro mo to discuss how the border must be secured. That document also contains a short note in which it states that whatever the Sikkimese raise regarding the relations on the Tibet-Sikkim border will be agreed to by the Amban. This document provides interesting contextual information regarding the Qing preoccupation with maintaining the security of the Tibetan border.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Sikkim-Gam pa agreement provides an insight into the nature of relations that existed between not only the common people of Sikkim and Gam pa but also the governments of Sikkim and Tashilhunpo and to a certain extent that of Lhasa and the Amban. What is clear from this brief presentation of the Sikkim-Gam pa dispute is that financial pressures placed on Sikkim by the British annexation of its territories in the plains had a knock on affect for the people of southern Tibet. Clearly Tibetan authorities, either out of compassion for the Sikkimese losses or, more likely fear that Sikkim may become a British spring-board to Tibet in the same way that Hong Kong became a region for British activities in mainland China,²⁷ provided Sikkim with compensatory payments of grain, pasture land access, and other forms of revenue. By so doing the taxation obligations of the people of Southern Tibet were dramatically increased leading to hostility and violence towards the Sikkimese and ultimately resulted in the failure to provide these source of revenue to Sikkim. Whilst the decision to grant the Sikkimese tax rights on account of the loss of Sikkimese taxable estates to the British, may have been made to solidify relations between Sikkim and Tibet at a macro level it ultimately had a detrimental effect on the localised relations on the Tibet-Sikkim border. In this particular period of Tibetan and Sikkimese relations the border between the two countries was an area of real political concern particularly after the rise of British interest in the Himalaya and it is probably for this reason that the disputes were resolved in a way to favour the Sikkimese.

27 It should be noted that Manchu pressure applied to Tibetan authorities in order to prevent British involvement in Tibet and the Himalaya was at its height during this period on account of increased hostility to the British after the two Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60. During those Wars the British invaded Canton and secured the island of Hong Kong as a Crown colony by the treaty of Nanking. The colony was extended to include Kowlon peninsula following the second Opium War.

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THE CAREERS OF GANDEN PHODRANG OFFICIALS (1895–1959): PATRIMONIAL ASPECTS OF PUBLIC SERVICE?

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The purpose of this paper is to offer a socio-historical investigation into the administration of the Ganden phodrang (Tib. *Dga' ldan pho brang*), the central government of Tibet, during the period from 1895, when the thirteenth Dalai Lama assumed power, to 1959, when the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India. In the first half of the 20th century, the Ganden phodrang had been functioning for almost three centuries, since 1642, when it was established by the Great Fifth. The organization of the administration evolved from the 17th century. It possessed from very early on precise written regulations, constitutions, administrative organizational rules (Tib. *sgrig gzhi* or *sgrig srol*) and codes or systems of laws (Tib. *khriims yig* or *khriims srol*) which remained in force until the end of its existence, organizing the government's rules, the routines of administrative work, the administration of the territories and the exercise of justice.¹

I would like to sincerely thank TashiTsering (AMI) and Isrun Engelhardt for reading and commenting on this article.

1 A great number of these official decrees, ordinances, etc., are reproduced in a recent publication: Nor bu Bsam 'phel, *Gzhung sa dga' ldan pho brang gi chos srid lar rgya dang 'brel ba'i khriims srol rtsa 'dzin dang bca' yig chings dan sogs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa nor bu'i me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2008. See also the following works by Christoph Cüppers: C. Cüppers, "Some Aspects of Tibetan Administration under the dGa'-ldan pho-brang Government", in H. Krasser et al. (eds), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz, 1995*, vol. 1. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997, p. 189–193; C. Cüppers, "Registers and Account Books of the dGa' ldan pho brang Government", in R. Prats. (ed.), *The Pandita and the Siddha: Tibetan Studies in Honour of E. Gene Smith*. Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007, p. 12–15; C. Cüppers, "Some Remarks on the Entries and Quotations taken from the *rtsis gzhi phyogs brigs* (Rtsii.) in S. C. Das' Tibetan English Dictionary", in B. Huber, M. Volkart and P. Widmer (eds), *Chomolangma, Demawend und Kasbek, Festschrift für Roland Bielmeier*. Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2008, p. 15–28; C. Cüppers, "Eine Merkliste mit den Aufgaben der Distriktbeauftragten (*rdzong-dpon*) aus dem 17. Jahrhundert", in H. Eimer et al., (eds), *Studia Tibetica et Mongolica (Festschrift Manfred Taube)*. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1999, p. 51–69.

It was reformed and improved several times over the centuries and, notably, during the period under scrutiny, through an unprecedented increase in the number of offices and their growing specialization.² This process of rationalization has been described as common in the formation of a number of bureaucracies around the world. During this period of maximal extension, in the 1940s and 1950s, there were at least 422 positions held permanently by monk or lay officials in the different areas of administration (government, army, territorial administration, and House of the Dalai Lama).³ The officials (Tib. *gzhung zhabs*) of the Tibetan government were divided into a monastic branch, whose members were called *rtse drung*, and a lay branch, whose members were known as *drung 'khor*. The monastic branch was recruited from all levels of society, among monasteries, whereas the lay branch was recruited almost exclusively among the aristocracy. Moreover, a few aristocratic families had specialized in producing monk officials as well, and these aristocrat monk officials were called *rje drung*.

Thanks to oral and written sources, namely interviews with about seventy noble men and women, British archives and Tibetan autobiographies written by noble men and women, the data concerning the careers of 441 noble officials of the government have been collected and put into a database. The analysis here is restricted to these aristocratic officials, who were mostly lay officials.⁴ This latter fact is the reason why the officials included in the database, being aristocrats, divide into a massive majority of lay officials (90%) and a tiny minority of aristocratic monk officials.⁵

The idea of this prosopographical database is to allow a different approach to the functioning of the political institutions and the administration, which would not be based on the norm or the way it is written or thought that they should function, but to view the whole question from the individual's point of view, in practice, looking at the way the officials lived their careers and used the institutions, sometimes testing their flexibility and their limits. In that sense, this research is meant to supplement the

2 Of the sixty-eight offices identified in the Ganden phodrang government in 1959, twenty-five had been created since 1895.

3 According to estimations based on our database and descriptions of the Ganden phodrang government (see the Bibliography). Theoretically, the number of lay and monk officials was 175 each, but in reality each group was larger. Indeed during the period under scrutiny the number of officials increased greatly. According to one of Melvyn Goldstein's informants there were 200 lay officials and 230 monk officials, cf. M.C. Goldstein, *An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System*, Ph.D. dissertation in Anthropology. Washington: University of Washington, 1968, p. 145.

4 The reason for this choice is that this study is part of broader research on the aristocracy of the Ganden phodrang for a Ph.D. in History completed in 2009 at the University of Paris Ouest-Nanterre La Défense and the Inalco, Paris.

5 Five men were originally monk officials and became lay officials. The status of ten officials remains unknown.

data available in Luciano Petech and Melvyn Goldstein's pioneering works on the Ganden phodrang's government.⁶

The sources mentioned above allow us to document a certain number of common practices in the professional sphere, and enable us to tackle two important aspects: on the one hand, the relationship between the officials and their office or job, which allows us to deal with a broader link—the one between the aristocrats, as a social group, and the government; on the other hand, the nature of the job or office in the Ganden phodrang administration. An interesting aspect, which concerns both the aristocracy in its role of servant of the State and the very organization of the Ganden phodrang, is the narrow intermingling of the family and professional worlds, and of the private and public spheres. The question that arises from these observations is whether one could speak of a partly patrimonial nature pertaining to the offices of the Ganden phodrang administration.⁷

First, a number of these practices will be set out, practices by which the position is treated as a private property. Then, a number of financial transactions which sometimes came with the exercise of public duties will be presented. Lastly, we will consider the financing of the State by officials.

1. GOVERNMENT OFFICE: A PRIVATE PROPERTY?

1.1. Hereditary transmission of office

The first domain of interest for our analysis is the hereditary transmission of office. In his book *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, Luciano Petech describes the hereditary transmission of offices, in particular in the Council of Ministers, as having been abolished by the Chinese at the end of the 18th century.⁸

However, we know that the problem remained crucial at the end of the 19th century: according to *rtsis dpon* Shakabpa, in 1894, several reforms of the structure of the government were instituted, aimed at transforming government positions that had become almost hereditary in order to place more talented people in charge of these positions.⁹ A petition circulated, criticizing especially the fact that the ministers,

6 L. Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet, 1728-1959*, Serie Orientale Roma XLV. Rome: Ismeo, 1973; M.C. Goldstein, *op. cit.*, and *A History of Modern Tibet. Volume 1: The Demise of the Lamaist State (1913–1951)*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993 [first print 1989].

7 By “patrimonial nature of the office”, I do not refer to the traditional and personal political form of domination described as “patrimonialism” by Max Weber (M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Günther Roth and Claus Wittich and translated by Ephraim Fischhof. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 [first print 1922]), I refer only to a conception of the office or the job as a personal patrimony.

8 L. Petech, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

9 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An advanced political history of Tibet*, vols 1 and 2, Translated and annotated by Derek F. Maher. Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 623.

mainly lay officials, held their office in a hereditary way, a practice that aroused dissatisfaction among other officials. “From that point on, three lay cabinet ministers and one monk cabinet minister were appointed. Moreover, it was decided that except for awarding special commendations for past service to the government, appointments should be made on the basis of one’s learning, experience, effectiveness, good training, popularity, and honesty. Beyond that, people would not be promoted on the basis of possessing estates or on hereditary connections, as had previously been the case.”¹⁰

Although the written rule was to appoint an official according to one’s ability and not according to one’s family connections, this practice continued to exist during the first half of the 20th century, although almost only for lesser offices. This phenomenon is not described in the literature. While working on the reconstruction of the careers of different members of one family who were officials, it appeared that it sometimes happened that they were appointed to the same positions. If we consider the number of lay officials available (more than two hundred), we could infer from this observation that the phenomenon was no coincidence and that aristocratic officials sometimes passed on their office to family members with the consent of the government, either from father to son, or between brothers. We can find several examples in the sources. As for the handing down of the office from father to son, we can give here three instances: first in the ZUR KHANG family, when Dbang chen nor bu retired in 1889, his post of general of the Dbus province (Tib. Dbus *mda’ dpon*) was handed down to his son Bsod nams dbang chen;¹¹ second, when the aristocrat SREG SHING Tshe ring nam rgyal was promoted mayor of Lhasa (Tib. *mi dpon*) in 1936, he left his post of governor of the province of Lhe (Tib. Lhe *rdzong dpon*) in eastern Tibet and this post was directly given to his son SREG SHING Blo bzang don grub;¹² finally, at the end of the period, in May 1948, the son of TSHA RONG, *rim bzhi* TSHA RONG *sras*, took over the office of his father at ‘Bri gung.¹³ We can also infer from the sources that this practice also occurred in the government of Tashi Lhunpo.¹⁴

10 *Ibid.*, p. 634.

11 L. Petech, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

12 *Who’s Who in Tibet, Corrected with a few subsequent additions up to 30th September 1948*. Calcutta: Printed by the Government of India Press, 1949, p. 108 (IOR/L/P&S/20 D 220/2 or V/27/270/26). I have not been able to locate this “Lhe dzong in eastern Tibet” referred to in the British archives. It could be Lho rdzong, in Khams.

13 *Lhasa Diary for the week ending 9th May 1948 from H.E. Richardson, The Indian Trade Agent, Gyantse and Officer in charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa, to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok* (PRO/FO/371/70042 ex F8351/71/94).

14 In October 1910, the treasurer of the Panchen Lama, named “Badula Kusho” by the British, passed away during a very severe smallpox epidemic. The British trade agent notes in his diary, as if it was a current and normal practice, that this official’s son had applied for this office and was waiting for his appointment, cf. *Gyantse diary for the month of November 1910, dated 3rd–6th December 1910 from Captain L. Weir, British Trade Agent at Gyantse* (IOR/L/P&S/7/245/1945). In another report, a year later, we understand that the son had secured the position but had not long survived his father, cf. *Gyantse and Yatung diary for the month of*

The transmission could also happen between brothers. In the RAG KHA SHAG family, Tshe dbang nam gyal was appointed finance minister (Tib. *rtsis dpon*) in place of his brother who was himself promoted general (Tib. *mda' dpon*).¹⁵ It happened that this transmission was explicitly made by the government in recognition of services rendered by a brother. Similarly, after LHA SDINGS *mda' dpon* was killed in March 1904 while fighting the British during the Younghusband expedition, his brother was appointed general of Dbus province.¹⁶

We also observe that a number of *rdzong dpon* positions were frequently held by members of the same family, but not always in a consecutive way: thus, BON SHOD Tshe brtan rdo rje and his son Tshe brtan dbang rgyal were both governors of Nag tshang (Tib. Nag tshang 'go pa, which is similar to a *rdzong dpon*-ship) though the latter did not directly succeed his father.¹⁷ The BON SHOD family probably had interests in this area, likely commercial interests, and sought the position.

Lastly, the importance of the family in the professional world is shown by the fact that several members of one family could work together: when GNANG BYUNG Spen pa don grub, who was minister (Tib. *bka' blon*) from 1932, was sent as governor of Kham (Tib. *mdo spyi*),¹⁸ his son 'Gyur med dbang phyug was appointed to be his assistant (Tib. *mdo spyi bka' mgron*) in 1939.¹⁹ Another example is that of two brothers, 'CHUM BKRAS GLING Mi 'gyur rdo rje and ZHE BO Blo bzang dar rgyas, who worked together at the *gyod zhib las khungs* (an office deciding legal disputes) from 1957 to 1959.²⁰

The study of the careers of the ZUR KHANG family over three generations provides a good example of the variety of these practices. Exactly as in the GNANG BYUNG family, when ZUR KHANG Dbang chen tshe brtan was appointed governor of Kham in 1936, his son Dbang chen dge legs followed him as his secretary.²¹ In the next generation, ZUR KHANG Dbang chen nor bu held simultaneously the functions of governor of Nyag rong (Tib. Nyag rong *spyi khyab*) and general of Dbus province (Tib. Dbus *mda' dpon*). His son, Bsod nams dbang chen, not only started a military

September 1911, dated 3rd October 1911 from David Macdonald, British Trade Agent at Yatung and Gyantse to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla, for information (IOR/L/P&S/7/253/1821).

