

19. Svastyayana-gāthā³²
 fol. 259b4 | | rgya gar skad du : sta-ba-sva-sti-ya-na-ga-tha |
 bod skad du bde legsu gyur pa'i tshigsu bcad pa
 fol. 260a4/5 de dag kun tu bde legs tu gyur pa'i tshigs su bcad pa
 rdzogs sho | |
- fol. 260a6/7 | | om ye dhar-rma he-tu-pra-bha-ba he-tung te-shin
 (sic) ta-tha-gha-ta hy-a-ba-tad te-shan tsa yo ni-ro-dha e-bha-ti
 (sic) ma-ha-shra-ma-ne-ye (sic) svo-hā (sic) | |³³
 gang gis lus med chos de la | |

³² Cf. D 818; F 100, 238; Q 441; S 328.

³³ This is the famous *ye dharmā* formula which can be found, e.g. in WALDSCHMIDT 1957-1962: 28 b.10; c.6.8 *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetum teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadāt teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī mahāśramaṇaḥ* | | "Of all the objects which proceed from a cause, the Tathāgata has explained the cause and their cessation. Thus is the doctrine of the great Śramaṇa."

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE THIG-LE BCU-DRUG AND THE BKA' GDAMS GLEGS BAM

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I. INTRODUCTION

While working on literary sources dealing with the self-originated Avalokiteśvara statues, and especially the legends concerning the Ārya Vati bzang-po from Mang-yul Skyid-grong, I came across a passage in the collection of texts called "The Book of the Bka'-gdams[-pa Tradition]" (*bka' gdams glegs bam*) referring to three of these statues and identifying them with three famous Bka'-gdams-pa masters of the 11th and 12th century. Like the statues Ārya Vati bzang-po, Ārya 'Ja'-ma-li and Ārya 'Bu-khang, they are called "Three Brothers" (*sku mched gsum*), and this label stands for Po-to-ba (1027/31-1105), Phu-chung-ba (1031-1109) and Spyan-snga-pa (1038-1103), the three well-known disciples of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas (1005-1064) who transmitted the teachings of Atiśa Dīpaṅkarasīrjāna (982-1054) in Tibet.

A closer look at this passage shows that the identification of Avalokiteśvara icons with Bka'-gdams-pa masters is part of a longer discussion concerning the incarnation status of the disciples of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas. It turns out that they are also regarded as embodiments of the "Protectors of the Three [Tantric] Families" (*rigs gsum mgon po*): Phu-chung-ba being an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, Po-to-ba of Mañjuśrī, and Spyan-snga-pa of Vajrapāṇi. As we find the whole discussion at the end of the biography of Atiśa known as *Rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags*,¹ the impression is one of following a strategy to unify the three important transmitters of Bka'-gdams-pa teachings at a time when the tradition as such had spread already from

¹ See Pha-chos 1994: 223.20-226.1; this biography of Atiśa, written by Mchims Nam-mkha' grags (1210-1285), the seventh abbot of Dpal Snar-thang, is found in all accessible editions of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*. Pha-chos 1994 is a modern edition of its first part based on the Sde-dge xylograph produced by Si-tu Pan-chen Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas (1700-1774); if not otherwise mentioned I quote from this edition in the following.

Mnga'-ris skor-gsum in the west up to the domain of the king of Tsong-kha in the east.

The problem of the author of the biography of Atiśa was that he used the scheme of the three Avalokiteśvara brothers to legitimate the status of the disciples of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas as incarnations of the protectors of the three tantric families. He seemed to have had his own doubts about this strategy, since he states that the "scriptural source" (*khungs*) for this kind of identification does not come from the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition itself. By the 15th century, however, such doubts were no longer entertained and as a literary source for the episode which brings together Po-to-ba, Phu-chung-ba and Spyan-snga-pa as the "Three Brothers Arya [Avalokiteśvara]" (*'phags pa sku mched gsum*), another text from the biographical tradition was brought forward; it bears the title *Jo bo rje'i rnam thar lam yig*. Unfortunately this work, an apocryphal text considered to be a composition of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas himself, does not contain any reference to either the self-originated Avalokiteśvara statues or to the three Bka'-gdams-pa masters. The reason for taking this text as the source for the identification of these two triads was obviously its mention of the Svayambhūcaitya in Nepal as an important stopover during Atiśa's journey to Tibet.² According to the passage in the *Rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags*, it was precisely at this sacred site in Nepal where the spiritual identities of Po-to-ba, Phu-chung-ba and Spyan-snga-pa were revealed by "non-humans" (*mi ma yin*) to a yogin who had joined their company in circumambulating the caitya.

Having reaped these marginal results from consulting the works of the Bka'-gdams glegs bam for which it is famous—i.e. the different texts concerning the biographical tradition of Atiśa—I decided to take a closer look at the collection as a whole and try to find out if there were more hints of Avalokiteśvara teachings, of how they were transmitted, and of the geographical areas where this took place. It was

2 The reference to the *Jo bo rje'i rnam thar lam yig* as the literary source for the identification between icons and masters is contained in Chos-'byung II: 319.8-320.4; this work was composed in the year 1484. The text of Chos-'byung IV, written in 1634, is for the greater part a verbatim copy of the earlier work; for the same reference see *ibid.*, 118.18-119.12. Atiśa's stay at the Svayambhūcaitya according to the *Jo bo rje'i rnam thar lam yig* is treated by DECLEER 1996: 40.

only then that I discovered the importance of the spiritual practice of the cycle of the "Sixteen Spheres" (*thig le bcu drug*) for the way the collection of texts made its appearance and how it was handed down in the generations following the three brothers.

