

found in any available Indian nor other older Tibetan<sup>39</sup> material, it is more than probable that the original source of the above-mentioned episode found in the commentaries on the "Drop of Nourishment for People" (as well as in the Mongolian Geser) can well be looked for in China and that it is identical with the tale from *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* of 10th century. It can be assumed that the tale went through changes on Tibetan soil — it became more simple, but at the same time it included a new motif, the magic stick and formula. Providing that a Tibetan commentary on the "Drop of Nourishment for People" was not written later than the early 17th century, when its first Mongolian translation is supposed to be done, the Chinese tale could be taken over by the Mongolian Geser from this commentary or even from its Mongolian translation. It also may be that narrators or compilers of different versions of the Mongolian Geser knew both the newer Tibetan adaptation as recorded also in some of the commentaries on the "Drop of Nourishment for People", as well as the Chinese version of the episode. However, in view of similarity, almost identity of the episode in the Mongolian Geser and the commentaries it is very unlikely that they could develop from their Chinese model fully independently.

In any case, the above-mentioned observations suggest that the tale about "the magic creations of the female demon" included in the "Mongolian (and Tibetan) stories from Pañcatantra" has been borrowed from China.

<sup>39</sup> Except the short reference to it in Śeṣ-rab Rdo-ri'e's commentary from 16th century. See the note No. 8 of the present article.

*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung. Tomus XLIX (1-2), 171-195 (1996)*

**THE STAR KING AND THE FOUR CHILDREN OF PEHAR:  
POPULAR RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS  
OF 11TH-TO 12TH-CENTURY TIBET\***

DAN MARTIN  
(Jerusalem)

It may go without saying in these days, with the ascendancy of literary-critical approaches to historical studies, that most of our sources for historical investigation are pieces of literature composed for specific purposes, not simply to reflect still-life pictures of historical moments, but to mold the present by selecting from among possible pasts. Many significant movements at work in history have, for one reason or another, not been portrayed for us in their own writings. One prominent reason for this is just that, regardless of their importance at their historical moment, they were left out of the 'mainstreams' that went on to make and transmit histories of themselves told according to their own points of view. In order to reenact the historical moment, it becomes necessary to read closely and critically whatever sources might be available, trying to make the most of a situation made difficult for those who want to know history. Especially when it is a question of 'popular' movements and practices,<sup>1</sup> the hints contained in narrative histories and polemical works have to be isolated and amplified, since evidence about what were, in their own times, quite widespread, general and influential phenomena, becomes devoiced (not necessarily self-consciously sup-

\* Dedicated to Clarence Stump. Much of the writing and research was accomplished during tenure as a fellow of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and I am grateful for their support.

<sup>1</sup> Our intention here is to cover particular early Tibetan popular religious movements. In the future, we hope to initiate study of the historical developments and configurations of Tibetan popular religious practices. The literature in Tibetan on such practices is, needless to say, quite limited and scattered, but perhaps therefore all the more worthy of our attention. This study needs to be set within the broader context of lay-monastic relations in Buddhist history and society. Within Mahāyāna studies, there is a broad array of opinion as to the role laypersons played in Mahāyāna origins and developments, leading to interesting scholarly controversies which will not be entered into here. (See G. Schopen, *Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrine of the Transference of Merit*, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985) 9-47. See also R. A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vinālakṛti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, University Park 1990, for the ideal of the accomplished lay Bodhisattva in the form of Vinālakṛti.) It is perhaps important to note that while the tensions between the laity and monkhood are underlined in what follows, this tension has not been universal. Within Tibet itself, individual Buddhist leaders who were at the same time monks have expressed different attitudes on the potential of lay religious practices, ranging from the dismissive, the patronizing, the accommodating, the accepting, and the advocating.

pressed) in the triumphalist records of subsequent writers. 'Amplification' carries with it the obvious danger of making mountains out of anthills. In our case, although the testimonies which follow are relatively quite brief and almost always polemically motivated, they do not themselves minimize the importance or the broad appeal of the movements in question — rather the contrary is the case. Our most difficult and perhaps insurmountable problem is how to rightly read through and between the lines to ascertain what the leaders and followers of these movements would have had to say about themselves in their own texts, were such texts available to us.

We stress at the outset that the movements we will discuss here were all Buddhist movements in the sense that they generally adhered to the complex of beliefs that Tibetans have referred to under the name *Chos* (Dharma), even though some later writers have called them non-Buddhist. They have nothing, or very nearly nothing, to do with that other Tibetan religious current called *Bon*. We will first look at the movement led by one Skar-rgyal ('Star King') in western Tibet in the early 11th century. Our second subject is a plurality of movements that have been styled by most of their opponents as a collectivity which they call the 'Four Children of Peihar' (Pe-har Bu Bzhi). These last four leaders were active in the mid-11th to mid-12th centuries in various parts of central Tibet, more specifically in Gtsang province and the area of 'Phan-yul.<sup>2</sup> The Four Children are almost always characterized in our sources as *Rdol-chos*,<sup>3</sup> which I would like to translate as 'Outbreak Teachings' or, better, 'Popular' Buddhism,<sup>4</sup> in keeping with the etymological and practical usage of the term. The teachings of the Star King are never characterized by this term, but I believe it could have been equally well deployed against him.

Over twenty years ago E. Gene Smith suggested that the same Klu Skar-rgyal ('Naga Star King') of the time of Rin-chen-bzang-po (958–1055) who was also called Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal ('Buddha Star King') in the story told by Sa-skya Pandi-ta ought to be identified with the Bon treasure excavator Gshen-chen Klu-dga'.<sup>4</sup> He recommended a line of research which could establish this iden-

<sup>2</sup> Phan-yul is a major valley just to the north of Lhasa in Central Tibet.

<sup>3</sup> I know of no use of this term before the middle of the second half of the 12th century, when it appears in a work by Zhang Gyu-brag-pa. It is found a number of times in early 13th-century works. The term *Rdol-bon* appears first in the history of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer at the end of the 12th century, and reappears in an anti-Bon polemical passage in the early 13th-century work, the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*. The later Tibetan tradition seems to have forgotten the earlier meaning of *rdol*, and this is why one sometimes finds the word in corrupted forms (based on the graphic similarity of 'rd' and 'j' in Tibetan script) such as *jol* or even *myol* in the phrase *jol-bon* (see, for example, G. Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, Tr. by Geoffrey Samuel, London 1980, 224). This mistaken spelling, which is nevertheless frequently adopted without comment in Tibetological literature, appears to have originated in the 1801 anti-Bon polemic of Thub'u-bkwan, which is in part based on the anti-Bon polemic of Sher 'byung (on both of which, see D. Martin, *The Emergence of Bon and the Tibetan Polemical Tradition*, Bloomington 1991, 170–173, 182–223).

<sup>4</sup> See E. G. Smith, Introduction. In: L. Chandra (ed.), *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (Saratika Series, no. 80) New Delhi 1970, 6, note 13. The life of Gshen-chen Klu-dga' has been told in D. Martin, *Emergence*. His important textual 'excavations' (*ger-mu*) were

ity, in particular, an examination of the early commentaries to the *Classifying the Three Vows* (*Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye*) of Sa-skya Pandi-ta (1182–1251).<sup>5</sup> A suggested method and begin with the story of Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal as told by Sa-skya Pandi-ta. Afterwards, we will look at relevant passages in available commentaries. In its broader context, Sa-skya Pandi-ta tells the story in order to provide an example of one who taught in harmony with the Buddha's pronouncements in a very general way, while getting some main points wrong.