15 *Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1915, p. 16 (PRO/FO/371/2318 ex. 1933/10/141275/15), and *Chiefs and leading families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet*, 1920, p. 7 (PRO/FO/371/6652 ex. 1463/1463/10).

16 *Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet*, 1915, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

17 L. Petch, *op. cit.*, p. 123, and *Who's Who in Tibet 1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

19 *Who's Who 1942* (NAI), p. 21.

20 Anonymous interview. Blo bzang dar rgyas was born in 1933 into the 'CHUM BKRAS GLING family and came as a *mag pa* to the ZHE BO family.

21 There was an unspoken right for the Mdo spyi to choose who would accompany him to Chamdo and work in his office (Chab mdo *bka' shag*).

career under the orders of his father as captain of Nyag rong (Tib. Nyag rong *brgya dpon*) and then as colonel of Dbus (Tib. Dbus *ru dpon*), he also took over the post of general from his father, when his father retired in 1889.²² Two generations later, in March 1950, ZUR KHANG Mkhyen rab dbang phyug succeeded his brother Lha dbang stobs rgyas as Tibetan trade agent in Gyantse (Tib. *'tshong don spyi khyab*).²³

What can we deduce of this transmission of offices? It seemed logical that an individual would succeed his father or his brother in a position, inasmuch as the successor could benefit from the experience and expertise of the one he succeeded. Some aristocrat families thus developed a kind of professional specialization. We can also assume that this form of transmission only occurred when the office was considered a good professional choice.

It could be useful to link these situations with another practice that seemed to be quite widespread in the administration and which also involved a family relationship, the representation in the office.

1.2. Representation in the office by the family

In the Tibetan government, the office, more than an individual responsibility, seems to have been commonly considered as a family matter, or a family responsibility. It often occurred that an official would send as his representative in office a member of the family who was not necessarily a member of the government. This could be for a short while or for the whole length of the post.

In a 1935 British report, we read that one of the two governors of Gyantse was away from his post, and as it happened that the other governor was also absent from work, the father of the first governor replaced his son.²⁴ In another case, in 1946, the Tibetan trade agent of Gyantse (Tib. *'tshong spyi khyab*) got himself represented by his brother.²⁵ As well, 'PHRENG RING Raja, the elder brother of the Maharajah of Sikkim, and a fourth rank official in the Ganden phodrang, sent his son to replace him.²⁶ In January 1903, in the PHA LHA house, two of three brothers were officials of the Ganden phodrang and the third was a monk. This monk acted for his brother as 'Phyongs rgyas *rdzong dpon*, in Dbus province and as governor of Gyantse, although he was not a servant of the government, as the document highlights.²⁷

22 L. Petech, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

23 *Who's Who in Tibet 1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

24 *Annual Report on the British Trade Agency, Gyantse, Tibet, for the year ending 31st March 1935* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4166/P3840).

25 *Gyantse News Report, period ending the 18th February 1946* (PRO/FO/371/53614 ex. F4797/71/10).

26 *Revised Who's Who in Tibet*, 1944, p. 41 (PRO/FO/371/46121 ex. F2195/1/10).

27 *Weekly Frontier Confidential Report for the Week ending the 24th January 1903*, from E. H. B. Walsh, Esq., ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal (IOR/L/P&S/7/151/P347).

A particularly interesting example is that of the Gartok governor in western Tibet, RIN SGANG, who had himself represented from 1934 to 1936 by his wife, to the great amazement of the British who could not help express their admiration for the lady's abilities.²⁸ When the brother of this lady, a monk and brother-in-law of the official in charge came to replace her, the British were disappointed by his alleged incompetence.²⁹

The office could be not only a family matter, but, more broadly, a house matter, since it also happened that when no member of the family was available or willing to take the role, a trusted servant was sent as a representative (Tib. *ngo tshab*) instead.³⁰ This practice of a noble official being represented by a servant has often been described in the literature.³¹ According to some officials, it was possible to ask and get permission from the government to do so, but in some cases the permission was not really necessary.³² One of the witnesses said that this practice increased greatly during the Reting regency.³³

We can also add that this phenomenon was parallel to the replacement of the *gzhis bzhu*gs—the family estate steward, a position which was often held by a son of the house—by a servant of the house when a son could not hold this important position. We can thus observe that aristocrats acted in the same way whether the matter was connected to the interests of the house or the interests of the government.

As early as 1751 “The Thirteen-Article Ordinance for the More Efficient Governing of Tibet” (Tib. *Bod kyi las don skor gyi rtsa 'dzin don tshan bcu gsum*) described two practices as having risen under the rule of 'Gyur med mams rgyal (1747–1750): first, the appointing, by officials, of servants and family members to government offices notwithstanding the procedures of officials' recruitment; second, the representation in the office by a servant. The ordinance reminds us that it is, according to old regulations, strictly forbidden and that only individuals appointed by the government could represent the government.³⁴

28 *Letter from the British Trade Agent, Gartok, Western Tibet, to the Superintendent, Hill States, Simla, dated the 15th September 1934* (PRO/FO/371/18107 ex. F7036/137/10).

29 *Diary of the British Trade Agent, Gartok, dated the 16th September 1936* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4163/P1081).

30 In 1908, it is the servant of the younger brother of the “Junior Garpon” at Spu rang who is in charge, cf. *Letter from the Hospital Assistant Mohan Lall, Officiating British Trade Agent in Gartok, to the Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, dated Gartok, the 25th April 1901* (IOR/L/P&S/10/150/1247).

31 H.E Richardson, *Tibetan precis*, Secret, For Official Use only. Calcutta: Printed by the Manager Government of India Press, 1945, p. 94 (reprinted in Aris, Michael (ed.), *High Peaks, pure earth: collected writings on Tibetan history and culture*. London: Serindia Publications, 1998, p. 519–666); L. Petech, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

32 Anonymous interview.

33 Anonymous interview.

34 *Bod kyi las don byed sgor gyi rtsa 'dzin don tshan bcu gsum*, in Nor bu bsam 'phel, *op. cit.*, p. 143–144; Blo bzang 'Phrin las Dung dkar, *The merging of religious and secular rule in Tibet*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991, p. 107.

The custom of having oneself represented by another person is certainly to be linked to another interesting aspect of Ganden phodrang service, the concurrent holding of several offices by a single official.

1.3. The concurrent holding of several offices

The reason why officials had themselves sometimes replaced by a family member or servant was actually often not to avoid the service of government: we read in a British report in 1935 that “Kusho Nyemo Malam”³⁵ was appointed governor of Gyantse, and that in addition to this position, he was appointed secretary in the Council of Ministers. He stayed in Lhasa to hold this Council position, and his post as governor of Gyantse was held by his son-in-law, “Kusho Chiwang”, although the latter had not been appointed to this office.³⁶ It is easy to understand how the concurrent holding of these two posts would be profitable. “Kusho Nyemo Malam” could live in the capital city and work in a prestigious office, while at the same time receive the incomes a *rdzong dpon* could usually expect from a *rdzong*, even if it was indirectly, through his son-in-law. Thus, the government did not turn a blind eye to this practice, but actually participated in it knowingly, since it appointed one official at the same time to several offices, often located far away from each other.

This phenomenon of the concurrent holding of several offices is very poorly described in the secondary literature, except for the position of governor of the eastern province (Tib. *mdo spyi*), which was generally given to a minister. As well, an official holding a particular permanent position could be sent away from his office to carry out a temporary mission, such as official guide (Tib. *sne shan*) to a visiting team, for instance,³⁷ or to attend a military training course³⁷ in India, or similar activities.

But in many cases described in the British archives, we find that two permanent offices were held at the same time by one official and there are no details as to the way the timetable was organized or the functions fulfilled. Just to give a couple of examples, out of many: in 1925, LUNG SHAR Rdo rje tshe rgyal was appointed general-in-chief of the army (Tib. *dmag spyi*) in addition to his office of *rtis dpon* or finance minister;³⁸ in 1932, the aristocrat TSHES GSUM PHUN KHANG was promoted to the fourth rank and appointed Tibetan trade agent in Yatung in addition to his position as governor of Phag ri district.³⁹ In this case, the closeness of

35 Most probably a member of the SMAR LAM PA noble house whose estates were located in Snye mo.

36 *Annual Report on the British Trade Agency, Gyantse, Tibet, for the year ending 31st March 1935* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4166/P3840).

37 Cf. among others, *Who's Who in Tibet 1948, op. cit.*, p. 54, 33 and 79; *List of Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, Third edition*, 1933, p. 20 (IOR/L/P&S/20/D216).

38 *Ibid.*, p. 17. He was dismissed from this second charge in 1931.

39 *Annual Report of the British trade agency, Yatung, for the year ending March 31st 1933, from A. A. Russell, British trade agent, Yatung and Assistant to the Political officer in Sikkim* (PRO/FO/371/17138 ex. F3334/3334/10).

the two office locations certainly made the concurrent holding of the two positions easier.

In 1941 Chos rgyal nyi ma KA SHOD PA was appointed officer-in-charge of the Grwa bzhi hydroelectric factory in addition to his office of finance minister (Tib. *rtsis dpon*).⁴⁰ In February 1951, Byams pa Ngag dbang was appointed magistrate of Lhasa (Tib. *bsher dpang*) in addition to his functions as assistant to the foreign office (Tib. *phyi rgyal las khungs*).⁴¹ During the same period, GSAR BYUNG Bsod noms stobs rgyas, in addition to his position as secretary to the Council of Ministers (Tib. *bka' drung*), was appointed assistant in the tourism office.⁴²

Two other situations are worth mentioning in particular. In one, an official exercised the functions of abbot of Gyantse monastery and at the same time held a government office, that of Tibetan trade agent in Gyantse.⁴³ In the other, B TSAG SER KHANG also held two offices at the same time: one for the Ganden phodrang and the other one for the Tashi Lhunpo government. In 1915 he had been governor of Gam pa since at least 1903, and was also officially *phyag mdzod* (a position between treasurer and steward) of Tashi Lhunpo monastery.⁴⁴

The reasons accounting for this situation are not clear. We can assume that it was partly the consequence of the increasing number of positions due to the creation of new offices from the reign of the thirteenth Dalai Lama onwards. But a lack of available officials does not seem to be the main reason, since we also know from the same archives that there was a significant amount of inactivity among officials, many of them holding the status of *gzhung zhabs* without having been appointed to any particular office. It might well have been due to a shortage of high ranking or experienced officials. According to one informant, the government was well aware of this situation and would have liked to stop it.⁴⁵

In many cases, a *rdzong dpon* appointment was given in addition to another office and, in this particular case, the officials concerned always sent representatives.⁴⁶

40 *Who's Who in Tibet 1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 17. According to the *Who's Who*, he was *bka' shod*, which is certainly a confusion, since the official concerned remembers well that he was *bka' drung*. Handwritten notes added to the *Who's Who* read as follows: "Since Feb. 51, in addition to his duties as kashag sho-pa, he has been acting as additional assistant in the *tourism* [hardly legible] Bureau." I have found no other mention of a "Tourism Bureau" in this period. A Tibet Tourism Bureau was founded later, in 1979.

43 In 1933, the monk official Byams pa chos bzang, cf. *Annual Report on the British trade agency, Gyantse, Tibet for the year ending 31st March 1934* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4166/P3566).

44 *Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, 1915*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

45 Anonymous interview.

46 Thus, the *Who's Who* of 1915 states that MAN SPEL Bsod noms rgyal po was appointed post officer (Tib. *sbrags spyi*) in addition to his "permanent position" as governor of Gting skyes, which is a five-day walk from Shigatse, cf. *Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, 1915*, *op. cit.*, p. 18. In 1940, SMON GLING Kun skyabs bsod noms stobs rgyas was

Actually, because of the nominal character or even, for most positions, the lack of any salary for the officials, a certain number of *rdzong* were granted to particular offices or officials in lieu of the salary. Giuseppe Tucci has underlined the fact that the government owned several estates which it gave to officials to ensure for them an income in kind.⁴⁷ For example, ministers were sometimes paid in estates called *bka' gzhis* (lit. "the estate of the minister")⁴⁸ and other *rdzong* were systematically attributed to certain offices and positions. In these cases sending a representative was completely accepted and expected.⁴⁹

On one occasion, when the government had some young officials attend a wireless course and was on the verge of creating the new position of officer-in-charge of the wireless service, the British agent observed:

"The wireless training course continues every day but it will be difficult for the government to make the position in this new field popular. Indeed, nobody in Tibet wants to have such a work, as it carries nothing but pay. As the salary of a Minister does not exceed more than 400 or 500 Rupees a year, the pay of a wireless operator will certainly be very inadequate as a living wage. I suggested that the Tibetan Government gives a district to anybody appointed wireless official, in order to make the position more attractive."⁵⁰

It is obvious that the Tibetan State considered the office of *rdzong dpon* as an official means of enrichment for its holder, a way of making up for the lack of salary.

appointed governor of 'Dus byung, near Shigatse, in addition to another position not specified in the source, likely secretary to the Council of Ministers (Tib. *bka' drung*), since he was appointed to this post in 1935, cf. *Who's Who in Tibet 1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 76. Finally, in November 1946, RIN SGANG Bsod nams dpal 'byor was appointed finance accountant (Tib. *rtsis pa*), in addition to his position as governor of Spu hreng/Spu ranḡ district, cf. *ibid.*, p. 100.

47 "To each official a holding was allotted corresponding to the rank held, which he managed to his own profit for the duration of his tenure. In some cases he might get a governmental loan on his nomination, enabling him to live to his rank, or to collect a handsome interest by investing its amount.", G. Tucci, *To Lhasa and Beyond*, Snow Lion Publications. New York: Ithaca, 1983, p. 50.

48 C.A. Bell, *Report on the Government of Tibet*, Confidential. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1906, p. 7.

49 These estates had to be given back to the government at the end of the tenure of the office. At the end of the 18th century, it seems that ministers customarily kept these estates in the family and the government had to remind them of the rule requiring that the estates be given back, cf. Article no. 27 of "The Twenty-nine-Article Ordinance for the More Efficient Governing of Tibet" (Tib. *Gong ma'i bka' 'brel lugs srol gсар 'dzugs don tshan nyer dgu*) of 1793, Blo bzang 'Phrin las Dung dkar, *op. cit.*, p. 128–129.

50 *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 16th January 1944 from Major G. Sheriff, Additional Assistant, Political Officer Sikkim, Officer in charge, British Mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201).