II. THE "ARCHAIC VERSION" OF THE BKA' GDAMS GLEGS BAM

In one of the historiographical works of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition written in the 15th century we find a good overview of the Bka' gdams glegs bam based on the classification of its content into different "scriptural sections" (*dpe tshan*). The collection as a whole consists of 54 of these sections, which are divided first into four "preparatory teachings" (*sbyor ba'i chos*) and into the remaining sections, which make up the "main part of the book" (*glegs bam dngos gzh*). It is explicitly stated that the first four sections should not be confounded with the main part.

The four preparatory teachings turn out to be two works attributed to 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, with the titles '*Brom chos kyi rgyal po nyid kyi logs su nan gyi gtad pa'i bka' rgya* and '*Rang rgyud skul ma 'debs pa dad pa'i ljon shing*'. The first work is also known under the short title "The Book's Sealed Command" (*glegs bam kyi bka' rgya*) and should, according to its colophon, be read both prior to and after the promulgation of the actual book. The second work, too, consists for the most part of verses to be recited by the religious practitioner following this specific teaching of the Bka'-gdams-pas.

Although they do not actually belong to the main part of the Bka' gdams glegs bam, the two remaining works are characterized as being of "great importance for both the preparatory [teachings] and the main part [of the book], [these] two" (*sbyor dngos gnyis kar gal che*). The first one bears the alternative titles *Glegs bam gyi chos 'byung* or *Lha chos bdun ldan gyi bla ma brgyud pa rnam kyi rnam thar*, both titles suggesting that this text will shed light on the individual teachers who transmitted the Bka' gdams glegs bam. The second work is devoted to the "doctrine of the sixteen spheres" (*thig le bcu drug bstan pa*) and more specifically to the "practice [of these teachings] as a spiritual experience" (*nyams len*). As different iconographical forms of Avalokiteśvara are described in this text, it is obviously the best literary source concerning the actual spiritual practices relating to the Great Compassionate One in the book of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition.

The classification of the collection into different scriptural sections ends with a fifth work which should not be included in the main part. It is the text *Rgyal ba yab sras kyi bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa'i gter* (or *Thugs dam jo bo yab sras kyi bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa'i gter*), and the historiographical work of the 15th century again gives a reason for this fact. It is stated that "because [the text] appears as something that was later made by the one from Snar-thang, it is perceived as a condensed version, and thus this [work] should not be confounded with the main part."³ Indeed, at the end of the text we find a note that it was set down in writing at Dpal Snar-thang, the "place of seclusion of [all] the scholars and siddhas" (*mkhas grub kyi dben gnas*). Although a date for the composition is given, i.e. a "male water-tiger year" (*chu pho stag gi lo*), there is no author's name stated.

The colophons of these two works, which stand out as quite important for the transmission history of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* and its Avalokiteśvara teachings, in both cases give Dpal Snar-thang as the place of composition, and in the *Glegs bam gyi chos 'byung* again we find a male water-tiger year as the date when the text was written down. All things considered, the evidence seems quite strong that the two works came from the pen of the same man, who composed them in the same year in the monastery of Dpal Snar-thang in Gtsang province. This evidence is supported in the form of a rhetorical question by another historiographical work of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition from the 15th century;⁴ we are introduced thus to Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (1225-1305), the ninth abbot of Dpal Snar-thang:

³ The whole classification of the contents of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* into different scriptural sections can be found in Chos-'byung II: 379.8-380.8; cf. Chos-'byung IV: 178.8-179.7. The just cited quotation closes this classification (... *phyis snar thang pas byas par snang bas / don bsdu lta bur snang la / 'di dang dngos gzhi la mi the'o*). It was H. Eimer who first pointed out this classificatory scheme in the work of Bsod-nams lha'i dbang-po, characterizing it at the time as a "still more archaic form of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*" (see EIMER 1984: 45 & 47, note 11).

⁴ This text was composed in 1494, i.e. ten years after the historiographical work of Bsod-nams lha'i dbang-po. The author, Las-chen Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, associated with the monastery of Rise-thang in the Yarlung valley, had been a direct disciple of Bsod-nams lha'i dbang-po and we find a biographical sketch of his teacher in the same work; see *ibid.*, vol. 1, 622.2-624.6; cf. also VAN DER KUIJP 1987: 125, note 6.

Now, the ninth upādhyāya of Snar-thang, Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, listened to these teachings in their entirety and lived them as a spiritual experience. Afterwards, on the eighth day of the third Tibetan month of the male water-tiger year [= 1302] he produced the sāstra *Thugs dam rgyal ba yab sras kyi bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa* and the [accompanying] paintings.

Then on the thirtieth day of the twelfth Tibetan month of the same year, he wrote down the great history of the [doctrine of the] *Lha chos [bdun ldan]* as it came forth from the words of Bla-ma Brom[-ston Kumāramati] (b. 1271); and as one says that also the instruction text for living the Sixteen Spheres as a spiritual experience called *Lag len zung 'jug nyi zla'i thig le* was composed in Snar-thang [at that time]: isn't this just [the same] upādhyāya [who composed the other two works]?