During the time of Rin-chen-bzang-po,<sup>6</sup> one named Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal would emit lights from his forehead and sit cross-legged in the sky, sometimes on a throne of 'jag-mu'<sup>7</sup> grass. He gave teachings on voidness and seemed to display great lovingkindness and compassion. His teachings even aroused states of contemplative concentration (*sanādhi*) in others. All the world believed in him. He made his teachings a little different from those of the Śākya King [the Buddha], and they spread widely.

Then Rin-chen-bzang-po, after he had engaged in six months of spiritual practice, went with a firm state of contemplative concentration before Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal, who was seated cross-legged in the sky, teaching. It is known that, with a mere glance from Rin-chen-bzang-po, he fell to earth and lay there unconscious.

It is said: <sup>8</sup> "If the great personage Rin-chen-bzang-po had not lived in those times, the wrong teachings of the one named Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal would have been established."

almost certainly found in the year 1017. Geographical and biographical evidence shows that the Star King and the Gshen-chen had, contrary to Smith's suggestion, nothing to do with each other.

<sup>5</sup> It may be that this work was written in the vicinity of 1232 (see D. P. Jackson, Commentaries on the Writings of Sa-skya Pandita, *The Tibet Journal* 8:3 (1983) 13).

<sup>6</sup> According to notes attributed to Sa-skya Pandi-ta himself, we should read, "At the time Rgyal-msham, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-dar i Bstan-bcos* (= *Sdom Gsum Rang Mehan Khrul-med*). Recently published in India (no publisher's information available) 132:5.

<sup>7</sup> There is a story told by Bsod-nams-rgyal-msham (Bsod-nams-rgyal-msham, *Rgyal-grabs Gyal-har i Me-lang*, Dehra Dun 198–, in eleventh chapter, 82), telling how, in the time of Emperor Song-bstan-rgan-po, one Akaramakāla went to an island in the ocean and beheld there on the tip of each blade of 'jag-mu grass a seated Buddha. He then brought back a sheaf of this grass for the Emperor. A variant of this same story is located at Dpa'bo II Gtsang-lag-phreng-ba, *Chos 'byung Mi-las-pa i Dga'-ston* (= *Dam-pa i Chos-kyi Khor-to Bgyur-ba-nams-kyi Byung-bu Gyal-bar the Ka-bkol-ma*, i.e., the *Bka'-chens Ka-khol-ma* (Ed. by Smon-lan-rgya-mtsho, Kansu 1989), which may have been extant in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, since it was said to have been excavated by Aftā. See also R. O. Meisecahl, *Die große Geschichte des tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition*, Sankt Augustin 1985, plate 133 (folio 198 verso, line 6).

<sup>8</sup> The use of the word 'said' (*gsung*) lends greater respect and authority to the source of this and the following statement than does the word 'known' (*grig*) in the preceding paragraph, which implies only general knowledge. This is important to note, since the literal English transla-

It is said, "A great *nāga*-spirit known as Skar-rgyal who preferred the 'dark side' entered into a bad person<sup>9</sup> and magically took on the form of a Buddha."

Some classes of delusory spirits (*bdud*) such as this take on the form of people or saints (*'phags-pa*) and, in order to spread wrong teachings, mix them with Dharma, mix wrong teachings into the essential points, and then they are *able* to teach them. To make an analogy, more [people] can be killed by poison when it is added to good food. If known to be simply poison, no one could be killed.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, other people are tricked when wrong teachings are added to a few good teachings. If [people] knew they were simply wrong teachings, the delusory spirits would fool no one.<sup>11</sup>

Sa-skya Pandi-ta continues for several pages in the same vein, but for present we would just like to underline that the word 'Bon' is not used anywhere in the entire body of this work by Sa-skya Pandi-ta, although one might expect some reference to it, given its polemical nature.<sup>12</sup>

Of the later commentaries, that of Spos-khang-pa provides the most interesting information. According to Spos-khang-pa, the people of Mar-yul<sup>13</sup> in Mnga'-ris named him Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal because he emitted light like the light of the star (*skar-ma*) Venus (Pa-ba-sang) from the circle of hair on his forehead.<sup>14</sup> That he could sit on a high throne of *'yag-ma* grass demonstrated [his ability to be] weightless. Householders as well as learned and monastic people of Tibet followed him. Rin-chen-bzang-po looked at him with the gaze (*lia-stangs*) of his chosen deity<sup>15</sup> whose *sādhana* he had performed for the six preceding

\_\_\_\_\_

tions of the Tibetan words seem to carry the opposite implications. According to the notes of Sa-skya Pandi-ta (*ibid.*, 133) the speakers of these words are "scholars of generations past."

<sup>9</sup> The text included in the commentary by Spos-khang-pa reads *skye-ngan*, 'one of bad (low class) birth' rather than *skyes-ngan*, 'bad man'.

<sup>10</sup> The same analogy is drawn by Chag Lo-tsa-ba in his 'Critique of Wrong Tantra' as contained in *Sangs-lag Sun-'byin-gyi Skor* (= *Chag Lo-tsa-bas Mdzad-pa'i Sangs-lag Sun-'byin dang Gos Khug-pa Lhas-bwas-kyi Shags-lag Sun-'byin*), Thimpu 1979, 116.

<sup>11</sup> The text for the passage is found in Sa-skya Pandi-ta, *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye* (Sa-skya Pandi-ta Kun-dga-'rgyal-mshan, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Bstan-bcos*, n.p. 1971, folio 80r-6 through folio 81r-6), and in the same work as contained in Sa-skye *Bka'-bun* (= *Sa-skye-pa'i Bka'-bun*, Vol. 5, Tokyo 1968, 316.6 ff.). Jared Rhoton composed a doctoral dissertation (Columbia 1985) on this text which I have not yet been able to consult.

<sup>12</sup> One does find Bon mentioned in another work by him. See his collected works as contained in *Sa-skye Bka'-bun*, Vol. 5, 431b.3. Bon first surfaces in the polemical literature beginning in about 1230 in the *Dyagongs-cig Yig-cha* anti-Bon polemic and in a polemic by Sa-skya Pandi-ta's contemporary Chag Lo-tsa-ba.

<sup>13</sup> Mang-yul, according to the commentary of Go-rans-pa, which has little to add to the information about Skar-rgyal found in Spos-khang-pa's commentary.

<sup>14</sup> The *mdzad-spi*, a circle of hair between the eyebrows, is one of the thirty-two major marks of a Buddha.

<sup>15</sup> According to the 1954 commentary by Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin, (Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Melon 'Grel*, New Delhi 1979, 239-4), the chosen deity was the Dharma Protector Bse-'bag Gur-mgon (= Mgur-gyi-mgon-po). See D.

months. The Great Translator took his shawl and tied it around Skar-rgyal's neck, exorcising him.<sup>16</sup>

Skar-rgyal said, "I am a *nāga*-spirit who lives in lake Gu-ma of Mar-yul.<sup>17</sup> My teachings have covered all Tibet. They have become inseparably mixed into many texts and precepts like salt in water. They cannot be separated out. I promise from now on not to give wrong teachings."

According to the words of Rin-chen-bzang-po, "A *nāga*-spirit who was an adherent of Ratīśvara (Dga'-rab-dbang-phyug), is named Skar-rgyal, entered into the being [lit., continuity, *rgyud*] of an unfortunate<sup>18</sup> shepherd<sup>20</sup> and taught in the form of a Buddha."

This Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal, a name meaning *Buddha* Skar-rgyal, is a name for the human being who seemed to his followers to be a Buddha. He was possessed by a *nāga*-spirit Skar-rgyal, from whom we might suppose that he

Shellegrove-T. Skowpksi, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Boulder 1977, 99-100 for the story of Rin-chen-bzang-po's contemplative visualizations of this particular form of Mahākāla. Dpa'-bo, *Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston* (Dpa'-bo II Gtsang-lag-phreng-ba, *Chos-'byung Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston: A Detailed History of the Development of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, Vol. 1, Delhi 1980, p. 524.6) says that the chosen deity concerned was Bhairava ('jigs-byed).

<sup>16</sup> *Bka' bsgo drug-po mdzad-pa*. Literally, 'to do a forceful exhorting'.

<sup>17</sup> Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin (Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin, *op. cit.*, 240.1) says he was from Khu-nu, or the lake of Khu-nu. Khu-nu is the present Kinnaur (= Kunawar) district on the upper Sutlej, now a part of India accessible from Tibet through the Shipki Pass. It is not so far from Mho-ling where Rin-chen-bzang-po spent some time. No place name Gu-ma could be located in any other context. The spelling given in the 17th-century commentary by Ngag-dbang-chos-rgyas (Mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang-chos-rgyas, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Rin-mo-bstid Legs-bstid Zia 'Od Nor-ba'i Phreng-ba*, Gangtok 1981, 73.6), but with reference to neighborhood of Jullundur (Jalandhara) in present day Himachal Pradesh. Perhaps more likely, from the standpoint of phonology, would be an identification with the large oasis of Gūma on the route between Karghalik and Khotan (see A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, Vol. 1, 99 ff.), although it seems fairly far removed from Rin-chen-bzang-po's field of activity.

<sup>18</sup> In Buddhist contexts, this is a name or epithet of the king of delusory spirits (*mdzo*), usually known as Kāma. (R. A. Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le bande au Tibet*, Paris 1959, 157; R. A. Stein, La Cécité du Makkara: un trait inexpliqué de certains objets rituels. In: A. Macdonald-Y. Inanada (eds), *Essais sur l'art du Tibet*, Paris 1977, 59.) The name literally means 'Rati's Lord', Rati being the name of Kāma's wife in Indian mythology.

<sup>19</sup> 'Unfortunate' translates *bsod-nams chung*, 'small merit'. In ordinary usage, it means 'unfortunate' or 'lucky', but it comes out of a Buddhist framework where 'merit' (*bsod-nams*) is a result of past good deeds, and therefore the one who experiences the 'luck' is ultimately responsible for it, even if not in the present lifetime.

<sup>20</sup> According to Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin (Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin, *op. cit.*, 240.2), he was a goatherd (*nyur-brdzol*).

took his name after the possession had taken place. If this is the case, we really do not have any proper name for the human being besides the name of the spirit which allegedly inhabited him for a time. The name Skar-rgyal is known as a Tibetan translation of an Indian personal name Tisya. It was also used to translate the nouns *tisya* and *piusya* from Sanskrit, both words used to refer either to a particular lunar month or to a constellation. I can find no reasonable explanation for the fact that there is a city in Ladakh called Kargil (Skar-rgyal?), or whether this has any bearing on our arguments.<sup>21</sup>

While the two earlier commentaries supply us with a geographical location for this teacher Skar-rgyal, they do not agree with each other, and they are even contradicted by another commentary. One of the early commentaries says it was the area of west Tibet called Mar-yul (which is generally identified with Ladakh) or the area in the eastern part of Mnga'-ris province named Mang-yul (just north of modern central Nepal, at least in later times subdivided into Gung-thang and Skyid-rong). This sort of confusion in Tibetan sources has led to considerable scholarly confusion and arguments,<sup>22</sup> and for present purposes it is perhaps as well to live with the ambiguity. The location given by the recent commentator Mkhān-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin may accord better with what we know of Rin-chen-bzang-po's life. He says that Skar-rgyal was at Khu-nu, or the area of the present-day Kinnaur district in India. Kinnaur borders on Gu-ge (with its capital then at Mho-lding), which was site of much of Rin-chen-bzang-po's activity in his later life. In fact, according to the oldest available biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po, he never travelled further east than Purang.<sup>23</sup> This would

21 In A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. 2, New Delhi 1972, 128, we find the spelling Dkar-skyil for this town in Ladakh. Modern newspapers often spell it as Dkar-'khyil. We also find the name Skar-rgyal belonging to one of the prior reincarnations of the Buddha — see Mkhas-pa Lde'u, *Mkhas-pa Lde'u mtshad-pa'i Rgya Bod-kyi Chos-'byung Rgyas-pa*, Lhasa 1987, 30, 33. For others with this same name, see H. Guenther, *The Life and Teachings of Nāropa: Translated from the Original Tibetan with Philosophical Commentary Based on the Oral Transmission*, London 1971, 16; Khetsun Sangpo (= Mkhas-bstan-bzang-po), *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism* (in Tibetan), Vol. 1, Dharamsala 1981, 111. For reference to one named Skar-rgyal among the many Buddhas of the past, see for example Bod Mkhas-pa Mi-pham-ge-legs-nam-rgyal, *Snyan-rgag-gi Bstan-bros Chen-po Me-long la 'jug-pa'i Bshad Sbyar Dandi'i Dgonggs Rgyan*, Dharamsala 1980, 49. I think it more likely that Skar-rgyal claimed to be a manifestation of a Buddha of the past (if he used the name for himself at all) and that the claims that he was a manifestation of a *nāga* or of Pe-har were then introduced into the story for polemical effect.

22 G. Tucci, *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal, Roma 1956*, (Serie Orientale Roma 10.) 74; G. Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzang-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet around the Millennium*, New Delhi 1988, 15; D. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, Vol. 2, Boston 1987, 393, 417, 429. For an article devoted to this issue, see L. Janspal, 'The Three Provinces of Mnga'-ris: Traditional Accounts of Ancient Western Tibet', *In: Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, Ed. by B. N. Aziz-M. Kapstein, New Delhi 1985, 152-156.

23 D. Snellgrove-T. Skorupski, *op. cit.*, 91. According to the notes attributed to Sa-skyā Pandi-ta (see Sa-skyā Pandi-ta, *Saṃ Gān Rang Meḥan*, 133.4), Skar-rgyal was in Khu-nu. For the problem of the historical authenticity of these notes, see now D. Jackson, 'Several Works of Un-

rule out the possibility that the 'exorcism' took place in Mang-yul, which lies to the east of Purang. The same biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po, written by one of his disciples after his death and therefore perhaps dating from as early as 1060 A.D.,<sup>24</sup> tells us that the 'exorcism' took place in Purang:

Just at the time that he went to Purang there was a monk there who appeared sitting cross-legged on a seat of coarse grass. Everyone was paying him respects and there was general wonderment, but our Lama Translator [= Rin-chen-bzang-po] gave thought to the matter and knowing that it was a delusive manifestation of Pe-har,<sup>25</sup> he sat for a month in profound coercive rites. Then he went to him and pointed his finger at him, and the monk turned head over heels,

usual Provenance Ascribed to Sa skyā Pandita. In: E. Steinkeller (ed.), *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uryū Gēza on his Seventieth Birthday*, Vienna 1991, 242-249.