The common practice, in these cases, of having oneself represented by somebody of one's own choice seems to imply a link between the official and his office not unlike ownership of property, since the official was allowed, to a certain extent, to decide what to do with it. Other facts reinforce the feeling that the office was sometimes and in some regards considered the private property of the official. The British describe an extreme case, that of a governor of a western district who simply refused to have himself replaced at the end of his term of office:

“The new Jongpon, who has not come as yet, has sent his servant to assume the charge of Jongpon from the servant of the previous Jongpon. The next acting Jongpon arrived in Daba a week before us. [...] The former acting Jongpon refused to give the charge this year. Upon this the new acting Jongpon reported the matter to the court of the Garpons who deputed their servant to ask the former acting Jongpon to hand over the charge at once. But this acting Jongpon did not care for the orders of the Garpons and refused to hand over the charge till next year (Tibetan), in order to have the fruits of taxes of the year. This is the example of the administration in Western Tibet.”⁵¹

Other elements of a financial order—such as the leasing of the position and what can be qualified as a kind of purchasing of the position—which imply the enrichment of an official thanks to his status as servant of the government, back up the idea of the partly patrimonial character of an office in the Ganden phodrang administration and lead us at the same time to envisage the whole relationship between the official and his position in a more complex way.

2. FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS REGARDING THE OFFICE

2.1. *The leasing of positions*

Another practice that stresses the idea of a property-like link to the official position is the leasing of the position: i.e., contracting one's post to another official in exchange for an income, which again gave an official the opportunity of holding several offices at the same time. In both the practices of having oneself represented by somebody else (Tib. *ngo tshab*) and leasing one's position (Tib. *bogs ma*), somebody other than the official initially and officially appointed by the government is acting in that position, but they are formally different.

Two examples show that the leasing of office existed from the beginning of the period under scrutiny. In 1901, the first Tibetan official that John Claude White, the Political Officer in Sikkim, met, at the border between India and Tibet, had, according to the Tibetan official himself, taken this office on contract. He explained to White that he had committed himself by contract to pay an allowance for his office.⁵² This

51 *Letter of the British trade agent, Gartok, dated 3^d/9th August 1931* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4163/P7900).

52 *Letter from John Claude White, Esquire, Political officer of Sikkim to C.R. Marindin, Esquire, Commissioner, Rajshahi, dated Tangu, the 19th August 1901* (IOR/L/P&S/7/137/P1177).

Tibetan official was the then governor of Gam pa. A later example is KA SHOD PA Chos rgyal nyi ma. From 1938 to 1942, when he was already finance minister (Tib. *rtsis dpon*) and additionally appointed officer-in-charge of the Grwa bzhi hydroelectric factory in 1941, he contracted the office of governor of Phag ri from the incumbent, 'CHUM BKRAS GLING Bsod nams dngos grub. KA SHOD PA Chos rgyal nyi ma then sent a representative⁵³ to occupy the position in southern Tibet, at the border with India.⁵⁴ Later, in 1948, according to a *Who's Who*, he also took on lease, while he was minister, the post of governor of Nag tshang in northern Tibet, a position to which the aristocrat CHA PA Bskal bzang dbang 'dus had just been appointed.⁵⁵ At the beginning, CHA PA had sent one of his servants but then decided to give the position on contract to KA SHOD PA Chos rgyal nyi ma against a "rental" fee (Tib. *bogs ma*). KA SHOD PA Chos rgyal nyi ma was interested in the position as he was engaged in trade in this area. CHA PA Bskal bzang dbang 'dus himself held another important office in Lhasa, in which he was occupied full-time, in charge (Tib. *do dam pa*) of the agricultural office (Tib. *so nam las khungs*).⁵⁶ This kind of arrangement was quite common in the administration and it was only rarely necessary to ask permission for it from the Dalai Lama or regent.

2.2. *The office, a purchasable and negotiable good?*

Some Tibetan autobiographies recount the degree to which family connections could sometimes determine success in getting a position.⁵⁷ Nominal gifts were customarily given when an official sent or presented a request in order to get a position. But it is well known that the end of the period witnessed abuses in this domain. Let us examine now a practice which was very much criticized by Tibetans during the period and which seems to have reached incredible proportions during the period of regency. Some western travellers noticed the importance of bribes in the Tibetan administration.

53 *Annual report on the Yatung trade agency for the year 1940–1941* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4166/P3686). According to Joachim Karsten, he had already leased this office from TSHES GSUM PHUN KHANG Bskal bzang dbang phyug in 1931 and sent a representative there, cf. J. Karsten, "A note on *ya sor* and the secular festivals following the Smon lam chen mo", in E. Steinkellner (ed.), *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History, and Culture, Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium held at Velm-Vienna, Austria, 13–19 September 1981*, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, vol. 1. Vienna: Universität Wien, 1983, p. 128.

54 *Annual Report on the British trade agency at Yatung, for the year ending 31st March 1939* (PRO/FO/371/23525 ex F5776/5776/10), and *Annual report on the Yatung trade agency for the year 1941–1942* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4166/P4559).

55 *Who's Who in Tibet 1948*, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and 54. Anonymous interview.

56 *Ibid.*

57 S. Carnahan and Lama Kunga Rinpoche, *In the Presence of my Enemies: Memoirs of Tibetan Nobleman Tsipon Shugupa*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1995, p. 23.

Frederick Spencer Chapman even declared that this practice was so deeply rooted in the system that it had become a necessary part of it.⁵⁸

This phenomenon, which cannot be ignored, surely evolved during the period, with moments displaying a greater amount of bribery than others. The different aspects, social functions and evaluations by the actors of what was described as bribery by British informants and also denounced as such by Tibetans will not be discussed here.⁵⁹ However, there is one interesting aspect which can be linked to our interrogations regarding the intermingling of private and public spheres and the partly patrimonial nature of the office or official position in the Tibetan State: i.e., the existence of what could be termed an “unofficial market of official positions” during certain periods of the first half of the 20th century, particularly during the regency period.

In Tibet, we could perhaps consider certain practices of bribery at the highest level of the State as a form of selling of official positions. The office, in the government, at least during the 1940s, and for the highest positions mainly, seems to have been considered as a purchasable and negotiable good. Let us examine the phenomenon as described by the British. In 1945, for instance, they learn through a “reliable source” that the governor of Gyantse, *yab gzhis* PHUN KHANG, had received an offer from the regent to be appointed head of eighteen districts, but that he refused to give the regent the necessary bribe to secure the position.⁶⁰

During the 1940s, the vacancy of the office of minister gave rise to what can only be described as an auction sale: the candidate who got the position was the one who

58 F.S. Chapman, *Lhasa: the Holy City*. New Delhi: Bodhi Leaves Corporation, 1992 [first print: London 1938], p. 83: “In Tibet the State owns practically all the land, and farms it out to the noble families on condition that they supply one or more officials, depending on the value of the estate, for government employment. Bribery is of course rife and is so ingrained in the system that it has become an indispensable part of it. A young official pays a senior one to put in a good word for him. Huge presents are received by those who have in their power the selection of candidates for a vacant post. Bribes are even paid to spread bad reports of rivals, so there is little feeling of security for a Lhasa official. But this system is tacitly accepted by the Government, who finds it convenient not to have to pay salaries.” The phenomenon is also described by Hugh Richardson, who states that the major part of an official’s income consists of “bribes and other perquisites”, cf. H.E. Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 94. Melvyn Goldstein also mentions these practices, cf. M.C. Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

59 Some of the best theoretical analyses of corruption, from a political and anthropological point of view, can be found in the following: J.T. Noonan, *Bribes*. London: Collier Macmillan, 1984; J.S. Nye, “Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis”, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 61, June 1967, p. 417–427; D. Haller, *Corruption: Anthropological perspectives*. London: Pluto, 2005; A.J. Heidenheimer, *Political corruption: readings in comparative analysis*. New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1970; A.J. Heidenheimer, M. Johnston and V.T. Le Vine (eds), *Political corruption. A Handbook*. Oxford: Transaction Publisher, 1989.

60 *Gyantse News Report from R.F. Grist, the Assistant Political officer, Gyantse to the Political officer in Sikkim for the period ending the 29th November 1945* (PRO/FO/371/53613 ex. 277/71/10).

agreed to pay a certain amount of money. According to information available in British archives, in a few cases the amount was fixed and known by all, while in others candidates offered stakes and the office went to the highest bidder.

Normally, the process for the appointment of a minister, in the event of vacancy of the office, was as follows: a list of candidates recommended by the other ministers in charge was sent to the Dalai Lama or the regent, who could take it into account or not before designating the future minister. But, in 1943⁶¹ and 1945⁶² especially, the vacancy of a position of minister apparently produced a spectacular auction sale.

The reason why bribery is of interest to a researcher is certainly not the need to judge an administration. Bribery is one of the most widely spread and shared phenomena among administrations in the world and throughout history. But the study of this type of transaction leads one to think of the venality of offices as it developed in European countries in pre-modern times, between the 16th and 18th centuries, and especially in France where its legal aspect was more pronounced than elsewhere. This other model could perhaps help in looking at the Tibetan situation from a different angle. In his book on the venality of offices in France, Roland Mousnier describes the office as having the characteristics of a patrimonial good, a private

61 In 1943, ZUR KHANG *dza sag* was said to have become minister after having given a bribe to the regent Taktra, cf. *News Report from the British mission, Lhasa, to Political Officer in Sikkim, dated 29th June 1944* (PRO/FO/371/41588 ex. F4577/38/10), and *Yatung news report for the period ending the 15th June 1945 from the British trade agent, Yatung and Assistant to the Political officer in Sikkim, Yatung, Tibet* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4208/P3452). If true, it would have been a first for this regent who originally had made the battle against corruption his main concern, cf. *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 4th July 1943 from Major Sheriff, Additional Assistant, Political officer of Sikkim, Officer in charge, British mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201).

62 *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 13th May 1945 from the Additional Assistant, Political officer in Sikkim, Officer in charge, British mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201), *Yatung news report for the period ending the 31st May 1945 from the British trade agent, Yatung and Assistant to the Political officer in Sikkim, Yatung, Tibet* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4208/P3117). "The Tibetan Trade Agent, Yatung, has dispatched one 'Adung' (special messenger) [Tib. *a drung*] with one sealed cover addressed to his son-in-law Samdrup Photrang Theiji (*Revised Who's Who* p. 37) at Lhasa, with instructions to deliver the sealed cover within seven days. The sealed cover is said to contain an advance hand receipt approximately for four lakhs of rupees to be handed over to the Regent as a stake for Shap-peship. He also suggested to his son-in-law to increase the stake should any other candidate endeavour to increase it. There is rumour that Lhalu Se (*Revised Who's Who* p. 24) one of the candidates for Shap-peship has also given a hand receipt to the Regent of the same amount offered to him by Surkhang Shap-pe in securing the appointment to Shap-pe in 1943", cf. *Yatung news report for the period ending the 15th July 1945 from the British trade agent, Yatung and Assistant to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Yatung, Tibet* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4208/P3886). For a discussion of the political context in which these events took place, see M.C. Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p. 449; *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 29th July 1945 from the Additional Assistant, Political Officer Sikkim, Officer in charge, British Mission Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4202).

property that you can hand down or hand on, especially after 1604, with an essential feature, the confusion of public power and private property.”⁶³

One common contextual feature of the first occurrence of the venality of offices would be the critical condition of the State’s finances. Nonetheless, it is obvious that there are important differences between the government office in Tibet and the government office in Europe (insofar as we can put these offices into one category, i.e., European). First, the profits of the sale of offices were not used to refloat public finances, as was the case in France, but the private finances of the regent (in the case described) or individuals in the government. Second, the office, as it was defined in Europe, was held for life, whereas in Tibet, theoretically, most of the offices were temporarily given and only the highest ones were given for life. Last but not least, in Tibet, the money paid to obtain a position was really considered a bribe, and although the practice seems to have been widespread during certain periods, it was not normal procedure. It was always considered abnormal and remained, even if well known, unofficial. It was clearly opposed to the highest standard of morality in the service of the State and considered as an unfortunate drift of the Tibetan administration. Officials who did not indulge in these practices were highly praised.

In fact, the comparison could only be made with what also existed in pre-modern Europe and many countries, and has been termed a “private venality”⁶⁴ or “customary venality”,⁶⁵ in opposition to “public venality” and “legal venality” of government office. Lastly, all these practices implying an underlying representation of the office as a private good, and the enrichment of private individuals through their public office or their position, need to be put in perspective with other elements, the broader context of the holding of office in the Ganden phodrang administration, which not only implied not getting a proper salary, as we said, but also meant being responsible for the State to the point of sometimes putting up one’s private money to ensure the functioning of the State.

63 R. Mousnier, *La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII*. Paris: PUF, 1971, p. 7–10.

64 *Ibid.*

65 R. Descimon, “La vénalité des offices et la construction de l’État dans la France moderne. Des problèmes de la représentation symbolique aux problèmes du coût social du pouvoir.”, in R. Descimon, J.-F. Schaub, and B. Vincent (eds), *Les figures de l’administrateur. Institutions, réseaux, pouvoirs en Espagne, en France et au Portugal. 16^e–19^e siècles*. Paris: EHESS, 1997, p. 84.

3. THE FINANCING OF THE STATE THROUGH OFFICIALS' PRIVATE FINANCES

3.1. Officials' expenditures

We come now to a particular feature of the Ganden phodrang administration, the input of private money into the State by officials.⁶⁶ To begin with, the holding of an office very often meant great personal expenditures, for daily dress, ceremonial dress, giving parties when one was promoted, and so on. Moreover, the highest offices involved maintaining a costly sumptuous daily lifestyle.

Another aspect, which still has to be thoroughly studied, is more significant: an official could be appointed to an office with its finance in deficit and he was then obliged to resort to his private resources in order to make up the deficit of the public finances.