It is certain that the *[Bka' gdams] glegs bam* originated in Snar-thang as well, it having been set down in writing [by Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan] [as] what was lodged in the mind of 'Brom-ston Kumāra[mat].⁵

The ninth abbot of Dpal Snar-thang is thus the person who wrote down the three mentioned introductory works in the year 1302—each seemingly quite important for an understanding of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* in its formative phase. As the quotation suggests further, Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan was also involved in bringing the larger work into some kind of definite form by recording the words of his teacher 'Brom Kumāramati. But before coming to this decisive event in the process of codification, I shall give an overview of the sections of the main part as they are presented in the later historiographical literature.

With five of the 54 sections having been bracketed out—the two works attributed to 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas and the three works of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan—there remain 49 sections in that part of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* conceived as the central core of the book. They are divided into the 26 sections of the so-called "Teachings for the Father" (*pha chos*) and the 22 sections of the

⁵ See Chos-'byung III, vol. 2, 248.1-6 (*de la snar thang mkhan po dgu pa mkhan chen nyi ma rgyal mtshan gyis / chos 'di dag ma las par gan te thugs dam rgyal ba yab shas chu pho stag gi lo nam thongs kyi zla ba'i tshes brgyad la thugs dam rgyal ba yab sras kyi bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa'i bstan bcos dang / ras bris de bohengs / de nas lo de'i rgyal zla ba'i sum cu'i tshes la bla ma 'brom gyi gsung las byung ba lta lha chos kyi lo rgyus chen mo de mtzad / thig le bcu drug rnyams su blang ba'i 'khrid yig lag len zung 'jug nyi zla'i thig le zhes bya ba de yang snar thang du mtzad zer ba snang bas / mkhan po 'di nyid yin nam sryam mo / snar thang du glegs bam mched pa yang / 'brom ston ku ma ra nyid kyi thugs la bzhugs pa yi ger bkod par nges so*).

"Teachings for the Sons" (*bu chos*); to this is added an "Additional Chapter" (*kha skong gi le'u*), containing prophecies etc.

We are quite well informed about the 22 sections of the *Bka' gdams bu chos*, which consist of the "Twenty Teachings for Rngog [Legs-pa'i shes-rab]" (*rngog chos nyi shu*) and the "Two Teachings for Khul-ston brtson-'grus]" (*khu chos gnyis*). They have already been described as examples of Buddhist narrative literature dealing with the former lives of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, the narrator being Atiśa himself, who was staying on the mountain Lha-ri snying-po in Yer-pa. These narratives, which are said to have been requested from Atiśa by Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab (11th century) and by Khu-ston Brtson-'grus (1011-1075) themselves, contain not only a great amount of Buddhist dogmatic doctrine, but also numerous teachings concerning political morals of Buddhist rulers. They are thus of special importance for an analysis of the formation of political and religious ideologies in Tibet in the 13th and 14th centuries.⁶

The 26 sections of the *Bka' gdams pha chos* are for the greater part related to a work by Atiśa with the title *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* (*Bodhisattvamañyāvali*) and its commentary in 23 chapters. The number of these chapters matches with the 23 sections of the "Teachings for the Father", the latter term referring to 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas as the person who requested the master for an explanation of these teachings. The commentary is thus an exchange of "questions and answers" (*zhus lan*) between Atiśa and his main Tibetan disciple. Bibliographical data on Atiśa's text and an overview of the different chapters of the commentary are already available, and I will only point out the relation of this text to another work of the famous Buddhist scholar from modern-day Bengal.⁷

⁶ For an overview of the *Bka' gdams bu chos* see SCHUH 1981: 1-23 [=Nos. 1-3]. The same volume also contains an analysis of the four prayers contained in all printed versions of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*, the last one providing details of the way the texts were compiled by Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mshan in Dpal Snar-thang in the year 1302; cf. *ibid.*, 302-305 [=No. 352]. The block print used for this description was the one from Dga'-ldan phun-tshogs gling (17th century).

⁷ For an overview of the contents of the *Bodhisattvamañyāvali* and its commentary see MEISEZAHN 1990: 448-450; the block print for this description was again the one from Dga'-ldan phun-tshogs gling. The cover title for both works is *Jo bo yab sras kyi gsung bgras pha chos rin po che'i gter mdzod byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba rtsa gre'el sogs*; the commentary alone bears the title *Pha chos nyi shu*

An interesting statement in this respect was made by Gtsug-lag phreng-ba (1504-1566), the second Dpa'-bo sprul-sku, in his compendium on the religious history of Tibet:

[The text] *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba*, [which is] the root [of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*], is a condensed version of the words of Jo-bo [Atiśa] by 'Brom[-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas]. And as this [text] and the letter to the king Neyapāla composed by Jo-bo [Atiśa] for the greater part made their appearance as one and the same [work], it is said that this king is of one mind-stream with 'Brom[-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas].⁸

According to this quotation the text of the *Bodhisattvamañyāvali* is typologically similar to an epistle addressed to King Neyapāla, a ruler of the late Pāla dynasty who was a contemporary of Atiśa. To identify this letter according to Tibetan classifications we need to look at a collection of works translated all by Atiśa and his different Tibetan collaborators, and known under the title "The Hundred-and-some Small Teachings of the Lord [Atiśa]" (*jo bo'i chos chung brya rtsa*). This collection was transmitted as a separate teaching tradition, as we can see, for example, from the *Gsan yig* of the Fifth Dalai Lama. It contains both the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* and the letter to King Neyapāla, the latter work bearing the title *Dri ma med pa rin po che'i 'phrin yig* (*Vimalaratnalekha*) and forming the last item in the collection. The works of this collection are listed in the historiographical work of the

rtsa drug las zhus lan gyi dngos gzhir nor bu'i phreng ba le'u nyi shu rtsa gum pa.