24 This biography is the one translated and published in Tibetan script edition in D. Snellgrove-T. Skorupski, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 85-98, 101-111. Texts of the same biography may also be found appended to G. Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzang-po*, and in *Collected Biographical Material about Le-chen Rin-chen-bzang-po and His Subsequent Reembodiment*, Delhi 1977. The early date would make it one of the earliest specimens of the biographical genre called *riam-thar* to be devoted to the life of a Tibetan (rather than an Indian) religious figure. Although critical historians may well entertain doubts as to the antiquity of this biography, it was certainly known in the 15th century, since it is directly cited in the 1484 history of the Bka'-gdams-pa order written by Bsod-nams-lha'i-dbang-po. *Bka'-gdams Rin-po che'i Chos-'byung Ruan-thar Nyan-mor Byed-pa'i 'Od Stong Aḥing Gampok* 1977, 291.5, 292.2), as well as in the 1476 history 'Gos Lo Gān-nu-dpal. *Dob-thar Sngon-po*, Zhih-hwa 1985, 94. For some doubts, see D. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan*, vol. 2, 477-478. Unlike Snellgrove, I do not believe that the presence of miraculous elements (in actually few) necessarily points to a later reworking of the text. Miracle stories are not 'irrelevant' to the life of a saint, and miraculous stories are told to this day about Rinpoches during their lifetimes. Indeed, if reasonably conclude that it must have been rewritten at the hand of a former professor of the University of London. I see very little reason to doubt that the biography by Khr'i-thang (= Khyi-thang) is genuinely old and preserved today in a form reasonably close to the original. The scholarly reservations of Tucci and Snellgrove are too speculative to be a useful guide. Tucci (G. Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzang-po*, 28) suggested that the author "must have drawn extensively from the popular traditions," but under the circumstances, this tells us nothing at all. The line near the beginning of the text, which Tucci suggests (*ibid.*, 55) "has all the appearance of a gloss or later insertion," in actuality has all the appearance of being an essential statement following the author's own outline. Besides, I can see no special motive for the alleged insertion. Note that the same sort of alternation in spelling between Khyi-thang and Khr'i-thang is found in Old Tibetan texts in the names of the sons of Dri-gum-bstan-po (Bya-khr'i = Bya-khyi) and in an Old Tibetan spelling for *rdz-rgi* ('knife') — *rdz-ryi*.

25 Pe-kar. A variant manuscript of this work reads *khr-bhad*, a type of spirit which is opposed to the *nāga*-spirits; this of course contradicts the idea that he was possessed by a *nāga*-spirit. For iconographic representations of Pe-kar/Pe-har, see D. I. Lauf, *Étude Iconographique des Tibétains du Bouddhisme*, Graz 1979, 146, and references supplied there. See also below.

fell to the ground and went.<sup>26</sup> From then on our Lama Translator was treated with great respect.<sup>27</sup>

There are enough similarities in wording and detail to assume that this or a similar written or oral text was used (or vaguely remembered?) by Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta.<sup>28</sup> There are also quite obvious differences — the six months of spiritual practice are reduced to one month; the teacher is a 'monk' (or, better, a learned religious teacher, a *dge-bshes*)<sup>29</sup> who turns out to be a delusive manifestation of Pe-har (or significantly, in variant ms., a *kur-bdul* spirit) rather than a low-class person possessed by a *nāgpa*; rather than bringing the 'levitating' teacher down to earth with a look (*lta-stangs*), here Rin-chen-bzang-po brings him down with a gesture.<sup>30</sup> In both versions, the teacher was able to sit on a seat of *'ja-g-nia* grass to the amazement of onlookers, but here there is no mention of the other miraculous abilities of emitting light from the forehead or sitting crosslegged in the sky. Both versions are equally silent about any specific teachings of that teacher that would explain to us what was wrong with them, neither is there the slightest mention of Bon.<sup>31</sup>

There is another brief account, roughly contemporary to that of Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta, contained in the story text accompanying the commentary to the sixth

<sup>26</sup> The use of the verb *song* here may imply that he 'disappeared' or 'vanished' in a more-or-less miraculous manner.

<sup>27</sup> D. Snellgrove-T. Skorupski, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 91. I have given the translation that appears there without any significant changes.

<sup>28</sup> We should remember that this biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po is said to be the middle length version. It is entirely possible that Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta had the longer (but no longer extant) version of the biography available to him.

<sup>29</sup> It seems improbable that at this early period the word *dge-bshes* (an abbreviated form of *Dge-ba*; 'Bshes-gnyen, a calque translation of the Sanskrit Kalyāṇamitra) would have had the same special connotations that it held for the later Bka'-gdams-pa and Dge-lugs-pa sects. I think here it just means 'religious teacher'.

<sup>30</sup> *Sdzin-mtshub*. This is a characteristic gesture in the iconography of wrathful *lha* (including Mahākāla), generally with the index and small fingers flung toward the sky, the middle and ring fingers being pressed to the palm. It is interesting that the 'gesture' and 'gazing' are combined (rather awkwardly) in the account by Sher-'byung translated a little further on.

<sup>31</sup> In a late 16th-century work we do find reference to a story of Rin-chen-bzang-po having a contest of magic with Bonpos. He had to mix Zhang-zhung with the words of the mantra in order to win. The source for this story is said to be in the *Pa-ri-ri* 'Yig-clia. See Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mi-shan, *Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mi-shan*, New Delhi 1975, 2 vols. Vol. 1, 308, 6; and Zhe-Chen Rgyal-tshab Padma-nam-rgyal, *Syrga-gyur Rdo-ri-rlie-lheg-pa Gso-bor Gyur-pa* 'i *Syrgud Brgyud Shing-ria Brgyud-kyi Byung-ba Brijod-pa* 'i *Giam Mlor-bśadus Legs-bśad Padma Dkar-po* 'i *Rdzing-bu* (A Concise Historical Account of the Techniques of Esoteric Realization of the Nyingmapa and Other Buddhist Traditions of Tibet). "Reproduced from a manuscript from the collection of A. W. Macdonald." Leh 1971, 150. Some of the coercive magical rites used in the Sa-skya sect do employ mantras with Zhang-zhung words (see also Gu-tu Bka-shis (= Sleg-sgang Mkhas-mchog Nge-dbang-blo-gros = Dbyang-gcan-dga-ba 'i-blo-gros), *Bstan-pa* 'i *Syng-po Syrga-gyur Nges-don Zab-no* 'i *Chos-kyi 'Byung-ba Gsal-bar Byed-pa* 'i *Legs-bśad Mkhas-pa Dga'-byed Ngo-mi-shar Giam-gyi Rol Misho*. (= *Chos-'byung Ngo-mi-shar Giam-gyi Rol Misho*), Delhi 198X, Vol. 2, 819, 6).

subject heading of the early 13th-century *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*.<sup>32</sup> This passage seeks to demonstrate that teachings received through the transmission of a lineage are more profound and miraculous than revelations through earth, sky and tree revelations or Pop[ular] Buddhism (*Rdol-chos*). As examples of those who received sky revelations (*gnam-chos*), he names the greater and lesser Ka-ru-'dzin<sup>33</sup> who emerged at different times:

While some say that he did *sādhana* at Glang-ru in the Nepal Valley (? Bal-mo), the great Ka-ru-'dzin is the one who was brought down to the ground from the sky with a gesture (*sdig-'dzin*) of gazing (*lta-stangs*) by the translator Rin-chen-bzang-po.

Sher-'byung, the author of these words, goes on to tell about a lesser monk attending the group teachings of one Zhang-shar-ba who stopped coming because a white man [Pe-har] came down from the sky and said, "Listen to my teachings. I will lead you to the sky." The poor monk was powerless to go. Zhang-shar-ba tamed the spirit and said, "If it were any teacher but me, the entire assembly would have fallen under his power with no trouble."