This phenomenon was very common in China under the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) as underlined by Pierre-Étienne Will.⁶⁷ In his *Memorandum* on the Tibetan government written in 1906, Charles Bell, the British representative, describes the situation of the Receivers of Barley Flour (Tib. *rtsam bzhes pa*), who were the storekeepers of the State:

“They have charge of the Government barley, barley-flour, wheat, peas, meat, oil and some silver. They issue their supplies on receiving an order from the Council or from the Labrang treasury. [...] They are bound to meet indents whether they have the goods in store or not, and these officers are always put to loss. When completing their term of office which lasts three years, they put in a petition stating that they have incurred heavy loss. They are generally rewarded afterwards by being appointed to a profitable Jong. They receive no pay; they may be said to farm this revenue and always at a loss to themselves.”⁶⁸

A study made by the anthropologist Paljor Tsarong confirms Charles Bell's description. He mentions the fact that only rich officials were appointed to this position of *rtsam bzhes pa*.⁶⁹ In addition to this, a study of the administration made by Dge rgyas pa Bstan 'dzin rdo rje allows one to observe that officials of a higher and higher rank were appointed to this office during the period,⁷⁰ which could also be

66 It happens in other administrations that some positions require its holders to put in private funds, but, to our knowledge, it was not as widespread as in the Tibetan administration.

67 P.-E. Will, “Bureaucratie officielle et bureaucratie réelle. Sur quelques dilemmes de l'administration impériale à l'époque des Qing”, *Études chinoises*, vol. 8, no. 1, spring 1989, p. 69–142.

68 C.A. Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

69 P. Tsarong, “Economics of a Tibetan State Treasury: the Barley Supply Office”, *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 23, no. 2, summer 1998, p. 4. The same situation applied to the offices of *rtswa gnyer* and *shing gnyer*.

70 Bstan 'dzin rdo rje Dge rgyas pa, “De snga'i Bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi srid 'dzin sgrig gzhi”, *Bod ljong zhib 'jug*, no. 3, p. 129.

linked to the obligation of meeting public expenditures with one's private money. This situation happened in other offices as well.⁷¹

3.2. *The private financing of public functions*

In addition to the expenditures mentioned above, officials—in turn and on a compulsory basis—were expected to finance and organize official functions and parties, which also incurred great expenditures.

Officials from the fourth rank and above generally once in their career, sometimes more often, organized a party. Council ministers would organize, in turn, the *bka' shag thugs spro*⁷² and lay officials would organize, also in turn, the lay official party (Tib. *drung spyi dbyar skyid*). The organization of this party was a ruinous affair, as several accounts evidence: there were, on average, two hundred guests, who each came with two servants, which amounts to a total of six hundred people.⁷³ When it was the turn of *bla phyag* 'PHRENG RING to organize this party in 1943, he estimated that he needed nine hundred eggs per day for the six hundred guests, just for the making of the *thug pa* (Tibetan noodle soup). According to the custom, breakfast, lunch and dinner were served. Based on financial considerations, 'PHRENG RING assessed that a single official could not undertake this function more than once in his life.⁷⁴

In addition to these two occasions there were also public functions, which two newly appointed officials of the fourth rank would finance in turn, such as the lay state ceremonies taking place after the *Smon lam chen mo*.⁷⁵ After the 16th day of the first month, the two aristocrat officials who had been appointed *ya sor khri pa* or *spyi khyab ya sor* trained their troops for a few days in preparation for a military parade in 17th century dress.⁷⁶ The two *ya sor khri pa* took charge of the organization and the financing of the parade which was extremely costly.⁷⁷ With the help of their relatives they had to start preparing everything a long time ahead.⁷⁸

71 Anonymous interview.

72 See a description of this party in Phun tshogs bkra shis Stag lha, *Mi tshe'i byung ba brjod pa*, vol. 1, Bod kyi dpe mdzod khang. Dharamsala: LTWA, 1995, p. 135–136.

73 G. Tucci, *op. cit.*, p. 126–127.

74 *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 7th November 1943 from the Additional Assistant, Political Officer in Sikkim, Officer in charge, British Mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201); see also R.D. Taring, *Daughter of Tibet*. London: Wisdom Publications, 1986 [first print 1970], p. 187. The description is even more detailed in the Tibetan version of her autobiography, cf. Rin chen sgrol ma 'Phreng ring, *Bod kyi bu mo*, Ngag rgyun lo rgyus deb phreng 11/ Oral History Series no. 11. Dharamsala: LTWA, 2000, p. 233.

75 See a very detailed description of this festival in J. Karsten, *op. cit.*

76 *Lhasa Mission, Typescript, August 1936 (Fols. 1–13)*, p. 44 (MS. Or. Richardson 2, Bodleian Library, Oxford).

77 *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 1st December 1946 from H.E. Richardson, British Trade Agent, Gyantse and Officer in charge, British Mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4202).

78 Dbyangs can sgrol dkar Tsha rong, *Sde dpon mi drag gi sras mo gzhon nu ma zhig gis sge'u*

“A different set of costly and elaborate clothes has to be worn on each of the seven days of the ceremony; special uniforms have to be provided each day for a large retinue who must also wear coral rosaries and gold bracelets; young ladies of good families have to be enlisted as maids of honour and adorned with masses of valuable jewelry; extensive entertainments have to be given. Few families could take this on without borrowing much of the finery from their friends. There was no escaping the duty and it was a matter of pride that everything should be of dazzling perfection.”⁷⁹

They would spend at least 15,000 rupees each, according to British archives.⁸⁰

All these parties were ruinously expensive, as the British archives and Tibetan aristocrat autobiographies underline. A number of officials went into debt while organizing them and the government and the officials began taking various steps, like creating collective funds (Tib. *sphyi ngul*) or forbidding excessive expenses through sumptuary laws to improve the situation. In 1944 for instance, the Tibetan government decided to enforce sumptuary laws forbidding the use of very expensive imported food items during official parties:

“Sumptuary laws against the use of imported foodstuffs and drink were put into force at the Kashag’s official party. No Chinese delicacies, imported alcohol or even Indian tea were to be used. On the day that foreign missions were entertained Indian tea was served, as a concession. These parties had become far too extravagant and competitive and the new restrictions are sensible.”⁸¹

In 1945, a collective fund was created to avoid officials bankrupting themselves while using their personal funds for organizing official parties. The idea was as follows: Each time an official was promoted to a higher position, he would give a certain limited amount of money, 250 *ngul-sang* for instance. An office took charge of this money and gave it as a loan to traders and kept the interest. Part of this money was used during the Smon lam festival in order to help the *ya sor*, and the other part for the organisation of official parties.⁸²

According to another witness, it was TSHA RONG Zla bzang dgra ’dul who came up with the idea and who, as early as 1934 or 1935, organized this collective fund. It was entrusted to a committee which invested or lent the money and used the interest for the organization of official parties and kept the concerned officials from going too far

khung nas mthong ba’i bod kyi rgyal sa lha sa’i snang tshul mdor bsdu, Rtsom rig sgyu rtsal deb phreng 7. Dharamsala: AMI, 2006, p. 261.

79 *Lhasa Mission, Typescript, August 1936 (Fols. 1–13)*, p. 44 (MS. Or. Richardson 2, Bodleian Library, Oxford).

80 *Lhasa letter for the week ending the 19th March 1944 from Major G. Sheriff, Additional Assistant, Political Officer in Sikkim, Officer in charge, British Mission, Lhasa* (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201).

81 *Report on the Indian Mission in Lhasa for September 1948, from the Indian Trade Agent, Lhasa to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok* (PRO/FO/371/70046 ex F18400/71/10).

82 Anonymous interview.

into debt. Each time an official took charge of the organization of an official party, he would add some money and the capital would increase. Thus it was easier later on for officials to organize these parties and the funds were all the more welcome with the much increased price of foodstuffs.⁸³

A great deal of solidarity and reciprocity between aristocrat families was displayed: when an official was designated to organize the function or party, the whole family and network of friends would help him.

3.3. Interdependency of officials and the State

From this whole picture, we can see that private and public money seem not to have always formed two clearly delimited spheres. The expenditures incurred in the exercise of official duties and the lack or insufficiency of salary are reasons that at least partly account for the search for personal profit, or simply repayment of private expenses, in the service of the State. The very fact that officials accepted that it was their duty to meet public expenses with their private money in offices lacking finances or in deficit, or in organizing official parties and public functions, indicates a sense of responsibility of the official regarding the State. This sense of responsibility on the part of officials may be linked to a strong commonality of interests of the officials and the State. This could perhaps explain why a situation of tension—the fact that some of the administration's rules were not respected and the intermingling of private interests with public service, but also the serving of public interest with private money—which could be either detrimental or beneficial to the well-functioning of the State and to the well-being of aristocratic houses, endured from the beginning of the Ganden phodrang administration to its end.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we could first say that in its functioning during the first half of the 20th century the Ganden phodrang administration met with a certain number of difficulties in enforcing regulations that had existed for centuries and which regarded the clear differentiation between public service and personal or family interests. These difficulties cannot be considered particular to the Ganden phodrang administration. Regulations of this type and the difficulties to implement them are present in every administration at all times in any country. Neither can they even be considered to be present to a greater degree in pre-1959 Tibet than in other countries' administrations. They are nonetheless of interest to the researcher insofar as they illustrate the ongoing difficulty of the public sphere to achieve autonomy from private interests and networks, even when written laws and regulations theoretically ensure their

83 Anonymous interview.

application. It is hence of great importance to understand the likely reasons accounting for the tenacity of these practices as well as the State's responses to them.

The separation between private and public spheres has often been thought of as a characteristic feature of the modern State.⁸⁴ It is probably for this reason that British archives so widely and precisely give an account of the practices described in this paper. The British representatives were clearly fascinated by practices which seemed to them incompatible with public service in their understanding of it. As well, they had a direct interest in describing these practices insofar as they could be presented as a justification for the British near-colonialist enterprise in Tibet and their alleged help in modernizing the country. Hence the possible overrepresentation of all these practices in the British archives, compared with the probable real extent to which they were engaged in by officials in the service of the Tibetan administration.

Moreover, a number of historians challenge the relevance of the distinction between public and private in other periods of European history and in other societies. For instance, Paul Veyne, in his study of the Roman Empire, has underlined⁸⁵ that the "ideal of the State", as he puts it, is never incompatible with the venality of offices, because this ideal needs not to be disinterested. To him, the distinction between public and private is only conventional and he describes the administration of the Roman Empire as a public service which itself procured private advantages. Several studies show that the distribution between private business and public duties is a very contemporary one,⁸⁶ and, perhaps, a very Western one.

This idea would lead to the argument that one of the reasons for the close interweaving of the private and public spheres in pre-modern administrations or in other cultures was the non-relevance of the separation between the private and public spheres. This might be true to a limited extent. Yet it is clear from the reading of written regulations that from the beginning of the functioning of the Ganden phodrang, the government at the highest level was well aware of the danger represented by these practices, and tried to separate the two areas. In this respect, the decrees and regulations

84 P. Rosanvallon, *L'État en France de 1789 à nos jours*. Paris: Le Seuil, 1992 [first print 1990], p. 24.

85 P. Veyne, "Clientèle et corruption au service de l'État : la vénalité des offices dans le Bas-Empire romain", *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1981, p. 339–360. In this article, the author explains that the officials he studies "adhere to themselves when they serve their own importance by serving the prince and hence they consider themselves disinterested". He adds that "patronage and business did not prevent our officials from having the 'ideal of State', considering they had to serve the emperor even if they stole from him; amateurishness, corruption and venality of offices did no more to prevent it. Because the ideal of public service is no more disinterested than any other and goes easily with baksheesh and the trafficking in public power. [...] In order to serve, one has to invest interests in the service, and, by definition, an investment is egocentric." [my translation from the French]

86 R. Descimon, J.-F. Schaub, and B. Vincent, "Avant-propos" in R. Descimon, J.-F. Schaub, and B. Vincent (eds), *Les figures de l'administrateur. Institutions, réseaux, pouvoirs en Espagne, en France et au Portugal, 16^e–19^e siècles*. Paris: EHESS, 1997.

always enjoin officials to stick to the “old custom” (Tib. *lugs srol rnying pa ltar/ sngar lugs ltar*) and condemned the mixing of public and private interests as illegal.⁸⁷

Instances are far too numerous in the official decrees for all of them to be cited. To give one example, in 1751, “The Thirteen-Article Ordinance for the More Efficient Governing of Tibet” reminded cabinet ministers that in order to avoid the situation where “personal considerations interfere with their execution of public duties”⁸⁸ and to ensure that they act equitably (Tib. “*drang bzhag gi sgo nas bkod pa byed pa*”), ministers should handle their official business in their government offices according to the old regulations, instead of holding public business in their private homes, as they apparently started to do during the rule of Pholanas.⁸⁹ In the same ordinance, the ninth article reminded officials that “people should not be held as private property” (Tib. “*mi ser sogs la rang 'tshams kyi bdag bzung byed mi 'jug pa 'i bab 'brel 'dug*”).⁹⁰ The argument of the irrelevance of the differentiation between public and private seems not to be pertinent concerning the Tibetan government where a clear distinction between what pertains to the private (Tib. *sger*) and the public (Tib. *spyi*) has always been made.

Therefore, to answer the question asked at the beginning of this paper, it would not be appropriate to speak of any *legal* patrimonial nature of position or office in the Ganden phodrang administration. Nevertheless, there was, to a limited extent, a *de facto* and tolerated patrimonial attitude towards the office by officials in the practices of the institutions. Thus, we can only suggest that some of the practices described above—which were, from very early times, considered illegal—were tolerated (like the hereditary handing-down of the office, an official being represented by somebody else in the office, the leasing of the official position, and so on) for two reasons.

First, as with administrations elsewhere, the State found no efficient way to eradicate them thoroughly. In this respect, another observation might be added which is linked to the very nature of the Tibetan government and an inherent fragility due to the system of reincarnation of its spiritual and temporal leader, the Dalai Lama. Why

87 There has always been, throughout the existence of the Ganden phodrang, a system for demoting and dismissing officials from the government service when they acted in an inappropriate way or infringed the laws. For the 20th century, see A. Travers, “Risk and social mobility among the aristocracy: a study of the demotion and dismissal cases in the careers of the Dga’ ldan pho brang officials at the beginning of the 20th century (1885–1952)”, in Brandon Dotson *et al.* (eds), *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the First International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, London, 9–13 August 2007*, Chicago: Serindia, 2009, p. 363–381.