⁸ See Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag phreng-ba: *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Peking 1986, 709.21-710.1 (... *rtsa ba byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba ni 'brom gnyis jo bo'i gsung bodus pa yin la 'di dang jo bos nriya (=neya) pa la (=pāla) la 'phrin yig mdzad pa phal cher gcig tu byung bas rgyal po de 'brom dang thugs rgyud gcig pa'o zhes* ...).

⁹ The Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682) identifies the text as a translation by Atiśa himself, and adds in a note that the identification of this work in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* as a version orally transmitted by 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas is somewhat off the mark, contradicting as it does the generally accepted definitions of the "Teachings for the Father" and the "Teachings for the Sons"; see his *Chos kyi thob yig gangā'i chu rgyun*, Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, 1991, vol. 1, 89.4-5 (*byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba jo bo nyid kyi rang bgyur du mdzad pa [lchos rje dpa' bo'i gsan yig na 'di bka' gdams kyi rtsa ba yin pas 'brom gnyis gsungs pa'i phyogs mdzad pa ni cung zad ma dngongs par ngon te pha 'brom ston gnyis zhus nas jo bos gsungs pa la pha chos dang bu khu ringog gnyis zhus nas gsungs par bu chos zhes grags pas sol]).*

Bka'-gdams-pa tradition used as the starting point for the present investigation, the letter to King Neyapāla, written as a privy advice, being classified under the literary genre of *nitiśāstra* (*lugs kyi bstan bcos*).¹⁰

It has been shown that this letter to the king of the Pāla dynasty was put down in writing by Atiśa around 1040 on his journey through Nepal and western Tibet, while the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* was composed at least three years later—which makes the *Dri ma med pa rin po che'i 'phrin yig* the literary model for the central text of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*. We should particularly keep in mind the fact that Gtsug-lag phreng-ba used the typological similarity between the two texts to construe a kind of spiritual identity between 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas and the Indian ruler; in this way the *Bka' gdams pha chos* was open to interpretation in the interest of political and religious ideologies.¹¹

But what are the spiritual practices described in the commentary of the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba*, the sections of which form, together with the root-text, the main teaching of the whole book? If we restrict ourselves to chapters two to five in the long dialogue between Atiśa and 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, we are introduced to the "four gods" (*lha bzhi*), i.e. Buddha Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, Acala and Tārā; among these the Great Compassionate One is called the "God Whose [Religious] Share Is Tibet" (*bod kyi lha skal*). These four divine beings are claimed by Atiśa to be his personal meditative deities (*nga yi lha nyid lha bzhi ste*). In chapter three the question concerning a "selection" ('*dam kha*) of the most effective teachings of the Buddhist doctrine leads to the importance of the "Three Baskets" (*sde snod gsum*), i.e. Vinaya, Sūtra and Abhidharma. One of the statements of Atiśa is that "this selection of the doctrine is the best" (*chos kyi 'dam kha de ni mchog go*). After a presentation

¹⁰ Cf. Chos-'byung II: 377.8-378.1, and Chos-'byung IV: 176.5-7.

¹¹ For the *Jo bo'i chos chung brgya rtsa* as listed by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma in his *Thob yig* see the text (as in note 9), vol. 1, 89.1-101.6, where a critical remark is once again made of Chos-rje Dpa'-bo's position of regarding the two works as one, and the point insisted upon that the "texts" (*dpe*) and their "reading [authorization]" (*lung*) should be kept apart; see *ibid.*, 100.3.5. A comparison of the *Vimālaratnālekha* and the different versions of the *Bodhisattvamañyāvali* in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* and the Bstan-gyur has shown that the version familiar to the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition cannot be considered the original one; see EIMER 1981: 323 ff.

in chapter four of the combination of the four gods and the Three Baskets as a teaching called "sevenfold divine doctrine" (*lha chos bdun ldan*), chapter five elaborates "how one enters into the main part [of the spiritual practice]" (*angos gzhi la 'jug pa*) of this specific teaching.