It may be interesting to look at other similar stories, related about the 11th-12th centuries, in which Pe-har<sup>34</sup> plays a role. The following passage is from a famous history of the 'Brug-pa sect:

Bya 'Dul-'dzin [1091-1166] founded a teaching monastery at Zul-phu. Dpe-dkar emanated [there] as a young monk (*btsun chung*). Then, when he saw an opportunity, he did something that violated the Vinaya. But, besides a robe with the fur showing on the outside, they saw nothing. Then, he had faith and became a disciple.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Found in Dhon Sher-'byung (= Dbon Shes-rab-'byung-ngas), *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*, Bir 1975, Vol. 2, 457-496, untitled *Lid Sgom Snyod-pa* 'i *Tshoms-kyi Lo-rgyas*. The passage in question occurs at 460, 4.

<sup>33</sup> For Ka-ru-'dzin, see also Sa-skya Pañḍi-ta, *Sltom Giam Kub-dlye*, 52v. At present I have no explanation for his name, but it does seem significant that he has been confounded with Skar-rgyal. Compare the story of the Newari Ka-ka-ru-'dzin in the polemic by Chag Lo-tā-ba (*Shrgyus Log Sun-'byin*, 13), where he is portrayed as a false Padmasambhava who appeared at Samye after the real Padmasambhava had returned to India. Chag Lo-tā-ba says he was possessed by 'king' (*rgyal-po*), here is used to refer to a class of spirits. Pe-kar (i.e., Pe-har).

<sup>34</sup> There is a brief work on the story of Pe-har in the collected works of Cha-har Dge-bshes Blo-brang-tshul-khims (see *Gang-gyur-bum Dkar-clang* (= *Zhwa-ser Bstan-pa* 'i *Syran-me Rje Tsong-kha-pa Chen-pas Gnas Skyes-chen Dam-pa Rin-'byung-gi Gang-gyur-bum Dkar-clang Phyogs-Gcig-ri Brgyes-pa* 'i *Dri-nied Zla-she'd Gsang-ma* 'i *Me-long*.) Lhaq-pa-tshe-riing et al. (ed.), Lhasa 1990, 397.

<sup>35</sup> Brug-pa Padma-Dkar-po, *Brug-pa* 'i *Chos-'byung*. (= Gangs-can Rje Mikral series no. 19), Lhasa 1992, 256. Compare also G. N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, Delhi 1976, 80: "Dpe-dkar (i.e., Pe-har) himself having assumed the form of a novice, attended on him [Bya 'Dul-'dzin]. He never seemed to transgress even a single precept of the Vinaya except when he was wearing a fur coat trimmed with fur on the outside."

Another interesting story is told about Pehar manifesting as a young boy at Tshal Gung-thang Monastery, just a short distance upstream on the opposite bank of the Skyid-chu from Lha-sa. Zhang G-yu-brag-pa Britson-'grus-grags-pa (1123–1193) disliked Pehar and ordered that no picture of him should be painted in a new monastery he was building (the Tshal Yang-dgon). Pehar considered this an insult, and took the form of a young boy. The young boy helped the painters so much that they asked how they might pay him for his work. The boy said that he wanted only that they should paint a small picture of a monkey holding an incense stick. One night Pehar entered into the painted monkey and burned down the monastery with the incense stick.<sup>36</sup>

Among the several historical works by the Sa-skya scholar 'Jam-ngon A-myes-zhabs is one on the history of the Mahākāla tantric cycles written in 1641. In this work are, interestingly, two versions of the story of Skar-rgyal. The first version<sup>37</sup> follows that of the biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po by Khyi-thang-pa, and adds no significant details, even in wording, although he does add the miraculous ability to emit light rays from his body. The second version exhibits some details that may be of some interest.<sup>38</sup>

Having come at what would seem to be the beginning of the Later Spread of the doctrine, the noxious Bonpos were doing some harm to the Buddha's teachings, and [some people might] even ask, 'Are they the delusive manifestation[s] of Dpe-kar [which we have] mentioned previously?'

Others [say that] a noxious *nāga*-spirit who liked the 'dark side' and stayed in Gu-me Lake in Mang-yul, or in the gorge of Bse-rib,<sup>39</sup> entered into a bad person. His name was Sangs-rgyas

<sup>36</sup> For this and other stories about Pehar, see R. de Nebesky-Wolkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (Mouton 1956), 94–108. There is no special symbolic significance to the image of the monkey with the incense stick, only that if a monkey were to play with an incense stick, it might very possibly cause a fire.

<sup>37</sup> Found in 'Jam-ngon A-myes-zhabs Ngag-dbang-kun-dga'-bso-d-nams (1597–circa 1662), *Dpal Rdo-rie Nag-po-chen-po'i Zab-mo'i Chos-skor-nams Byung-ba'i Tshul Legs-par Bshad-pa Bstan-srang Chos Kun Gsal-ba'i Nyin Byed*, New Delhi 1979, Vol. 1, 176.5–177.2, as well as in an extract from the same work contained in *Collected Biographical Material about La-chen Rin-chen-bzang-po and His Subsequent Reembodiments*, Delhi 1977, 172.5 ff. D. Snellgrove–T. Skorupski (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, 99–100, text on 112–113) translated another portion of this extract, but without noting that the original source was by A-myes-zhabs, although this was already determined by D. Jackson (D. Jackson, Notes on the History of Se-rib, *Kalish* 6: 3 (1978) 201, note 17).

<sup>38</sup> This passage follows what D. Snellgrove–T. Skorupski (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, 83, 99) call manuscript version B. The same passage is found in 'Jam-ngon A-myes-zhabs (*op. cit.*, vol. 1, 210.6–211.4), as well as in *Collected Biographical Material*, 228, 1 ff.

<sup>39</sup> For Se-rib (= Bse-rib), see Kun Chang, On Zhang zhung, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica* extra volume no. 4 (= Studies Presented to Tung Tso Pin on His Sixty-fifth Birthday), Pt. 1 (1960) 145. As Chang here notes, this name is mentioned twice in the *Old Tibetan Annals*: from Tun-huang. It was "a country to the southwest of Tibet with a population of fifty thousand." See D. Jackson, Notes on the History of Se-rib, where Se-rib is located in the Kafi-Gandaki valley south of Mustang (Lo, G10) in what is now Nepal.

Dkar-rgyal. Light emanated from his body and he would sit cross-legged in the sky or on the tips of *'jag-ma* grass, teaching wrong Dharma, and so on. The Great Translator subdued him by means of this [very] Dharma Protector [Mahākāla] and made him nameless. After this, he [Rin-chen-bzang-po] composed his *Critique of Wrong Mantra*.

Some of the unique points of this version are as follows. A-myes-zhabs suggests that there may be a connection between the Skar-rgyal episode and the Bonpos of the Later Spread period, although on no special authority besides, "it is said" (ཅེ་པ།). Besides this, he gives an alternative geographic location not found in our other versions. He implies that Rin-chen-bzang-po was inspired to write his *Critique of Wrong Mantra*<sup>40</sup> by his experience with the false teacher, while earlier sources only mention these as unconnected, although chronologically close, occurrences. He also says that Skar-rgyal was made 'nameless'. I suppose this to mean that he lost his reputation, but it may also point to the fact, previously noted, that no real personal name for him has been preserved in these traditional historical accounts.

The fact that the earliest source, the biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po, gives no name whatsoever for the false teacher led me to speculate about another passage which predates Sa-skya Pandita's work and which I came across in the works of 'Jig-ten-ngon-po. The person mentioned in this passage could be identified with Skar-rgyal on the basis of name and a common ability to perform miracles. I suppose, if the chronology could only be made to agree,

'Jig-ten-ngon-po is relating to his followers an anecdote which he had heard from his own teacher Phag-mo-gru-pa. It is told within the general context of a sermon to the effect that it is absolutely essential to understand the nature of the mind in order to go beyond *samsāra*. For this, nothing else, not even miraculous abilities, can be of any assistance.