88 Blo bzang 'Phrin las Dung dkar, *op. cit.*, p. 106. See the Tibetan original in *Bod kyi las don byed sgor gyi rtsa 'dzin don tshan bcu gsum*, in Nor bu bsam 'phel, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

89 “Bka’ blon thams cad spyi khang bka’ shag tu ma phyin par sger khang du las ka byas 'dug”, *ibid.*

90 Article no. 9 of “The Thirteen-Article Ordinance For the More Efficient Governing of Tibet”. Blo bzang 'Phrin las Dung dkar, *op. cit.*, p. 110; *Bod kyi las don byed sgor gyi rtsa 'dzin don tshan bcu gsum*, in Nor bu bsam 'phel, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

is it that although the government was well aware of the existence of a certain number of these practices, and although it forbade them repeatedly, they persisted through the whole existence of the Ganden phodrang, apparently rising cyclically again and again? The periods during which these practices seem to have been most prevalent appear to be periods of internal political troubles, mostly during regencies, during the minority of the Dalai Lama. It is likely that strict adherence to the rules and ethic of the public service was favoured by the charisma of the Dalai Lama whereas regents, due to their own conduct or to their lack of charisma, could not ensure such coherence between the rule and the practice in the public service.

Second, another crucial reason accounting for the tolerating of some of these practices is surely to be found in the problem of nominal or non-existent salaries, the deficiency of the State's finances which sometimes encouraged the financing of the State by private individuals, and the strong interdependency between the State and its officials, all of which somehow blurred the existing differentiation between the public and the private.

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THARCHIN'S ONE MAN WAR WITH MAO

ISRUN ENGELHARDT

Beginning in 1925 and over a period of some thirty years, *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*, or *The Mirror of News from All Sides of the World* (later known as *The Tibet Mirror*),¹ was the only newspaper published in the Tibetan language.² Its editor was the Christian catechist Dorje Tharchin and it was published in the border town of Kalimpong in West Bengal.

In the late 1940s Tharchin began to alert Tibet of the imminent danger of Chinese invasion.

This paper will examine Tharchin's tireless efforts to publish his newspaper against great adversity. Allowing the sources to speak for themselves wherever possible, it offers an overview of Tharchin's ever increasing efforts to do battle with the Chinese, armed only with a pen until the *Tibet Mirror* ceased publication in 1963.

THARCHIN

Gergan Dorje Tharchin (1890-1976), affectionately called Tharchin Babu (*Mthar phyin sba bu*) was an exceptional personality. Although a Christian from Poo in Kinnaur, near the Indian border with Tibet, he identified wholly with the Tibetan cause and made it his life's work. He was baptized by the Moravian missionary Theodor Schreve (1860-1930) and was educated by the Moravians. In the 1920s after having been trained as a schoolteacher, he came to Kalimpong, the town on the border of Sikkim and "the hub of Indo-Tibetan trade," and worked for the Church of Scotland.³ This is how he was described in the early 1950s by Sangharakshita

1 I'll refer to it as the *Melong* and the *Tibet Mirror*.

2 Still in 1953 on the front cover of the second edition of Tharchin's *The Tibetan Second Book*, he proudly called himself as „editor and publisher of the only Tibetan newspaper.“

3 For a voluminous biography of Tharchin, see: H. Louis Fader: *Called from Obscurity: The Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet, God's Humble Servant from Poo Gergan Dorje Tharchin*. With Particular Attention Given to his Good Friend and Illustrious Co-Laborer in the Gospel Sadhu Sundar Singh of India. 3 vols. Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press 2002-2009. See also Paul G. Hackett: "Kalimpong, Gergan Dorje Tharchin, and his Mirror Newspaper." http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/eastasian/Mirror_Hackett.pdf

Tashi Tsering: "The Life of Rev. G. Tharchin: Missionary and Pioneer." In: *Lungta* 11 (1998), 9-10. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz: *Where the Gods are Mountains: Three Years among the People of the Himalayas*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: 1956; Dawa Norbu:

(Dennis Lingwood), a British Buddhist monk, who lived in Kalimpong for fourteen years:

....The colourful and contradictory Mr Tharchin. He had been born not in Tibet but in Ladakh, and was not a Buddhist but a Christian-in fact, a Scottish Presbyterian. Nonetheless, he had an excellent knowledge of Tibetan, both colloquial and classical, and was in great demand as a teacher, especially among the growing number of Western scholars who came to Kalimpong in order to pursue their researches into Tibetan Buddhism. His principal claim to celebrity, however, was the fact that he was the editor, proprietor, printer, and publisher of the *Tibet Mirror*, which proudly proclaimed itself to be the only Tibetan language newspaper in the world, and which was read from the monastic colleges of Lhasa to the oriental departments of major Western universities, not to mention the foreign offices of Washington, Peking, London, and Moscow, and the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi. The reason it was so widely read was that Mr Tharchin was violently anti-Communist and anti-Chinese, and denounced Chairman Mao and all his works with unsparing vigour in every issue of his paper. Not that the *Tibet Mirror* came out very frequently. It was certainly not a daily; it was not even a weekly or a monthly. The truth was, it came out whenever Mr Tharchin had the time - and the money - to write, print, publish, and distribute the shiny tabloid sheets. There had been periods in its history, indeed, when the *Tibet Mirror* did not appear for months together, or even for a year or two. When the paper did appear, therefore, it was quite an event in the Tibetan-speaking world, both inside and outside Tibet, even though only four or five hundred copies were printed, and even though some of these took weeks to reach their destination. Now that China had invaded Tibet, however, and Communist troops occupied Lhasa, Mr Tharchin had redoubled his efforts. At least two issues of the *Tibet Mirror* had appeared in recent months, and Chairman Mao had been denounced more vigorously than ever. For Mr Tharchin his paper was now no less than the voice of Free Tibet, a fact which was not without political significance, especially so far as relations between India and China were concerned.⁴

“G. Tharchin: Pioneer and Patriot. An Interview with Tharchin Babu.” In: *Tibetan Review* 10 (December 1975), 18-20. Anonym.: “Tharchin passes away.” *Tibetan Review* 11 (April 1976), 13. Hisao Kimura. 1990. *Japanese Agent in Tibet: My Ten Years of Disguise*. London: Serindia, 135-136.

4 Sangharakshita (D.P.E. Lingwood): *Facing Mount Kanchenjunga: An English Buddhist in the Eastern Himalayas*. Birmingham: Windhorse Publications 1991, 177-178. The Austrian



Tharchin in ca. 1959.⁵

According to the Tibetan historian Tsering Shakya, “There is no doubt Tharchin regarded the paper as his attempt to bring Tibet into the modern world as he saw it...The *Tibet Mirror* was influential in the formation of new thinking among the Tibetans...”⁶

As Sangharakshita suggests, it was in fact read in the United States. In an article in the December 1962 issue of the *Melong*, Tharchin reports that an American newspaper wrote about his efforts in an article entitled “One Man War With Mao” (from which the title of this essay is drawn).⁷

anthropologist René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz also provided a vivid description of the content of the *Tibet Mirror*. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz: *Where the Gods are Mountains*, 73-75.

5 GettyImages 3322132.

6 Tsering Shakya: *The Emergence of Modern Tibetan Literature—gsar rtsom*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies Ph.D. thesis 2004, 21. I am very grateful to Tsering Shakya for generously allowing me to quote from his as yet unpublished dissertation. See also his interview in Luc Schaedler: *Angry Monk: Reflections on Tibet*. Literary, Historical, and Oral Sources for a Documentary Film. Zürich: University of Zürich Ph.D. thesis 2007, 297-298. See also Isrun Engelhardt: “Tharchin’s *Melong*.” In: Hartmut Walravens (ed.): *The First Tibetan Serial: August Hermann Francke’s La-dvags-kyi-ag-bâr (1904-1907)*. Facsimile of a unique set in the archives of the Evangelische Brüderunität, Herrnhut. Berlin: Staatsbibliothek 2010, 1-22.

7 Despite much efforts, I have been unable to locate the original article Tharchin himself writes in his late autobiography: “A copy of this newspaper cutting from the *Globe* had been sent to Tharchin many years ago. He gave it to a Tibetan official who never gave it back.” Tharchin Autobiography II (unpublished manuscript, dictated at the end of his life, fol. 30. Tharchin Collection Columbia University.

Although the article is written in the third person, referring to Tharchin as “the old man,” it is translated here in the first person.

Recently, the world’s enemy, Red Chinese Communist bandits crossed the Indian border from Tibet like thieves. On this matter I had already in former times fervently fought the Communist Chinese by the means of my newspaper. Twelve years ago I saw and read in a foreign newspaper an article entitled ‘One Man War With Mao’. In this article someone wrote about me, the newspaper, and the much related news.

However, now I am overjoyed, because I am no longer alone; more than 400 million Indians are fully determined to strongly oppose Mao. Due to my old age, I cannot take part in the war, although I thought of carrying my gun on my back and facing the enemy. So I have to fight the Communist Chinese again by taking up my pen and writing in the newspaper.⁸

In the late 1940s Tharchin began to alert the Tibetans to the imminent danger of Chinese invasion. To strengthen his early warnings, and as he wrote “to incite the Tibetans” he used the authority of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and repeatedly reprinted his so called “Political Testament” from 1932,⁹ which includes the following:

In particular, we must guard ourselves against the barbaric red communists, who carry terror and destruction with them, wherever they go. They are the worst of the worst... It will not long before we find the red onslaught at our own front door. It is only a matter of time before we come into a direct confrontation with it ... either from within our own ranks or else as a threat from an external [communist] nation. And when that happens we must be ready to defend ourselves. Otherwise our spiritual and cultural traditions will be completely eradicated.¹⁰

METHOD AND STYLE

Due to the range and diversity of his reporting, Tharchin’s newspaper became the chief source of national and international news for the Tibetan speaking people. The

8 *Melong* XXVII, 12, December 1962, 10.

9 *Melong* XV, 4-5, February-March 1946. 1; XVII, 6, March 1949, 1; XXIII, 2, January 1955, 12; XXV, 4 July-August 1958, 2-3.

10 Glenn H. Mullin: *Path of the Bodhisattva Warrior. The Life and Teachings of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Pub. 1988, 111-112. See also further translations by Lobsang Rabgay in K. Dhondup: *The Water Bird and Other Years*. New Delhi: Rangwang Pub. 1986, 143-146; Lobsang Lhalungpa in Franz Michael: *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State*. Boulder: Westview 1982, 171-174.

vast majority of the reports were factual news reports of varying length on the approach of the Chinese toward Tibet. These occasionally ended in urgent personal appeals. Tharchin attempted to collect and print as much information as possible about the progress of the Chinese conquest and the situation in Tibet. For this reason, it is surprising that the *Tibet Mirror* has received so little attention as a contemporary historical source.

When Chinese crossed the Indian border in 1959, the *Tibet Mirror* reported not only on the Chinese in Tibet but also on the attacks on Indian territory, providing a detailed chronology of the Chinese border invasions with geographical details in each case.¹¹

He published the statement by the Dalai Lama in Tezpur on 18 April 1959¹² and his appeal to the United Nations on 9th September 1959.¹³ The publication of the Dalai Lama's first press conference after his arrival in India, held in Mussoorie on 20 June 1959, is, as far as I am aware, the only complete record of the entire press conference with its eighty-nine questions and answers.¹⁴ Tharchin also printed the 1954 exchange of correspondence between Mao and the Dalai Lama in his January 1955 issue, even adding an English translation.¹⁵ He also printed Indian newspaper articles generally drawn from the Calcutta *Statesman* as well as articles from Taiwan and Hong Kong.¹⁶

Tharchin always framed his thoughts in a wider international context and did not regard the conflict between China and Tibet as an internal affair. He thus paid particular attention to the 17-Point Treaty of 23 May 1951 between China and Tibet, which he not only printed several times, but also compared to the Treaty of Simla of 1914.¹⁷ In 1963, the final year of the *Tibet Mirror* he published an eight-part series on the Treaty of Simla. In addition, he translated into Tibetan the "Panch Shila (Panchsheel) Agreement" of 29 April 1954 between India and China; no Tibetan version existed despite the concession by the Indian side that Tibet was under Chinese rule.¹⁸ Furthermore, in the June 1954 issue he compared the Agreement with the treaties of 1908 and 1914, printing them side by side.¹⁹ In a rousing appeal covering

11 See for example *Melong* XXVI, 4-5, September-October 1959; XXVIII, 2, February 1963, 3-6; XVIII, 3, March 1963, 3-4.

12 *Melong* XXVI, 1, June 1959, 1-3.

13 *Melong* XXVI, 4-5, September-October 1959, 1-2.

14 *Melong* XXVI, 2-3, July-August 1959, 2-6 and 11-12.

15 *Melong* XXIII, 2, January 1955, 3-4.

16 Tharchin distinguished between levels of reliability in his sources. Whenever possible he indicated the precise date and origins of his source, e.g. Radio Delhi, Lhasa, the *Statesman* journal, Calcutta, eye witnesses or educated scholars. Where reports were only based on rumours, hearsay or gossip, he also indicated this: *go thos gnas tshul*.

17 See *Melong* issues XIX, 3, June 1951, 5; XIX, 4, July 1951, 4; XIX, 5, August 1951, 4-5; XIX, 6, September 1951, 7.

18 *Melong* XXII, 1, April-May 1954, 5; also again in XXII, 2, June 1954, 3-4.

19 *Melong* XXII, 2, June 1954, 5-9.

several pages, he argued vehemently against the Agreement.²⁰ From a typewritten paper in the Tharchin collection, it appears as if Tharchin had received this appeal from Kundheu, a Tibetan from Phari, who urged him to publish it in *Melong*.²¹ Tharchin also seems to have translated this appeal, which the missionary George Patterson published in his *Tibet in Revolt*:

To Leaders, Officials, Monks, Soldiers, Traders, Craftsmen, Agriculturists,
Nomads – the People of Tibet.

This is to alert you to the great danger threatening our common cause,
the independence of Tibet, regarding which I feel compelled to speak a
few words.

- 1) The last edition of the Tibet Mirror carried translations of articles from Indian papers of a trade pact signed at Peking between India and China regarding Tibet. There was a statement that “discussion in Peking related only to procedural matters and not to the substance of the issue”. Neither was there any mention of which particular treaty formed the basis of the talks. Further, no full copy of the agreement was made public.
- 2) Were the talks based on the Trade Regulations of 1893 or of 1908, both of which were mentioned in regard to the Peking Trade Agreement? If so, it is a violation of the Simla Convention of 1914 whereby both of those Trade Regulations are declared revoked in Clause 7.
- 3) The Peking Trade Pact refers to Tibet as ‘an integral part of China’, and there are many mentions of the ‘Tibet region of China’, these being terms unprecedented in the history of Tibet and also another violation of the terms of the Simla Convention.