The actual practice is then described as an emanation of the four divine beings, starting with Buddha Śākyamuni and leading consecutively to Tārā, Avalokiteśvara and Acala in a process of mental creation. Upon the request of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, Atiśa clarifies that the actual iconographical forms of the individual meditation deities are in this case not so important, since this teaching is an "instruction for holding them in the mind" (*sems 'dzin pa'i man ngag*). The whole procedure of spiritual practice is called the "method of contemplating the divine doctrine" (*lha chos kyi bsgom lugs*).¹²

Returning one last time to the classification of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* into scriptural sections, one may note that the three missing sections—to reach the number 26 for the *Bka' gdams pha chos*—are called *Bka' rgya ma*, *Ma 'ongs lung bstan* and *Rdo rje'i glu*.¹³ The first work is again set on the mountain Lha-ri snying-po in Yer-pa, and it is said to have been delivered on the occasion when Atiśa "turned the wheel of the sevenfold divine doctrine" (*lha chos bdun ldan gyi 'khor lo bskor ba*). Given that at the beginning and at the end of this text a stanza from the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* is quoted which corresponds to chapter 16 of the commentary, we can regard the text as a kind of sub-commentary to that particular chapter. The *Rdo rje'i glu* section contains the final instructions of Atiśa to 'Brom-

¹² See *Jo bo yab sras kyi gsung bgras pha chos rin po che'i gter mdzod byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba rtsa 'grel sogs*, Dharamasala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press 1992, 27.2-71.3. This edition of the *Bka' gdams pha chos* is a manuscript version of the Lha-sa block print dating from after 1940. The complete xylograph of this edition of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* was reproduced in Sikkim in the years 1977 to 1990; cf. *Ka-dam Pha-chos*, Part Three, Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology 1980, 629.4-666.3.

¹³ In all block print editions of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* these three sections are grouped together with the two sections *Khu chos gnyis* and the "additional chapter" (*kha skong gi le'u*) of the *Bka' gdams bu chos*; they are then placed at the end of the whole book under the title *Bka' rgya / khu chos gnyis / lung bstan / rdor glu / kha skong rnam*s. The manuscript version of the Lha-sa xylograph (see note 12) presents these works immediately after the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* and its commentary.

ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas—again in the form of questions and answers—and is dated to a “male wood-horse” (*shing pho rta*) year [= 1054]; this is the generally accepted date for the year when Atiśa passed away. The section titled *Ma 'ongs lung bstan*, finally, is devoted to different prophecies, mentioning for example the three main disciples of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas as incarnations of the protectors of the three tantric families. Concerning the foundations of monasteries of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition, one such institution in the province Gtsang is mentioned, obviously with reference to Dpal Snar-thang, and we also hear of the future establishment of Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa.

III. THE TRANSMISSION OF THE THIG-LE BCU-DRUG

In the later historiographical works of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition the three disciples of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, known as the “Three Brothers”, are associated with three different teaching lineages. The lineage going back to Sgyan-snga-pa is called *Bka' gdams ngag pa* in these works, while the one deriving from Po-to-ba bears the name *Bka' gdams gzlung pa*. The teachings of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* are associated with the person of Phu-chung-ba, this tradition being classified in the works of the 15th century as a “secret teaching” (*gsang chos*).

That Phu-chung-ba occupies a special position within this group, which is sometimes enlarged by a fourth brother, Kham-pa lung-pa Śākya Yon-tan (1025-1115), is reflected in the earlier historical literature. Let me quote, for example, from the work of Myang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer (1136-1204) on the history of the Buddhist doctrine in Tibet:

Among the [spiritual] sons of Jo-bo [Atiśa], the oldest [is] Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, the teacher from the 'Brom [family]. His disciples [are] the precious “Three Brothers” and others. [Concerning] Dge-bshes Phu-chung-ba: not relying on disciples, [who are like] sons, he only performed his religious practice. From Po-to-ba and Sgyan-snga Rin-chen, [these] two, [further] disciples, [who are like] sons, arose individually; they are known as the “followers of the authoritative scriptures” and the “followers of the instructions”, [these] two.¹⁴

¹⁴ See *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcaud*, Lhasa 1988. (Gangs can rig mdzod. 4), 469.13-17 (*jo bo sraskyi thu bo 'brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung*

In order to assess the development of the teaching lineage associated with Phu-chung-ba, I want to return now to the text *Glegs bam gyi chos 'byung* of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, which we have already identified as the most promising literary source for information on the different teachers who transmitted the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*. Attention should be paid foremost to the circumstances under which the book made its appearance and how Avalokiteśvara teachings are described in it.

In the introductory verses the “precious lineage of the seven[fold] divine doctrine” (*lha chos bdun gyi brgyud pa rin po che*) is brought into a connection with the “seven precious beings” (*skyes bu rin chen bdun*), namely the following persons: 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas - Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab - Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan - Phu-chung-ba - Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan - Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan - Stabs-ka-ba Byang-chub bzang-po. We can thus differentiate between an early transmission, up to Phu-chung-ba, and a later transmission, from him to a person whose name shows his connection with the already-mentioned Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa. These two transmissions I shall call the “legendary” one and the “local” one.

The early—or legendary—transmission centres on two persons: Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab, a personal disciple of Atiśa and founder of Gsang-phu Sne'u-thog college, and Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, a native of western Tibet, who is said to have also studied with the Indian master. Rather than go into the details of the extensive narrative of how the “kalyāṇamitra from Gsang-phu [Sne'u-thog]” (*bshes gnyen gsang phu ba*) received this special teaching, I simply note that Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab set down the latter teaching for the first time in the form of a “book” (*glegs bam*). The transmission of the teaching to

gnas / de'i slob ma rin po che sku mched gsum la sogs so / dge bshes blo chung {phul chung} (=phu chung) pas slob bu ma bsten par sgrub pa kho na mdzad do / {po} to ba dang / sgyan snga rin chen gnyis las / slob bu so sor byung ba la / bka' gdams gzlung pa dang / man ngag pa gnyis su grags so. The same characterization of Phu-chung-ba can still be found in the 14th century; see Śākya Rin-chen sde: *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung*, Lhasa 1988, 98.5-10. For the change in the presentation of Phu-chung-ba as a holder of a specific teaching lineage in the 15th century—and the chapter devoted exclusively to him and the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*—see Chos-'byung III: vol. 2, 183.1-251.5. For the term dge-bshes as a title of Bka'-gdams-pa teachers like 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, see TARAB TULKU 2000: 18.

Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan is described thus: "Now, the way the book was transmitted from his [i.e. Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab's] hand" (*da de'i phyag nas glegs bam ji ltar bgyud pa'i tshul*). In the account concerning Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan it is stated that Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab handed over to his disciple this "[miraculously] manifested book" (*sprul pa'i glegs bam*) and soon afterwards conferred upon him initiation into the maṇḍala of the Sixteen Spheres. The same account also gives details of the personal encounter between Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan and Phu-chung-ba during which the book was passed on to the disciple of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas.¹⁵

The longest section in the text of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan concerns events dealing with Phu-chung-ba's special status as transmitter of the sevenfold divine doctrine. The four meditative deities of Atiśa are several times referred to, and we find an interesting classification of the "four gods" in terms of whom they should be entrusted to. As this discussion of different "entrustments" (*bka' babs*) follows immediately upon an enquiry into the nature of Atiśa's teaching lineages of "authoritative scripture" and "instruction", and as Po-to-ba and Spyān-snga-pa figure quite prominently in this section, I would see the document as mainly being concerned with establishing a teaching lineage of Phu-chung-ba along its own lines. This can be dated around the 12th and 13th century, given that one comes upon the name of Skyer-sgang-pa (1154-1217) as one of the teachers who were entrusted with the spiritual practice of the Great Compassionate One. In this section Phu-chung-ba is credited with not differing from his teacher 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas (who at one point takes the form of the Śaṅkara formula *Om maṇi padme hūṃ*). Manifesting himself as Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇa, Phu-chung-ba delivers a pro-

¹⁵ For Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab see Chos-'byung I: 314.14-336.20, and for Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan *ibid.*, 336.21-352.9; the authorship of the second section is ascribed to Phu-chung-ba. In the historiographical work of Bsod-nams lha'i dbang-po the transmission of the *Bka' gdam glegs bam* is treated, accordingly, in the context of the teaching lineages of Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab. These lineages are divided into one extending to his nephew Rngog Lo-tā-ba Blo-lan shes-rab (1059-1109) and another to Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan; see Chos-'byung II: 362.4-366.6 & 366.4-368.4, and Chos-'byung IV: 160.8-164.9 & 164.9-166.12.

phesy concerning the next holder of the teaching lineage.¹⁶

The disciple of Phu-chung-ba was born in the valley of Klungs-shod and in his young years met the Bka'-gdams-pa teacher Sne'u zur-pa (1042-1118). In his later life he studied many years under Zhang Karma-pa (1057-1131) from the same tradition, and was ordained by the latter. The name he received on that occasion was Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan. The section treating his person represents a quite long interpolation on the "book [containing] the vast number of pronouncements of the Buddha in their entirety" (*sangs rgyas kyi bka' rab 'byams thams cad kyi glegs bam*), while also containing dialogues of the "Three Brothers" about this special scripture. At one point the latter is even taken out of a small wooden box and displayed before the eyes of the excited observers: "The [miraculously] manifested teaching" (*sprul pa'i chos*) is identified as the text *Zhus lan nor bu'i phreng ba*, i.e. *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba*, and called a "great treasure script" (*gter yig chen mo*). Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan, according to the narrative, is able to acquire this special book only after six months spent mastering the propitiation of Avalokiteśvara; only then does he meet Phu-chung-ba and obtain from him the initiation into the maṇḍala of the Sixteen Spheres. This happened at a site known as Rts[va] Sgyer-mo, its actual name being Phug-rings.¹⁷

Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan followed his spiritual practices not only at this site, but also travelled extensively, reaching western Tibet and Nepal. During a stay in Rva-sgreng he met his future disciple Zhangston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan. The latter had arrived there as a member of the entourage of Dar-ma grags (1103-1174), a master holding the

¹⁶ For the section on Phu-chung-ba see Chos-'byung I: 352.10-396.15 (supposedly written by Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan). The classification of the "four gods" according to whom they should be entrusted to can be found *ibid.*, 360.1-20. This is the literary source for the treatment of the same subject in the historiographical works of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition; see Chos-'byung II: 367.4-6, and Chos-'byung IV: 165.13-16 (*lha bzhi ni rab tu byung ba'i cha nas śākya thub pa / tshad med pa bzhi la dge sbyor byed pa'i cha nas thugs rje chen po / 'gro don byed pa'i cha nas rje btsun ma sgröl ma / gnyen po bsten pa'i cha nas mi g.yo ba*).