The Bodhisattva Zla-ba'i-rgyal-mtshan had three brothers, the youngest of whom was a Bonpo named Dkar-ma'i-rgyal-mtshan. He had very great [miraculous] power. It is said that he had the power to [tie] the tops [lit., 'heads'] of mountains on either side [of himself] in a knot.<sup>41</sup> Still, even though one obtained such sorts

<sup>40</sup> This work, although not available in reprint form, must nevertheless exist somewhere. See the listing of polemical works collected in a single volume in L. Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, New Delhi 1985, 673–674 (nos 15801–15814). The same collection is listed as existing in three sections in *Klong-rtol Ngag-dbang-phi-bzang-gi Gsung-'bum*, Lhasa 1991, (Ganggs-can Rig Mdzod series nos. 20–21), Vol. 2, 604–605. A handwritten table of contents to a one-volume collection is preserved on microfilm at the Nepalese National Archives (running number E45088, reel number E2449/14), but not the actual volume. (I must thank Dr. Franz-Karl Ehrhard for kindly sending photocopies of the last-mentioned work.) According to all these sources, the polemical work attributed to Rin-chen-bzang-po filled 48 folio pages.

<sup>41</sup> The same miraculous ability is attributed to the ancient Bonpo sage Stong-rgyungel-mtshen] in Skyabs-ston Rin-chen-'od-zer, *Spyi-sprungs Khro-bo Dbang-chen-gyi 'Grel-pa* (and the *Dba'i-phur Spyi-don*, excavated by Klu-isha Zla-'od), New Thöbgyal 1973, 93, 8.

of clairvoyance, [ability to make] magical projections and [miraculous] power, if one has not understood one's own mind, it is of no avail. A moving drum will not at all raise one from *samsāra*.<sup>42</sup>

Following usual Tibetan abbreviation practice, a four-syllable name such as Dkar-ma'i-rgyal-mtshan might very easily appear in a written text as Dkar-rgyal, and we do find Dkar-rgyal as an alternative spelling of Skar-rgyal.<sup>43</sup> It would seem at first glance that our miracle-working Skar-rgyal was in fact a Bonpo with a proper name (not, in this case, the name of a *nāga*-spirit) Skar-rgyal and a brother who could perhaps be identified.

In fact, this Bodhisattva Zla-ba'i-rgyal-mtshan can be identified and that is the reason why this Dkar-ma'i-rgyal-mtshan could not be a contemporary of Rin-chen-bzang-po. Bodhisattva Zla-ba'i-rgyal-mtshan was a contemporary of Sgam-po-pa (1079–1153) and a teacher of Phag-mo-gru-pa (1110–1170) in the year 1135 or shortly thereafter.<sup>44</sup> This makes it unlikely in the extreme that his brother, apparently a younger brother as well, could have been the same as the teacher defeated by Rin-chen-bzang-po (who died in 1055).

Did the teachings of Skar-rgyal really lapse into total obscurity? The version in Spos-khang-pa's commentary would lead us to think that these teachings had more than a passing effect on later Tibetan Buddhism. Besides, the

<sup>42</sup> Text in 'Brng-gung Chos-rje 'Jig-rten-ngon-po, *The Collected Writings* (*Gsung-'bum*) of 'Brng-gung Chos-rje 'Jig-rten-ngon-po *Rin-chen-dpal*. New Delhi 1969. Vol. 4, 374, 4 ff. The reading of *nga* (*gras* 'moving drum') in the last sentence is not very certain, and the translation presents an archaic meaning for the verb *'gre*. A similar line is found on the preceding page (373.5): *'khor-ba las rta nga 'gres gang las mtshags*, 'a moving horse [or] drum by no means raised [them] from *samsāra*'. See also Karma-pa I Dus-gsum-nkhyen-pa, *Selected Writings of the First Zhwa-riang Karma-pa Dus-gsum-nkhyen-pa*, Gangtok 1980. Vol. 1, 264–6 ff. This does remind us of the story of Na-to Bon-chung (in the Milarepa biographies) in which he rode on his drum to the top of Mt. Ti-se.

<sup>43</sup> See, for examples, 'Brng-chen IV Padma-dkar-po, Chos-'byung hstan-pa'i Padma Rgyas-pa'i Nyin-byed. In: 'Brng-chen IV Padma-dkar-po, *Collected Works* (*Gsung-'bum*) of *Kram-nkhyen Padma-dkar-po*. Dargjeing 1973. Vol. 2, 353.6, and Kheasun Sangpo (= Mkhas-bstan-bzang-po), *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*. (in Tibetan), Dharamsala 1981+. Vol. 1, 828. Padma-dkar-po sums up the story of Skar-rgyal in just four syllables, "Klu Dkar-rgyal ba!" which means 'He civilized (or converted) the *nāga* Dkar-rgyal'.

<sup>44</sup> Mkhan-po Ye-shes-chos-dar (= Khempo Yeshe Chhodar), *Mhyan-med Dvags-po Bka'*, *brygyud-kyi Ring-logs Dri-ma med-pa'i Tshul Ciung-zad Glang-ba Legs-bshad Dbyur-nga'i Sgra-dbyangs*. Samath 1972. 60; G. N. Roerich, *op. cit.*, 472, 557, 561, 1024–5, 1055; 'Brng-chen IV Padma-dkar-po, Chos-'byung, 541.1; Tshal-pa Kun-dga'-rdo-rje, *Deb-ther Dmurt-po* (= *Deb-ther Dmurt-po-mams-kyi Dang-po Hsi-lan Deb-ther*). With added footnotes by Dmurt-dkar Rin-po-che Blo-bzang-'phrin-las Peking 1981, note 531. Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147–1216) received novice vows from Bodhisattva Zla-ba'i-rgyal-mtshan in his eighth year (*circa* 1154) according to his biography by Sa-skya Pandi-ta contained in 'Jam-dbyangs-blo-gter-dbang-po (ed.), *Lam-'bras Stob Bshad*. Dehra Dun 1983. Vol. 1, 36.6.

*Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston*, although relatively late, being completed in 1564, adds a unique, but perhaps significant statement.<sup>45</sup> The entire passage reads,

In Mnga'-ris there was one who said "I am Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal" who had the magical power of appearing in the form of Teacher. He levitated in the sky, giving teachings a little different from the Teachings of the Buddha, and all the people gathered [around him]. At that time Great Translator [Rin-chen-bzang-po] performed a six-month *sādhana* of Bhairava, and after stabilizing the generation stage practices, he went to where Skar-rgyal was staying. With a mere look by the Great Translator, he turned into an ordinary herdsman. It is said that among the teachings which he [Skar-rgyal] taught [all] sank [into obscurity] except for the *Benefits of the Vajracchedikā*.<sup>46</sup> It seems that a *nāga*-spirit of the dark side known as Skar-rgyal had possessed a herdsman and started to create obstacles for the Teachings.