Clauses 3 and 9 of which first of all recognized the mutual independence of Tibet inasmuch as the Tibetan Government kept her existing rights, which until the time of the recent invasion of Tibet included the management of her external affairs; secondly, guaranteed the non-violation of Tibetan territory, Great Britain and China agreeing to abstain from sending their troops, stationing civil and military officers, or establishing colonies in Central Tibet.

- 4) The Simla Convention was signed by the fully empowered representatives of the three Governments of Tibet, India and China, whereas the Peking Pact was concluded between India and China,

²⁰ *Melong* XXII, 2, June 1954, 10-15 with further appeals.

²¹ Rough translation from the Tibetan Newspaper vol. XXII, No. 2, dated 1st June 1954: To most learned Tharchin la, Printer and Publisher of World News. Columbia University Tharchin Collection.

the wishes of the Government and people of Tibet being completely ignored. This makes it clear that China wishes not only to absorb Tibet but to destroy our culture, religion and eventually our race by intermarriage, as is shown by their moves to try to get in, in addition to the two hundred and twenty thousand in the Liberation Army already in Tibet, a further two million Chinese for the so-called economic development of our country. It is only too obvious how our two neighbours are willing to come to private arrangements in favour of aggression so as to serve their own inter-Asian imperialist policies.

- 5) Please read carefully the second Independent Treaty signed at Simla between Tibet and the British Government in India, on the same day, and immediately after, the Tripartite Simla Convention, as it recognized not the autonomy but the complete independence of Tibet.²²

Patterson notes that the protest, circulating in Tibetan inside a closed Tibet, evoked no sympathy or response either in India or the outside world.

Tharchin seems to have believed that more could be achieved with emotion than with facts. Even before the majority of Tibetans became aware of the imminent disaster, Tharchin anticipated the growing danger and published an urgent warning as early as the November 1950 edition, when the Chinese had already conquered Chamdo:

There is not enough ink and paper to translate and publish all of the news. One person with but short arms and long sleeves and with no help cannot accomplish all the work. In other countries, the newspapers are highly valued and supported, and they distribute hundreds of thousands of papers. But, for this Tibetan newspaper, some even see it as a negative thing. Today, the Chinese are using the power of newspapers to lure the Tibetan people.

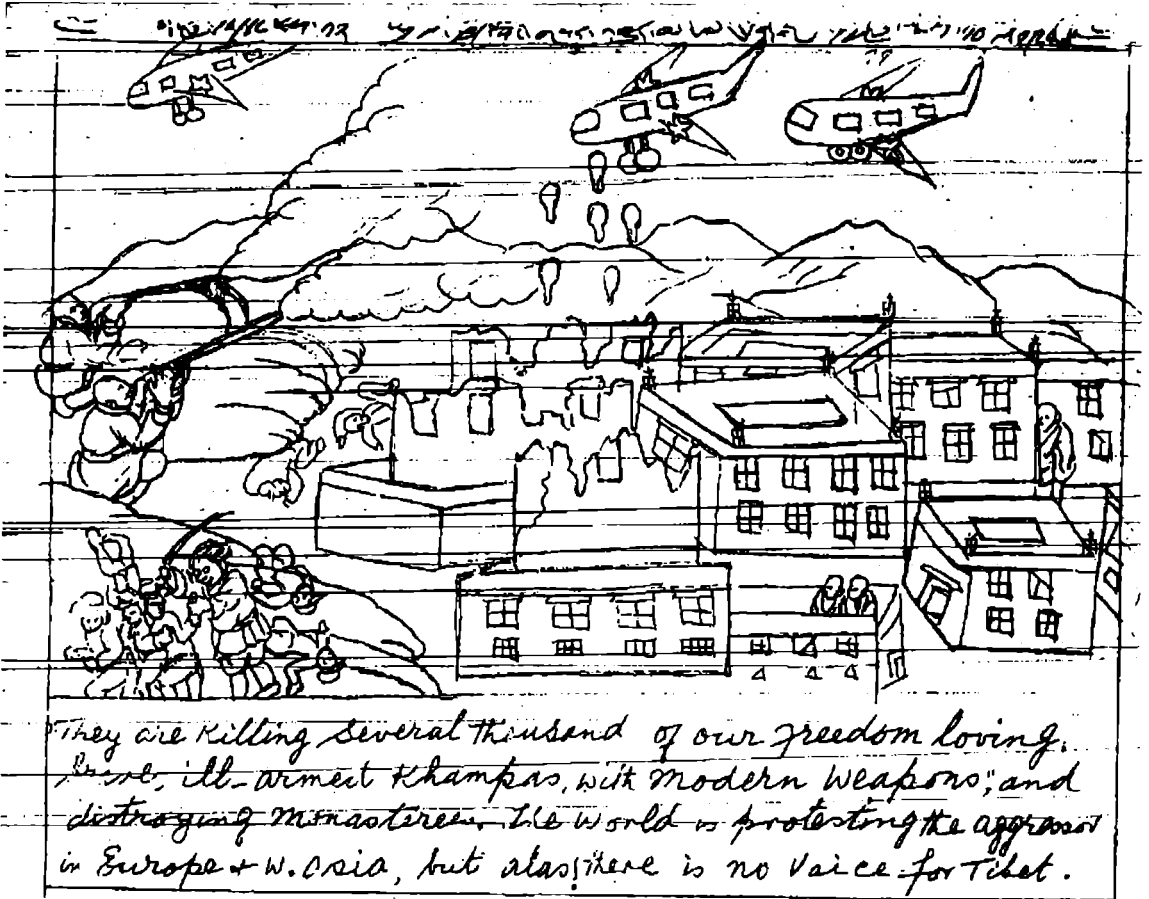
This is the desperate voice of the person who has published this newspaper for 19 years (over a twenty-five year period). I apologize if it bothers anyone..."²³

At the end he appeals "to contact other nations through wire and wireless means to let them know that our country has a long history of being an independent nation."²³

22 George N. Patterson: *Tibet in Revolt*. London: Faber and Faber 1960, 104-105.

23 *Melong XVIII*, 10, November 1950, 4. Translation from Carole McGrahanan: *Arrested Histories: Between Empire and Exile in 20th Century Tibet*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Ph.D. thesis 2001, 246.

The *Tibet Mirror* supplied the first and most detailed Tibetan news of events in Kham and the destruction of the monasteries there.²⁴ The first drawings of the destruction of monasteries appeared in November 1956.



Destruction of Kham monasteries.²⁵

Tharchin was profoundly interested in language, as his various published books demonstrate. He was also involved in linguistic innovation, as many new terms appeared in the *Tibet Mirror* evidently appeared there for the first time.²⁶ He was particularly fond of using poetry as a stylistic device. Almost every issue from this period contains at least a short poem on *rang dbang* (freedom) and/or *rang bisan* (independence),²⁷ such as the following:

²⁴ Carole McGrahanan: *Arrested Histories*, 243.

²⁵ *Melong* XXIII, 11, November 1956, 4.

²⁶ Jamyang Norbu: "Newspeak and New Tibet: The Myth of China's Modernization of Tibet and the Tibetan Language." www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=10009&t=1 Part II-V on 17 and 28 June, 9 July 2005. Id.: "'NEUSPRECH' und das Neue Tibet: Der Mythos von der Modernisierung Tibets und der tibetischen Sprache durch China." In: *Tibet-Forum*, 2005, 66-96.

²⁷ See for example *Melong* XX, 2-3, May-June 1952, 10; XXII,3, July 1954, 1; XXIII,5, February

“There is no pleasure like independence.
 There is no pain like being controlled by another.
 The happiness of others seeks the happiness of both oneself and others;
 The happiness of oneself brings about the suffering of oneself and others.”²⁸

Or

“Some celebrate their independence.
 Some suffer under oppression.
 There is no happiness like independence and freedom.
 There is no suffering like servitude and oppression.
 The happiness of independence and the suffering of being controlled by another
 Make samsara turn like a wheel.”²⁹

A number of acrostics, some in reverse alphabetical order, by Tharchin and other authors (*mkyen ldan zhig*), were also published.³⁰ Tharchin was fond of proverbs (*gtam dpe*) like this one: “Remember! That the power of dominions will turn around like a wheel.”³¹ In the period 1951-1953, he published a number of satirical Lhasa street songs condemning Chinese oppression,³² though very few attacking Mao directly, such as this from January 1952:

“In the religious city of Lhasa this year
 Chinese soldiers have arrived like hail,
 Whether as liberators it is in doubt,
 Or to tie the throats of the poor.

They speak sweetly
 But what are the sticks in their hands
 If not to exterminate
 Lord Buddha's doctrine and Tibetan people?

1956, 1; XXVII, 11, September 1961, 9; XXVII, 12, December 1962, 12; XXVIII, 3, February-March 1963, 1; XXVIII, 7, October 1963, 1-2.

28 *Melong* XXIII, 3 October 1955, 8, kindly translated in the appropriate style by Donald Lopez.

29 *Melong* XXIV, 5 September 1957, 2, also kindly translated in the appropriate style by Donald Lopez.

30 See for example *Melong* XXIII, 1, December 1954, 8; XXIV, 12, April 1958, 2; XXV, 1, May 1958, 2.

31 *Melong* XVII, 3, December 1948, 19: *rgyal khab rnams kyi dbang shugs rnams / 'khor lo bzhin du 'khor bar 'gyur / zhes pa yid dran mdzod //*

32 See for example: *Melong* XIX, 5, August 1951, 5 (translation in Melvyn C. Goldstein: *A History of Modern Tibet*, vol. 2, Berkeley: University of California Press 2007, 170-171); XIX, 11, February 1952, 2 and 6; XX, 1, April 1952, 7; XX, 2-3, May-June 1952, 3 and 8; XX, 10, January-March 1953, 4.

Rise, young men, be bold of heart!
 And young maidens, unite together
 That happiness may come
 And misery depart!"³³

Or
 Liberation Song
 "Arise! Tibetan Brothers
 Living under occupation
 Work unceasingly
 To revolt in a united way
 To liberate the Tibetans from suffering
 One should sacrifice one's life
 Arise! All the Tibetan brothers
 Living under forcible occupation
 To regain freedom and prosperity
 We must fight together
 Arise! Arise! Arise! Tibetan brothers
 Arise! Arise! Arise!"³⁴

Although Tharchin praised the policy of the Indian government of accepting Tibetan refugees, he repeatedly bemoaned Nehru's failure to provide the Tibetans with military support and unrealistic dreams of friendship with Mao:

Panch Shila Agreement
 "In the foothills of the Himalayas,
 In order to bring peace to the world,
 In order to bring about peace between China and India,
 The supreme Nehru, Shiva of the Noble Land,
 Drunk on bliss of meditation,
 Practices the meditation of pañcaśīla,
 Consigning Tibet to hell.
 In order to go to heaven, practice meditation."³⁵

33 *Melong* XIX, 10, January 1952, 7. Translation without a name in: Michael Choukas: *Propaganda Comes of Age*. Washington D.C. Public Affairs Press 1965, 244 and n. 21 with reference to *The New York Times* from 20 January 1952.

34 *Melong* XIX, 8 November 1951, 4, translated by Riika Virtanen, In: Luc Schaedler: *Angry Monk*, 520.

35 *Melong* XXVI, 3 July-August 1959, 14, also kindly translated in the appropriate style by Donald Lopez.



Tharchin's tone did not change until the Indian government had been taken by surprise by the Chinese attacks on Indian soil and Indian government policy changed accordingly.

Hoping to reach a wider audience, he tried to publish news in English at the end of 1958:

With the enclosed pamphlet as the first of its series I intend to publish a monthly Circular mainly to inform you of the situation now prevailing in the neighbouring country – Tibet. Since this vast Himalayan state had been subverted by the Communists from China, it has suffered uninterruptedly the iron sway of the invader's armed forces. There is nothing of an organ of information to the outside world except the propaganda material of the Communists themselves.

For the last eight years the patriotic elements in Tibet resisted quite strongly the expansionist policy of the Chinese over-lords. The partisans tried their utmost to persuade the Chinese not to interfere in the affairs of their country and the result was an armed conflict between the patriots and the Chinese invaders. This continued struggle of the Tibetans against the Chinese and the recent armed resistance by the patriotic National Defence Army came very scantily to the notice of the world outside. My purpose in acquainting of these developments in Tibet is to give an idea of the situation in the context of world events. Tibet is not

a small region to be ignored by the world at large, and the impact of events in that land will definitely influence the world situation as a whole. Tibet has a contiguous frontier with some of the world powers and its immediate borders touch conveniently the Communist world.

This newspaper has served the neighbouring state for the last 33 years and it has always stood for the cultural and political integrity of Tibet. It has always served our neighbour with all the important news from outside. But today, with Tibet itself under the yoke of a ruthless communist neighbour and having no outlet for the day to day happenings inside their own country. The Mirror, stands alone to give you a glimpse of the world behind the nearest iron curtain. This pamphlet is being published from the bordering town of Kalimpong in the Himalayas and as such it deserves more than any other to serve the cause of the freedom loving people of Tibet. This spontaneous movement of the vast masses of Tibet is a living proof of their determination to fight for their faith and freedom. For the last eight years they were only dependent on their own resources, human or otherwise, and no helping hand from any quarter had been extended for this splendid cause. International situation during the last few years proved rather unhelpful for their cause and even now with all the odds these simple, freedom loving and brave people of our great neighbour are fighting hard in spite of the fact that not a single country in the free world helping or even giving a moral support to their noble cause.

In the light of the above facts and in return to my this humble attempt to extend a helping hand to the great cause of the people of Tibet, I can only expect of your interest in the affairs of a country inhabited by a deeply religious and peace loving people. Their country is virtually under the process of Communist indoctrination. It invokes your sympathy and moral support for the victims of a naked aggression.³⁶

36 "The Mirror: Editor's Note," type-written ms., Columbia University Tharchin Collection.