¹⁷ This rough résumé of the life of Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan is again based on Chos-'byung I; see *ibid.*, 396.16-438.9. The section is supposed to be in Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan's own words. For the interpolation of the episode concerning the "Three Brothers", their dialogues and the revealing of the book see *ibid.*, 400.2-431.15. The number of pages is said to have been 672 (*drug brgya bdun cu rtsa gnyis shog bu'i tshad*).

teaching lineage of the Bka'-gdams gzhung-pa through Shar-ba-pa Yon-tan grags (1070-1141). Dar-ma grags is known to have been the founder of Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa in the Mal-gro valley, and it was at this monastery that Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan gave teachings to a great number of monks from Dbus and Gtsang shortly before the death of Dar-ma grags in the year 1174. Afterwards Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan followed Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan to various sites, including Phug-rings, where he received the transmission of the *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba*. Among further episodes in the life of Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan I highlight only his visit to the 'Phrul-snang temple in Lha-sa, where he paid reverence to the statue of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. After the icon proceeded to manifest the forms of Avalokiteśvara with four and two arms, dialogues took place between Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan and the Great Compassionate One, during which the former is identified as an incarnation of the king Lha bla-ma Ye-shes 'od (947-1024); it is prophesied that Byang-chub bzang-po, a person again born in the valley of Klungs-shod to the north of the Mal-gro valley, will be his disciple.¹⁸

With Stabs-ka-ba Byang-chub bzang-po we have reached the last member of what I have called above the later "local" transmission. He was born into the "Brom family" (*'brom gyi mi bryuud*), and the place where he received the transmission of the book and the maṇḍala of the Sixteen Spheres from his teacher was again Phug-rings; this site is described by later authors as the "birthplace of the precious 'Bromston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas]" (*'brom rin po che'i khrungs yul*). After studying nine years with Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan, and upon the death of his teacher, Byang-chub bzang-po went to Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa and pursued there his spiritual practice of the Great Compassionate One.

According to the colophon of the *Glegs bam gyi chos 'byung*, the introductory verses with the list of the "seven precious beings" mentioned above came from the pen of a certain Slob-dpon Nam-mkha'

18 See Chos-'byung I: 438.10-456.15. The dialogues between the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara and Zhang-ston Dar-ma rgyal-mtshan refer to the hiding of "treasure scripts" (*gter yig*) in pillars of the 'Phrul-snang temple. It should be remembered that the literary cycles of the Avalokiteśvara teachings of the Ruying-ma-pa tradition made their appearance in the central temple of Lha-sa in the 12th and 13th centuries; see EHRHARD 2000: 207-208 & 210 (Appendix D).

rin-chen, who is also known under the name Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen, having been the disciple of Stabs-ka-ba Byang-chub bzang-po. With him we enter now that phase in the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* and its teachings when these were no longer restricted to a single person—we can thus speak of a broadened transmission.

The details of the life of Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen are said to have been written down by him personally. The first thing we note is that he too was born into the 'Brom family. After receiving the initiation into the maṇḍala of the Sixteen Spheres, he travelled with his teacher to different secluded spots—for example to the "Fortress of Nepal" (*bal po'i rdzong*), where a temple of Atiśa was located (due to the great heat they were only able to stay for a period of half a month there). For fifteen years, up to the age of 45, Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen remained in the company of his teacher; after that—like Stabs-ka-ba Byang-chub bzang-po—he moved to Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa and spent the rest of his days there. Among the highlighted activities was his continuously preaching to worthy disciples the "profound meanings of the precious book" (*glegs bam rin po che'i zab don rnam*). There are several dates given in the account of his life, enough to propose for Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen's lifetime the years 1214-1286.¹⁹

This leaves us with the final part of the text on the transmission of the "sevenfold divine doctrine", written by the ninth abbot of Dpal Snar-thang and dealing with the life of his own teacher 'Brom Kumāramati. This master is another member of the family of 'Bromston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas. At the age of seven he met Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen in Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa and received from him the read-

19 For Byang-chub bzang-po see Chos-'byung I: 456.18-471.15 and for Nam-mkha' rin-chen 471.16-488.16; both narratives are ascribed to Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen. The history of the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* in later historiographical works is based on the text used by us here; compare the account in Chos-'byung III: vol. 2, 192.3-242.5. The 15th-century author opens this chapter with a quotation from Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen according to which the latter was the only holder of the transmission at his time; see *ibid.*, 192.3-4 (*slob dpon nam rin gyi zhal nas / yongs su rdzogs pa gzhon nu rgyal mtshan ni / phal cher 'dzin pa tshul khrims 'bar du gda' / phyogs tsam gsal bar rin chen gsal ba yin / ding sang du na kho bo nyid du zad / byang chub bzang po'i thugs dngos rdzogs gyur cig*). For this quotation and the interlinear commentary (identifying the persons in the first three lines as the "Three Brothers") see Chos-'byung I: 302.11-15.

ing authorization of the work *Byang chub sens dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba*, which he learned by heart at the age of fifteen (this date corresponds to the year 1285). Already before, in 1282, he had received first ordinations in Dpal Snar-thang under Mchims Nam-mkha' grags (1210-1285), the seventh abbot. After further studies he finally settled down in Dpal Snar-thang in the year 1294, spreading the teaching lineage of his family tradition according to the wishes of his preceptor.