It is difficult to know precisely what to make of this statement about the *Benefits of the Vajracchedikā*. It is a very popular collection of fifteen stories which all testify to the efficacy of reciting or copying the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* for averting various calamities and securing a good rebirth, while some of the stories are very like the later popular genre of *das-log*<sup>46</sup> stories. The *Benefits* was often appended to manuscripts of the *Vajracchedikā* in Tibet. Although it was never included, so far as I have been able to discover, in the Tibetan canon

<sup>45</sup> Dpa'-bo II Gtsug-lag-'phreng-ba, Chos-'byung Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston: *A Detailed History*. Delhi 1980. Vol. 1, 524.6–7. Dpa'-bo II Gtsug-lag-'phreng-ba, Chos-'byung Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston, (= *Dam-pa'i Chos-kyi 'Khor-lo Bgyur-ba-mams-kyi Byung-ba Gaid-ber Bred-pa Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston*), Ed. Rdo-rje-rgyal-po. Peking 1986, 527. For a reference to the *Benefits of the Vajracchedikā*, see K. M. Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon Kyōki of the Monk Kyōkai*. Cambridge 1973, 32 (this reference I owe to Dr. Gregory Schopen). There are numerous examples in manuscript collections, as well as some recent possessions at microfilm copy of a rather unusual example of the *Vajracchedikā*. I have in my possession a National Archives (see bibliography under *Rdo-rje gradd-pa'i phan-yon*). This, too, was meant to be appended to a text of the *Vajracchedikā*, as we may judge from the marginal notation *Khad* ('part 2').

<sup>46</sup> L. Epstein, *On the History and Psychology of the "Das-log"*. These *das-log* stories were meant for the edification of laypeople, and most of them were also written by laypeople. According to Epstein, most *das-log* stories came into existence in the period between the early 16th and the middle of the 18th century. For a translation of a *das-log* story, see Th. Schrewe, Ein Besuch in buddhistischen Purgatorium, *ZDMG* 65 (1911) 471–486. Of course, the roots of the *das-log* go much deeper into Buddhist history: one may cite the story of the visit of Maṇḍuḍāyāna to the M. Nakamura, *op. cit.*, and Y. K. Dkyusa, *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sūtra from Ancient Japan: the Danhōkoku Hōkōkyōkenki of Priest Chingen* (1007?–1044?). Hirakata City 1983; Epstein finds the roots in the canonical cycles of Avālokiteśvara. See also F. Pommeret, Les Revenants de Z. Yamaguchi (eds), *Tibetan Studies*. Narita 1992. Vol. 2, 673–690. The study of 'das-log stories in light of their ability to motivate popular laypeople's practices has not yet been done.

(the Kanjur), it bears no author statement in the five editions I have consulted. Whether or not this text comes from Skar-rgyal, we do not know. It seems that, if so, he would have been a very Buddhist teacher indeed. More research is necessary.

Still, there is a kind of justice, I think, in ascribing the *Benefits to him*. The text reflects the same sort of popular approach to Buddhism that was so roundly condemned by Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta in his *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye*.<sup>47</sup> *Nirvāna*, rebirth in Sukhāvāri or Tuṣita and other lofty goals of Buddhist religious and spiritual practice are promised to those who simply recite or copy the scripture. There is, of course, much scriptural justification for these sorts of claims, even in the text of the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* itself.<sup>48</sup> It perhaps goes without saying that many, particularly the learned scholars, would agree with Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, that *Nirvāna* cannot be such a fast and simple thing. Nonetheless, these were very popular ideas and, as our sources make clear, Skar-rgyal gained a broadly-based, popular following which in some degree threatened the emerging official consensus. Perhaps the 'nāga-spirit' which possessed him was, as I have previously suggested in a different context,<sup>49</sup> a veiled metaphor for the common folk, the farmers and nomads. In this idea there seems to be more than a little poetic justice. What would happen to the religious elites if a religion could get along without them? Can one blame the religious scholars such as Rin-chen-bzang-po and Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta for their strong and worried reactions?

The *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*, composed in about 1235, has something to say about 'excavations' (*gler-ma*) and 'popular religion' in the first Adamantine Statement under its sixth general subject heading:

There are some who would have it that teachings (*chos*) without lineages and earth teachings (*sa chos*), sky teachings (*gnan chos*),<sup>50</sup> *gler-ma* and so on are profound and miraculous. But we

<sup>47</sup> Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom Gsum*, 69r and 79r. See also similar statements in another of his works contained in *Sa-skya Bka'-'bum*, vol. 5, 332a.1 ff., where he insists that the scriptural passages which promise lofty results for ordinary devotional practices were not intended to be taken literally, thus, in a single interpretative stroke, doing away with the entire scriptural justification for a broad range of Buddhist practices, for the most part laypeople's practices.

<sup>48</sup> G. Schopen, 'The Phrase "sa prithivīrude saskāryabhiḥ bhavet" in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 17 (1975) 147-181. However, the text of the *Vajracchedikā* falls short of promising the very highest religious and spiritual goals, saying rather only that reciting the text of the sūtra at a particular place makes that place a holy place, and, by implication, the recitation would provide the same merit as pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Buddhism. Scriptural recitation becomes a kind of verbal pilgrimage, with all the spiritual benefits of bodily pilgrimage, but without so much hardship.

<sup>49</sup> D. Martin, *Human Body Good Thought (Mi-tus-dam-legs) and the Revelation of the Secret Bardo Mother Tantra*. M.A. Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington 1986, 34-35.

<sup>50</sup> For a late fifth century Chinese example of a 'sky teaching', see K. Tokuno, 'The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues'. In: Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (ed.), *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*. Honolulu 1990, 38.

hold that the teaching transmitted through a lineage is [truly] profound and miraculous.<sup>51</sup>

There are collections of historical stories (*lo-rgyas*) meant to accompany each of the general subject headings of the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*. The stories at the beginning of the historical text accompanying the commentary to the sixth child of Pe-har<sup>52</sup> which according to him are *Rdol-chos*, 'Outbreak Teachings' or 'Popular Buddhism'. The stories go like this:

There were four people captured by spirits by the names Shel-mo Rgya-lean,<sup>53</sup> Zhang-mo Rgya-'thing, 'O-lam Bha-tu and Bso Kha-'tham. Each of these four had their own particular philosophical claims. The first believed that thoughts and objects are not interconnected. When Shel-mo's husband was killed by another man, she felt great grief but did not want to weep in front of others. So she went to a cave with people carrying *tshe-tsha* and remained there for a long time crying. When she got exhausted, Pe-kar came from the sky and said to her, "Do not cry. There is absolutely no connection between your thoughts and external objects. If there were, since you cry thinking about your husband, he ought to return to you as before; you cried and called out, but still no husband."

Hearing these words, she thought about them and decided they were true. She went into a meeting at the lower end of that same valley, where a teacher was explaining Dharma to five hundred students and started dancing.

Thoughts and things have no connection.  
The very idea must be rejected —

<sup>51</sup> Dbon Sher-'byung, *Dgongs-gcig*, vol. 1, 171.1.

<sup>52</sup> Pe-har *bu behi*. For Pe-har (= Pe-[d]kar), see S. Hummel, Pe-har. *East and West* 13:4 (1962) 313-316, and below.