CARTOONS

As he had during World War II, Tharchin made use of political cartoons.³⁷



“Revealing the secret meaning of the East
The policy of arrest and suppression by the Chinese.”³⁸



“Peaceful Alliance”³⁹

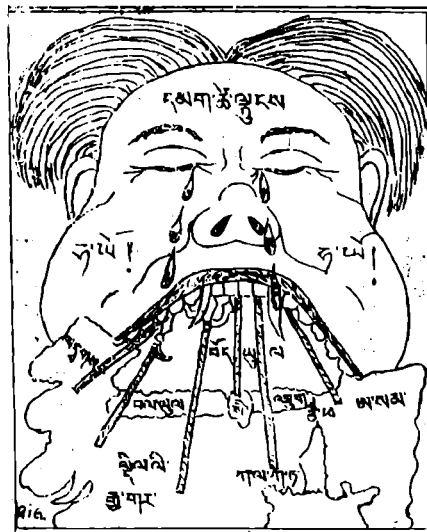
37 Despite extensive efforts I have only been able to identify one of the artists for the drawings and cartoons in the 1950s, although some are signed with initials. This was the Mongolian scholar Rigzin Wangpo, a nephew of Tharchin’s wife and the first Tibetan teacher at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. (R.K. Sprigg: “Obituary: Gelong Rigzin Wangpo (rig-’dzin dbang-po), 1920-1985.” In: *The Tibet Journal* 12 (3) (1987), 77-82. See also Isrun Engelhardt: “Reflections in the *Tibet Mirror*: News of the World, 1937-1946.” In: Gray Tuttle (ed.): *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*. [PIATS 2006: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Königswinter 2006] Andiastr/Switzerland: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies (IITBS) 2011, 205-264.

38 *Melong* XXVI, 1, June 1959, 7.

39 *Melong* XXVI, 4-5, September-October 1959, 9.



“In the first picture, the minority peoples who live in the Himalaya range (Hin, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan), are being tricked by the red female demon from the East with money and sweet talk. When they have all been deceived, as the second picture shows, there is no doubt that their life breath will be collected in the demon’s sack; the present situation in Tibet shows how this happens.”⁴⁰

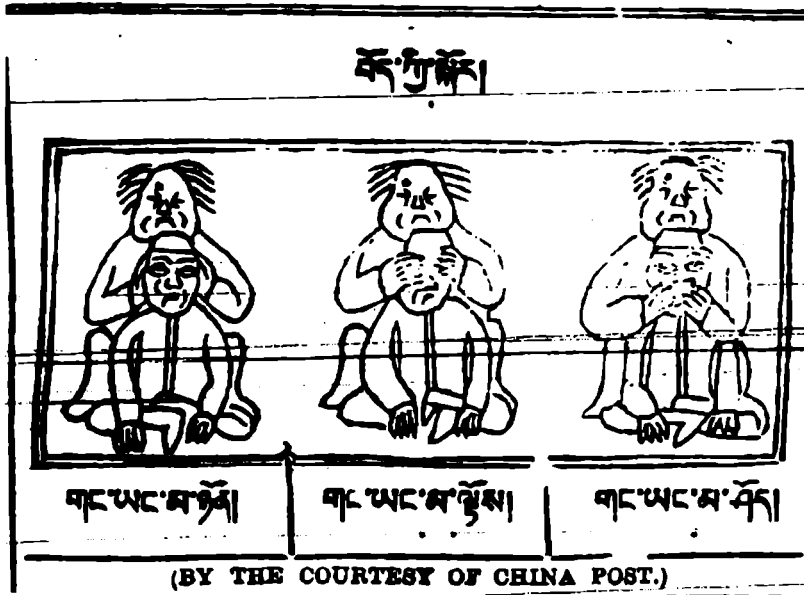


“The picture above shows the Chinese Communist bandit leader (Mao) *dmag tshe ltung*. In his mouth are those kingdoms of the Himalaya and India, which were forcefully eaten. But the solidarity of all Indian states stabbed his mouth with spears and so he cannot not close his mouth. Now it is time for us all to come under the leadership of Indian government and drive him away.”⁴¹

40 *Melong XXVII*, 8-9, May-June 1961, 2.

41 *Melong XXVII*, 12, December 1962, 8.

However, Tharchin's criticism was not restricted to the Red Chinese and Mao. He also criticized the narrow-minded policies of the Tibetan government:



“Hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing.”⁴²

PERSONAL COURAGE

Tharchin was fearless both in print and in person. In Kalimpong in July 1951 there was a reception for the Chinese general Chang Ching-wu:

A few days ago, further Chinese plenipotentiaries who will run the Chinese administration in Lhasa arrived in this town (i.e. Kalimpong) on their way to the capital. At a public reception the Chinese chief delegate made a speech from notes, which he had prepared in advance. When the audience was told that it might put questions, no one decided to avail himself of the privilege. Then an elderly Tibetan was asked to make a speech, a pleasant duty, which he found it expedient to accept. He said that Tibet had always stood on her own feet and that it would be a wise course to her to remain virtually independent, lest terrible misfortunes befall those who try to interfere with purely Tibetan affairs...⁴³

42 *Melong* XXVI, 1, June 1959, 6.

43 T.I.: “Tibet Today.” In: *The World Today* 8 (1952), 202-209, here 209; see also *Melong* XIX, 4, July 1951, 5.

In Tharchin's own words: "We all believe that the world is round and it is really so. In Tibetan we have a proverb meaning everything is changing. There is happiness and then there is also sorrow. Everything is turning like a wheel. It seems this is true..."

His attitude did not change:

After two or three years attempts were made by the Chinese to win me over to their side by promising to purchase an unusually great number of Tibetan newspapers presuming that for the sake of financial gain I might relent my attacks against the Chinese Communists and in this way the general public would be won also toward the Chinese cause. But their calculations went completely awry. Their attempts to buy me off proved a colossal failure. It was a big fiasco. On the other hand, it boomeranged, as I went on publishing article after article about the Chinese Communists, which embarrassed them no end.⁴⁴

This is at odds with what Fraser Wilkins, the First Secretary of the US embassy in Delhi, reported in 1951: "[George] Patterson told me that he no longer had any money as Tibet had recently discontinued its subsidy and that Tharchin had told him that if the Chinese offered to subsidize him he would accept. Patterson added, however, that Tharchin was no Communist and that these views were undoubtedly dictated by financial necessity."⁴⁵

The author Lois Long-Sims asked him in 1959, "why it was that he alone of the Tibetans I had met in India appeared to be unafraid and unembarrassed. 'I am a Christian,' said Mr Tharchin, as if the explanation were obvious. I wondered, and have many times wondered since, how far he was justified in replying to my question with this simple statement."⁴⁶

STRENGTHENING TIBETANNESS AND TIBETAN UNITY

As Tsering Shakya has stated, "The construction of the *Tibet Mirror* attempted to appeal to the pan-Tibetan region"⁴⁷ and thus "focused on the unity of Tibet. Because of the vastness of Tibet, it was never really focused as one place. So what you see in the newspaper is, that Tharchin tries to place all the Tibetan speaking population, the whole Tibetan world, in one place, through his newspaper: you have news from

⁴⁴ Tharchin Autobiography II, fol. 30.

⁴⁵ U.S. National Archives, 611.93B./5-245, 1. Memorandum of conversation between Fraser Wilkins and George Patterson on relations between Tibet and the United States on May 12, 1951. Enclosure Nr. 3 to Secret Despatch 2891 May 24, 1951.

⁴⁶ Lois Lang-Sims: *The Presence of Tibet*. London: The Cresset Press 1963, 70.

⁴⁷ Tsering Shakya: *The Emergence of Modern Tibetan Literature*, 21.

Kham [East], news from Sikkim [South], news from Bhutan [Southeast], news from Ladakh [West],⁴⁸ news from Amdo [Northeast], news from U-Tsang [Center]. You have all the Tibetans speaking people being presented as one in that newspaper.”⁴⁹ Therefore, Tharchin was committed to the view of Tibet as a united country. To emphasize Tibetanness he appealed to the Tibetans and including himself as “We, the tsampa eaters ...”⁵⁰

In repeated appeals, he urged the Tibetans to cease their internal wrangling. For example in a long urgent and passionate appeal to the Tibetans in exile in 1961, he wrote: “For the sake of Tibetan religion and politics as well as reviving its independence and inexhaustible happiness, everyone should give up personal benefit and personal grudge and strive to establish a harmonious society.”⁵¹

48 See for example the Ladakhi Buddhist scholar Yeshe Dondup, who composed in ten issues an abridged Ladakh *rgyal rabs* in *Melong* XV, 8, June 1947- XVI, 2, December 1947; XXI, 1, April-June 1953 XXI, 3.

49 Tsering Shakya interview in: Luc Schaedler: *Angry Monk: Reflections on Tibet*, 297-298.

50 See for example *Melong* XX, 7, October 1952, p. 8; XXIII. 10 October 1956, 4; XXIV, 3, July 1957, 5. See for translations in Carole McGrahanan: *Arrested Histories*, 2001, 247-248. Id.: *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*. Durham: Duke University Press 2010, 70. See also Tsering Shakya: “Whither the Tsampa Eaters?” In: *Himal* September/October 1993, 8-11; Jamyang Norbu: “In Defence of Tibetan Cooking. ” Part I. In: www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2011/02/07/in-defence-of-tibetan-cooking-part-i. Perhaps he might have been influenced by songs of Baba Phuntsog Wangyal. At least the song in the *Melong* of October 1956, seems similar to one of his songs. See *Melong* XXIII, 10 October 1956, 4 (*mkyen ldan zhig nas*). Phuntsog Wangyal together with his friend Ngawang Kesang had visited Tharchin in the end of 1944, where they have sung songs together with Tharchin, Phuntsog Wangyal playing the organ. Some time before in Lhasa, he had already sung Surkhang a song with the following refrain: “Rise up, rise up, rise up Tsampa eaters rise up...” See Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherab, William R. Siebenschuh: *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Baba Phüntso Wangye*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2004, 75 “*longs shog longs shog longs shog / rtsam pa bza'mkhan rnam longs shog...*” And according to Phuntsog Wangyal, Tharchin must have also published some songs of him in those *Melong* issues in 1945, before Gendün Chöphel had left Kalimpong for Lhasa in the end of 1945. See Goldstein, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 253 where Phuntsog Wangyal reports that GC had told him that Tharchin had published some songs in his newspaper. It is unfortunately not possible yet to check the songs as these *Melong* issues are still missing.

51 *Melong* XXVII, 6, February-March 1961, supplem. 1-2.



UNITY IS STRENGTH

In this picture by Rigzin Wangpo seven [in fact, eight] people form an elephant through their combined efforts and joined hands. Thus if we Tibetans demonstrate solidarity, we can develop the strength of an elephant and establish a strong and independent government. We can also able defeat the forces of the opposing nation that represses Tibet.

United we stand, divided we fall. I therefore appeal to everyone to rely upon the strength of solidarity.

“Particles of dust became Mount Meru;
 Drops of water became the sea.
 Over time, may the united Tibetan people
 Create a steadfast independent state.”⁵²

52 *Melong XXIV*, 4 August 1957, 3. *sa rdul lam ni ri rabs dang / chu rdul lam ni rgya mtsho bzhin / bod rigs gcig mthun 'dus gyur nas / rang dbang rgyal khab brtan par shog //* Kindly translated in the appropriate style by Donald Lopez.

Contacts with Americans in the early 1950s

There are many documents in the U.S. National Archives on the "Relations between the United States and Tibet," from the 1950-52, when U.S. officials were in Kalimpong trying to gather intelligence about the situation in Tibet and seeking ways to help the Tibetans.

Fraser Wilkins, First Secretary of the US embassy in Delhi, New Delhi, reports a conversation with Tharchin and George Patterson:

As I had not seen Tharchin on my previous visit to Kalimpong I called on him this morning in company with George Patterson who lives in Kalimpong and has known Tharchin for some time.

By chance, Tharchin was supervising the operation of a small hand press in a small stone workshop, which is situated on the roads which passes Pandatshang's villa and the Dorje property. Tharchin and two Tibetan workmen were just commencing the printing of the forthcoming edition of his paper. The front page was devoted to the presentation of some relics to the Dalai Lama.

When questioned regarding the Sino-Tibetan agreement, Tharchin said that he was publishing the text of the 17 points as broadcast by Peiping radio and received by press service from Hong Kong and London. Tharchin planned to include no editorial comment on the agreement in the current issue. Tharchin remarked however, that the agreement reminded him of an old Tibetan proverb to the effect that it was all wool with a hard stone in the center....

Tharchin discoursed at length on his penurious condition. It seems that in the old days he had been subsidised at varying intervals by the Tibetans, the British and the Indians. In the beginning he used to receive fairly frequent stipends from the previous Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government. During the war the British financed the operation of his press and procured his present hand press for him at a cost of 14 500 Indian rupees on which Tharchin hopes to conclude repayment in 1954. Thereafter the Indian Government, which assumed all the rights and privileges of the British in India, assisted Tharchin but in recent years has discontinued its help. More recently, the present Dalai Lama manifested an interest in the continuance of Tharchin's activities and sent him the sum of 300 Indian rupees. Tharchin was not optimistic but believed he might be able to continue this hand-to-mouth existence.

Tharchin's paper is about 11 1/2" by 17" and is usually printed in an edition of 500 copies. It comes out once a month, finance permitting, although an edition of 1000 copies could be produced. It starts off on white glazed paper but sometimes ends up on orange paper. Tharchin said he never had enough paper and it is increasingly difficult and

expensive to find. The paper is sold for 12 annas (about 15 US cents) although free copies are sent to Tibetan authorities in Lhasa. It carries many cuts, which come out clearly and are a constant delight to well-known Tibetans. Tharchin said that in the good old days the British political officers used to require that a notice regarding the issuance of all wool export licenses, with names and dates, be published in that all wool dealers buy so many copies. This practice prevented the re-selling of licenses and maintained Tharchin's circulation. The present Indian political officer discontinued this practice.

Tharchin has one complete set of Tibetan type, enough for a page and a half of his paper. He has matrices for two other sizes but has never been able to have more type cast. He picked up some of this material in the bazaars of Calcutta by chance. Several years ago, a friend of his told him that a large font of Tibetan type, formerly at Darjeeling and subsequently moved to Calcutta, was about to be melted by the Indian Government. Tharchin wrote asking if he could purchase. The reply was that the type would not be melted but could not be sold for the time being. There the matter continues to rest although Tharchin renews his request from time to time...⁵³

Lloyd V. Steere from the American Embassy in New Delhi later reported:

... It is understood that Tharchin's paper is the only Tibetan newspaper circulated in Tibet although there have been recent reports that the Communist Chinese are publishing material in Chamdo. In any event it seems likely that Tharchin's newspaper is the only one, which represents a western point of view with respect to current international developments.

It is accordingly the Embassy's opinion, as stated in Despatch 2891 of May 24, that we should give consideration to ways and means of providing the Tibetan authorities with information through USIE [U.S. Information and Education Service], and of assisting Tharchin in the publication of his newspaper. The Embassy is currently studying this matter. Meanwhile, it is hoped that the Department may wish to offer suggestions.⁵⁴

53 U.S. National Archives: Memorandum of conversation, between Fraser Wilkins, Tharchin and George Patterson on recent developments in Tibet and allied subjects on June 7, 1951. Enclosure Nr. 1 to Despatch 3030, June 1951, New Delhi: TOP SECRET [still classified in 1984 and withdrawn from the file on the microfilm]. I am very grateful to Jackie Hiltz providing me with this document.

54 U.S. National Archives: 611.93B./6-1451, Despatch 3030. Lloyd V. Steere, American Embassy, New Delhi to the Department of State, Washington, June 14, 1951 on relations between the United States and Tibet.

It is unknown whether Tharchin ever received support from the United States. In 1952 a young Foreign Office staff member Judith Laikin Elkin had been sent to Southern Asia to collect as much foreign-language material of any political relevance as possible. In Kalimpong, she met Tharchin, who “saw things differently, and told me of Chinese massacres of civilian populations, the starving out of monasteries ‘by siege, and the building of military highways and airports,’ which he thought should be of especial interest to the Americans. I thought so too. Our sources on Tibet were preternaturally thin.”

Thus she placed three subscriptions to the *Tibet Mirror*. However, back in the US in 1954, she wrote: “That was an error on my part, because nobody in Washington was interested in him. When I mentioned the Tibetan newspaper and its editor, I was met by a deep freeze. In fact, each time I tried to discuss any possible source of intelligence on the communist side of the bamboo curtain, my interlocutors changed the subject.” And it was even objectionable to deal with the impending danger of Communism. “In Washington in 1954 the anti-communist crusade of Senator Joe McCarthy was in full cry...”⁵⁵

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CHINESE AND INDIAN GOVERNMENTS

It is not surprising that, despite the *Tibet Mirror*'s low circulation and irregular publication, it was evidently carefully monitored by both the Chinese and Indian governments, as is clearly shown by the protest note issued by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India on 10 July 1958:

“There is openly published in Kalimpong the *Tibetan Mirror* a reactionary newspaper hostile to the Chinese Government and people. The Tibetan reactionaries and the organisations under their control also printed various reactionary leaflets and other propaganda materials and smuggled them into Tibet...”⁵⁶

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs responded to the Chinese Embassy in India on 2 August 1958.

The Government of the People's Republic of China refer to a newspaper named the *Tibetan Mirror*. There is no daily and weekly newspaper of that name published in Kalimpong. A monthly periodical called the *Tibetan Mirror* is published there. The editor of this newspaper is not a Chinese but an Indian national. The Government of India have noted with displeasure that some of the articles published in this periodical are objectionable and calculated to affect the friendly relations between India and China...

55 Judith Laikin Elkin: *Krishna Smiled: Assignment in Southeast Asia*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1972, 194.

56 Daljit Sen Adel: *China and Her Neighbours: A Review of Chinese Foreign Policy*. Delhi: Deep & Deep 1984, Appendix II, 288.

However the Government of India are most anxious that an unimportant magazine like the

Tibetan Mirror should not adversely affect the relations between our two friendly countries and are directing their local officers to administer a severe warning to this periodical. If it continues to create mischief, the Government of India will take whatever other action is feasible.⁵⁷

LACK OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Despite its wide recognition, Tharchin struggled to finance the newspaper. As “The ‘Mirror of World Events,’ the only widely read Tibetan periodical, described as an ‘iron wall against the infiltration of subversive teachings’, was left practically on the verge of bankruptcy, while Communists lost no time in establishing their own newspapers.”⁵⁸

Appeals to the Indian government circle, like this early letter of Tharchin to Nehru (?) on 14 May 1948, were unsuccessful:

...With a great hope of improving a little the relation between India and Tibet, I my humble self, have been publishing a Tibetan newspaper since 1925 when the country of Tibet had no idea about the value of newspaper like the foreign countries. The circulation of the paper is still not so satisfactory. However, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Serenity the Regent Lama, high officials, Lamas, monks & leading traders are taking interest in the paper. I will ever remain grateful if through the good office of Your Excellency the Indian Government be gracious enough to extend succour to run the paper as here-to-fore...⁵⁹

This picture and article ten years later suggests that Melong in fact “was eagerly awaited and read by all Tibetans:”

⁵⁷ Ibid., 291-292.

⁵⁸ T.I.: “Tibet Today,” 205.

⁵⁹ *Melong* XVI, 11, August 1948, 4-5, letter dated from 14 May 1948.



“Look at the above photo depicting the interest of all the people, old and young in the Tibetan news. For many years ago, almost thirty-three years, the news of Tibet has been published and distributed. During that time, because the Tibetan people did not understand the importance of news, it was distributed freely.

However, due to the gap between income and expenditure, which caused an interruption of the monthly printed issues, there are only twenty-five years of continuing volumes up to the present. Gradually people became more aware of the news, and although even Tibetans blocked their ears, eyes, and mouth, many Tibetan showed great interest and concern about the news. Therefore, I thank them. According to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s wishes, I Tharchin have been doing this printing work till now. I request everyone, who cares about this newspaper to send an annual subscription of ten rupees after having received this issue of the newspaper.”⁶⁰

Tharchin clearly had difficulties in maintaining publication of his paper because

60 *Melong* XXV, 2, June 1958, 1.

many readers failed to pay for their subscriptions. In a letter to Hugh Richardson, Tharchin wrote:

I am trying to continue my Tibetan news paper inspite of the Chinese Communists objections to read it, but still the paper goes and now the Tibetan public knows the value of the paper and I am getting many letters to be published in my paper, but they never send the subscription and they are still thinking to get it freely as they use to get during war time. I am under great difficulties getting on, but do not know how long I can do so.⁶¹

EXILE TIBETANS' NEWSPAPERS

To further exacerbate the situation for Tharchin, Gyalo Dondup, the brother of the Dalai Lama, evidently launched a new paper in Darjeeling as early as 1960 and called it "Tibetan Freedom" (*bod mi'i rang dbang*). This caused Tharchin further problems:

"Since last December I could not bring out my newspaper due to bad health as well as lack of funds. Besides now there are several papers [which] are published in Tibetan. But I got many enquiries and asked to continue it, as they like my paper better than others. I am trying to bring it out again."⁶²

Although it had been Gyalo Thondup who had persuaded him even attempting to publish the *Melong* weekly, called the *gza' 'khor ri'i yul phyogs so so 'i gsar 'gyur me long*, with the additional English title *The Weekly Tibet Mirror*. "So I am trying and to write and duplicate from 1/9/54 and try for some time how it works."⁶³ However, this only worked until January 1955 and it may have been too ambitious; the next issue after that did not appear until October 1955.⁶⁴

Tharchin's difficulties were also confirmed in a letter by Marco Pallis to Richardson from 10 March 1964: "The emergence of other Tibetan printers, local papers has gradually deprived him of a good part of his former work, nor does he get orders from Government as he used to do."⁶⁵

When the new newspaper *Rangwang* (*bod mi'i rang dbang*) appeared in March

61 Tharchin to Hugh Richardson, Bodleian Library, MS. Or. Richardson 41, 12 July 1954, fol. 202v.

62 Tharchin to Richardson, 3 August 1964, fol. 226v.

63 Tharchin to Richardson on August 23, 1954, Bodleian Library, MS. Or. Richardson 41, fol. 203v.

64 See also Isrun Engelhardt: "Reflections in the *Tibet Mirror*," 210. This gap might have also occurred due to the illness and death of Tharchin's beloved first wife.

65 Marco Pallis to Hugh Richardson, Bodleian Library, MS. Or. Richardson 41, 10 March 1964, fol. 223,1.

1960 in Darjeeling, Tharchin immediately published an article about it and congratulated the editor Lhawang on the launch of the new newspaper. But then he became more critical: "It would have been a great benefit if such a newspaper would have been published during the time Tibet was still independent. It is very sad that is bit a late now. It is like building a barrier after the flood has occurred." He goes on to complain:

From the beginning I was less fortunate to have such resources although I have been attached to Tibet, and the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lama issued their decrees one after another, as well as the Kashag. In keeping with those decrees, I have been publishing the newspaper for almost thirty-five years. Now because of the condition of my age and gap of income and expenditure, it is difficult to publish an issue each month continuously. Your publishing of a new newspaper called "*Tibetan Freedom*" at this time is like a rising moon when sun is setting.⁶⁶

Although he wished the best for the new newspaper, he sarcastically remarked – according to Dawa Norbu – in one of the last *Melong* issues:

"When there was rangwang
There was no "Rangwang"
When there is no rangwang
There is "Rangwang"!"⁶⁷

In August 1963 Tharchin congratulated Amdo Jigme, whom he assumed was the editor, of another new newspaper *Rangwang Sungkyab* (*rang dbang srung skyob*) in Darjeeling, which was supposed to be the organ of the "Chushi Gangdruk." However, like the *Rangwang* newspaper it was funded by Gyalo Thondup.⁶⁸

Herbert Louis Fader quotes Tharchin's last annual report from Kalimpong to India's Registrar of Newspapers in July of 1966:

... I wish to state ... here [that] the reasons for cessation of my publication [are] chiefly due .
1) to ill health
2) to lack of finance, and
3) to competition from other papers. Formerly, my paper was the only

66 *Melong* XXVI, 10, March 1960, 3; see also *Melong* XXVII, 10, Aug. 1961, 2-3.

67 Dawa Norbu: G. "Tharchin: Pioneer and Patriot." An Interview with Tharchin Babu. In: *Tibetan Review* 10 (December) 1975, 18-20.

68 *Melong* XXVIII, 6, August 1963, 5-6.

Tibetan newspaper, but now the Government of India publishes a daily bulletin from Gangtok, Sikkim, which is freely distributed. There is as well a daily newspaper entitled Freedom, published in Darjeeling ... [and which] gets funds from various sources [supporting] the refugees. There is another paper entitled Central Weekly News published in Calcutta by the KMT; and so, all these publishers have funds and means, whereas no funds [for me] is the second reason.⁶⁹

Despite health problems and financial difficulties, the ageing and ailing Tharchin strove to increase his endeavours to produce one of the last *Melong* issues, in June 1963, announcing in that issue:

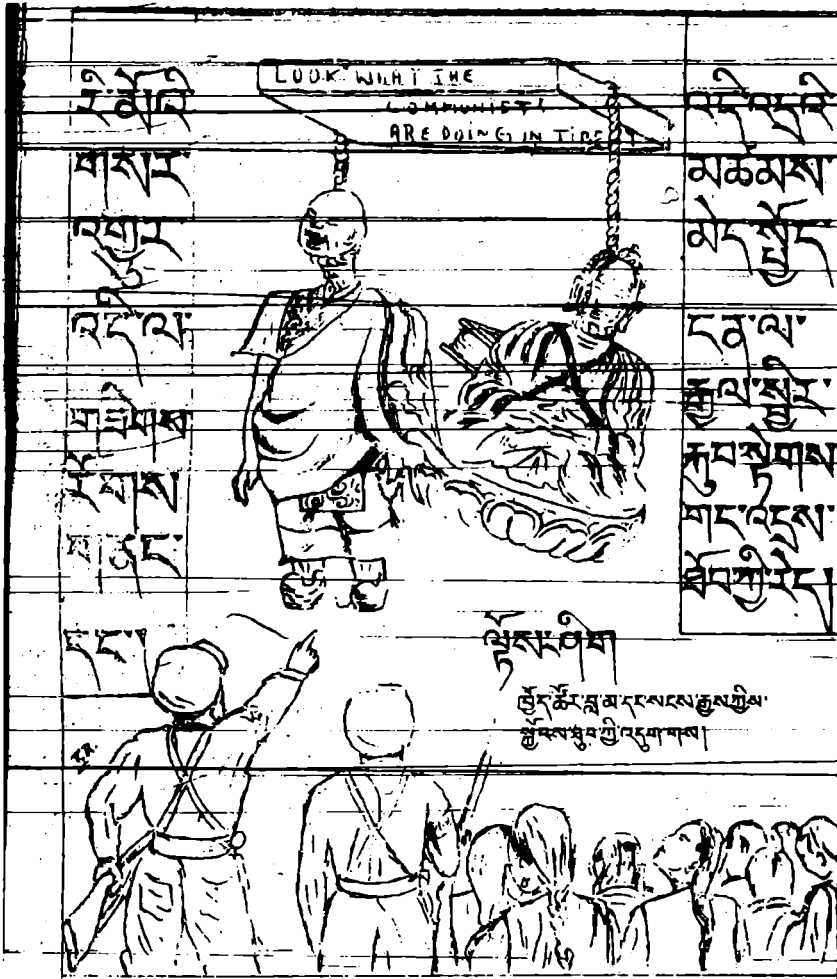
“The Editor has started to bring out from this month a News Letter from abroad in English, as a supplement to the “YUL-CHOG-SOSOI-SARGYUR-MELONG” (*Tibet Mirror*).

It is hoped that the English-knowing subscribers may appreciate it.”⁷⁰

However, the *Tibet Mirror* ceased publication after the final issue in November 1963, featuring an extensive eighteen pages and with this desperate and haunting cartoon.

69 H. Louis Fader: *Called from Obscurity*, vol. 3, 223: Tharchin to Office of the Registrar of Newspapers for India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Press Villa, Simla, Kalimpong, 4 July 1966, ThPaK.

70 *Melong*, XXVIII, 5, June 1963, Supplement, 1.



- “1. Please look at this cartoon.
2. How can those who commit such heinous sins, get a seat at the UN?
3. Look! Can the lama and Buddha save you?
4. This is what the Red Chinese bandits call ‘religious freedom.’ However in reality they are eradicating religion. In the monasteries of Kham chains are wrapped around the necks of the great statues and the necks of the lamas and they are hanged to death ...”⁷¹

In conclusion, Dawa Norbu wrote this about Tharchin:

“It is no exaggeration to say that if the ruling classes in Lhasa and New Delhi had heeded what Tharchin Babu was saying, Tibet’s modern fate might have been different.”⁷²

71 *Melong* XXVIII, 8, November 1963, 14.

72 Dawa Norbu in his introduction to H. Louis Fader: *Called from Obscurity*, vol. 1, XI.