<sup>53</sup> According to the Bu-ston polemic, she was named Sny'i-mo Rgya-lean, and her followers were called the Union Release (Sbyor-sgröl-pa). Note, however, that the Bu-ston polemic (labeled in *Sgrags log sui-'byin*, 33-34) is probably not really by Bu-ston. 'Thu'u-bkwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-'nyi-ma. *Thu-'bkwan Grub-niṭha'* (= *Grub-niṭha'*). *Thams-cad-kyi Khangs-dang 'Dol-tshid Ston-pa Legs-dshid Shel-gyi Mc-lang*. Gansu 1984, 74, says, "There is one [polemic] which partially is authored by Bu-ston, but since it doesn't appear in the listings of his collected works, and since even with its pretensions of compositional skill it doesn't have the feel of scholarly discourse, it was simply written by a simpleton and ascribed to Bu-ston Rin-po-che." I have discussed the history of the early Tibetan polemical literature elsewhere (in D. Martin, *Emergence*); and for a valuable treatment of more recent literature belonging to the Tibetan polemical tradition, see M. Kapstein, 'Purification Gem and its Cleansing: A Late Tibetan Polemical Discussion of Apocryphal Texts. *History of Religions* 28: 3 (1989) 217-244. Nyang-rat (Nyang-rat Nyi-ma-od-zer, *Chos-'byung Me-tog Snyang-po Shrang-ris'i Bend*, Ed. by Chab-spel Tshé-brtan-phun-tshogs et. al. Lhasa 1988, 494) says, "From Snc-mo Rgya-lean of Dbus [was one?] Gliong Nag-po Rgya-'dzam. They are called the Flyers ('Phur-tsho)."



by teacher, student and teaching three — that they are the least bit interconnected.

she said as she danced, and everyone, teacher and students included, got up and started dancing all at once. They became her followers, calling the cave where she had stayed Prophecy Relic Cave.<sup>54</sup>

While the one named Zhang-mo Rgya-'thing-ma<sup>55</sup> was doing religious exercises, a bird, which was an emanation of Pe-ka, killed a snake and the wind carried a leaf from a tree which hit the snake corpse which then utterly disappeared. The woman saw this and thought, "Just like this, that which is slain is by nature nonexistent." She is said to have sung a song,

I know that thinking the killer and killed  
suffer any effect is just a mistake  
just like the leaf, the bird and the snake.

She also gained some following.<sup>56</sup>

The view of 'O-lam Bha-ru<sup>57</sup> was, "It is not true that results come from causes. Causes cannot do anything. It's good to kill. Fire and water have exchanged places."<sup>58</sup> Meaning lies in the natural state of things." Doing just the opposite of what he said were those called the Crazy and the Nudists, and they gained some followers.

Bso Kha-'tham's<sup>59</sup> view was that 'attaining the celestial life' meant understanding that there is no virtue or sin. He seems to have killed many people.

<sup>54</sup> Lung-pstan Sku-gdung Phug. Evidently 'relic' because of the presence there of *tsa-tsha* containing remains of her husband.

<sup>55</sup> Zhang-mo Rgyal-mthing appears in G. N. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 984, where it says, "She being afflicted by grief after her husband's death, Dam-pa bestowed [on her] the precepts which teach the absence of a link (*bral med*) between mind and objects (*dhgog*), and she obtained emancipation." Nyang-ral, *Chos-'byung*, 494, supplies her the name Zhang-po Rgya-'thing (a form that does not imply that she was a woman) and adds that she was associated with the place named Zar Stag-sna. It is clear that the identities of the two women among the 'Four Children' have been partially confused. As we will see shortly, the two men were also partially confused.

<sup>56</sup> Her followers were called the Crazy (Smyon-tsho-pa), according to Bu-ston. Nyang-ral calls them the Crazy Yogis (Rnal-'byor Smyon-tsho).

<sup>57</sup> The name occurs in Bu-ston's polemic as 'Od-lia Bab-tu, and his followers are called the Do Nothings (Byar-med-pa). Nyang-ral (*op. cit.*, 494) calls him 'O-la 'Ba'-su, associates him with a place called Risi-ri, and calls his followers the Do Nothing Yogis.

<sup>58</sup> The phrase used here, *me chig go bzlog*, may also refer to one of the 'seven miraculous pulses' by which physicians may learn about the health and private life of the patient (or even of the patient's close relative or friend). See T. J. Tsanong, *et. al.*, *Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine*, Dharamsala 1981, 26, 96 (note 18); Y. Dhonden-S. Topgay, *Pulse Diagnosis in Tibetan medicine*, *Tibetan Medicine* series no. 1 (1980) 23. See also the following note.

<sup>59</sup> Nyang-ral (*op. cit.*, 494) calls him Sro Kha-'thams, the 'Victor' (Rgyal-ba, i.e., Jina, or Buddha) of Ru-mshams, and styles his followers the Fire-Water Reversalists (Me Chu Go Log-pa). His name was Stag-khang Thabs-shes, according to the Bu-ston polemic. He is evidently identical to the Bla-ma Sro-ba of S. G. Karney, *The Great Perfection (Kdzogs chen): A Philosophical*

As for 'earth teachings' (*sa chos*), it has often happened in Gtsang that Bon and Chos have been mixed together in a single treasure site (*ger-kha*), and they seem to get 'translated' ('translated') from one to the other...<sup>60</sup>

Of the just mentioned 'Four Children of Pe-ka', it is said that three appeared in Gtsang, while 'O-lam Bha-ru appeared in 'Phanyul. Zhang-mo Rgya-'thing-ma was later converted by Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and became his consort.

To sum up, one ought to stay away from such impure lineages.<sup>61</sup>

The history by Nyang-ral, which seems to be our earliest source on the Four Children (although not so called by him), since it dates to the last decades of the 12th century, adds two more groups — the Stag-tsho<sup>62</sup> group of the Yogi of Shangs and the Mgos-tsho group of Rdzi-lung — and calls them all collectively 'Six Dark Yogis' (Rnal-'byor Nag-po Drug). After brief statements about each of them, he says,

They performed well the 'practice transmission'.<sup>63</sup> The followers of the Lo-tsa-bas and Pundits [the followers of the New

and *Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism*, Leiden 1988, 206, and perhaps the Bla-ma Sro of G. N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 149. The So clan produced many important Rnying-ma and Zhi-byed teachers during this period. According to Bu-ston, his followers had many perverse texts such as the 'Treatise Seven Pebble Cycle (*Rie'u* [=Rde'u] *Skor Bdan*, on which, see below), the View Awareness Knot Cycle (*Lia-hu Rtes-pa'i Mlid Skor*), and the Proposition that Fire and Water Have Exchanged Places (*Gyan-tshigs Me Chu Go Log*), etc.

<sup>60</sup> The section about 'sky teachings' (*gnam chos*) has been translated above.

<sup>61</sup> This passage is found in the opening pages of the text entitled *Lia Sgom Snyod-pa'i Tshoms-kyi Lo-rgyas Gyal-byed* contained in the various editions of the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha* (for example, Dbon-po Shes-rab-'byung-gnas, *Dgongs-chos Dgongs-pa Gcig-pa'i Yig-cha*, Thimpu 1976, Vol. 2, 434, 5-436, 5).

<sup>62</sup> This Stag-tsho ('Stag Faction') is known to be among the many sub-factions that developed within the 'Four Factions' in the monastic community of the Later Spread. More specifically, the Stag Faction was one of the three factions formed from the Upper Lo Faction, which in turn was one of the three factions that developed among the monastic followers of Lo-ston Rdo-rje-dbang-phyug in Gtsang Province. The Stag Faction was named for Stag Lo Gzhon-brton (i.e., Gzhon-nu-brton-'gnas), who built the Stag Lo Lha-khang. This Stag Lo Gzhon-brton might be identical to the travelling companion of 'Brog-mi named Stag-lo Gzhon-nu-tshu-khri-m, although this needs more study (see 'Brug-chen Padma-dkar-po, *Chos-'byung*, 393-396). Likewise, the Mgos Faction may be identical to the monastic faction initiated (also in Gtsang) by Mgo-ba (= 'Go-ba) Ye-shes-g-yung-drung, who had his residence at Shre Lha-khang. It is interesting that 11th century) together with the Four Children who were lay Buddhists (evidently active after the mid-11th century).

<sup>63</sup> 'Practice transmission' (*sgyud-bryuid*) is a term still in fairly common use among the Bka'-bryud-pa schools, where it is sometimes contrasted to 'meaning transmission' (*dou-bryuid*), although both are equally esteemed. 'Practice transmission' emphasizes *sādhana* practice, while 'meaning transmission' emphasizes the kind of learning transmitted through the oral precepts.