We may pause over the fact that 'Brom Kumāramati learned the whole scripture by heart; as stated above, it was Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan who set down in writing what his own teacher had kept stored in his mind. Later authors, such as Yongs-'dzin Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan (1713-1793), assert that it was the special kindness of 'Brom Kumāramati, sometimes regarded as an incarnation of his ancestor 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, which made possible the appearance of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* as a collection of texts. It was thus a specific oral transmission of the teachings which led to the first manuscript version in Dpal Snar-thang in the year 1302. This change from an oral culture to one depending on manuscripts is signaled by the disappearance of the "[miraculously] manifested book" of Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab. One has the impression that this work, said to have been set down by its author in writing despite the reservations of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas, takes on, in the long narratives of the early and later transmission, the function of a sacred authorization of this specific teaching lineage. It seems that up to the end of the 13th century this lineage had spread only among a limited group of persons: for the most part, the Bka'-gdams-pa monastery of Stabs-ka and members of the 'Brom family, the birthplace of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas being a favourite spot for spiritual practices in the initial phase.²⁰ Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen, the master who finally started to make this lineage's teachings available to a greater

²⁰ The residence of Phu-chung-ba in the 'Phan-yul region was also located in the immediate vicinity of one of the sites where Dar-ma grags, the founder of Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa had stayed. This at least is what the pilgrimage guide book written by Brag-gdon Sprul-sku 'Jam-dbyangs bstan-pa rgya-mtsho (1824-1906) claims; see *Dbus gtsang gi gnas bskor byed tshul rag bsadud tcam zhig brjod pa mi brjed dran pa'i gsal 'debs gzur gnas mkhas pa'i rna rgyan*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Acc. No. 11013, fol. 4a/2-3 (*de nas 'phan yul gyi yul (=yung) lnga zhes pa'i phur / phu chung ba'i gdan sa phu chung dang / stabs ka ba'i gdan sa khra phu zhes pa yod*).

public, is also regarded as the one responsible for the disappearance of the mysterious book, which he is said to have inserted into the *Skz-bum*, the great caitya, at Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa.²¹

Although the maṇḍala of the Sixteen Spheres occupies a central position within this transmission, from Rngog Legs-pa'i shes-rab onwards, the text concerning the history of the *Lha chos bdun ldan* does not give any detailed information on the actual form of these spheres. We can only suggest that the four meditative deities of Atiśa formed the basis or substratum of this specific spiritual practice. As already noted above, we are dependent on the particular work of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan belonging to the literary genre of "instruction text" (*khrid yig*). The actual process of the unfolding of the Sixteen Spheres is contained in the "Main Part" (*ngos gzhi*) of the text and we find in this scenario of manifesting and dissolving light-circles, next to divinities like Prajñāpāramitā, also the Indian Buddhist masters Maitreya-nātha and Nāgārjuna, whose teaching lineages play an important role in the Bka'-gdams-pa school. The central deity is the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, who figures as the first and the seventh *thig le*; the iconographical form of the Great Compassionate One with two arms is also represented two times, namely as the third and fourth *thig le*.

In order to gain a visual impression of the arrangement of the different spheres as a tradition idealizing Atiśa and 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas as divine beings, I present a scroll painting of the *Thig-le bcu-drug* in an appendix. This painting is based on the instruction text of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, the captions of the Sixteen

²¹ For the life of 'Brom Kumāramati see the final part of Chos-'byung I: 488.17-495.11. On the role of Stabs-ka-ba Nam-mkha' rin-chen in making the teachings public and the special role of 'Brom[ston] Kumāramati as the one whose powers of memory tapped the "original [manuscript] copy" (*ma phyi*) of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*, see Yongs-'dzin Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan: *Lam rim bla ma bryud pa'i rnam thar*, Lhasa, 1990, 918.16-919.2. Like the other historiographical works, this text contains the episode on the insertion of the book into the *Skz-bum* at Stabs-ka'i dgon-pa; see *ibid.*, 910.24-25 (*bka' gdams sprul pa'i glegs bam chen mo ni slob dpon nam mkha' rin chen gyis stabs ka'i mchod rien gyi nang du bzugs su gsol zhes 'byung ngo*). Concerning the traditional view that 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas had reservations about putting down the teachings into written form—something that had to wait for his reincarnation 'Brom[ston] Kumāramati, see BOUSSEMART 1999: 218-219.

Spheres corresponding exactly to this work. We can find a seventeenth *thig le* added to this set, showing the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho. The painting thus belongs to the "close transmission" (*nye brgyud*) of this teaching lineage, which the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma had received in a vision of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas in the year 1652. In that year the worldly and spiritual ruler of Tibet set out from 'Bras-spungs monastery on a journey to China and the first episode along the way described in the account of his visionary experiences concerns his encounter with 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas. This happened at Rts[iv]a Sgyer-mo (or Phug-rings), the birthplace of Atiśa's most important disciple, and the site where the later or "local" transmission of the teachings of the *Bka'* *gdams glegs bam* had taken place.²²

IV. THE OLDEST BLOCK PRINT OF THE

BKA' GDAMS GLEGS BAM

The further transmission of Phu-chung-ba's teaching lineage after its codification in the form of a manuscript is quite well documented in the historiographical works of the 15th century. After Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan the following line of teachers is given in these works: Rin-chen byang-chub - Rigs-kyi bdag-po'i dpal - Byang-chub dpal - Bla-ma Bsod-nams 'od-zer - Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas bzang-po - Bya-bral-ba Bsod-nams bzang-po - U-yug-pa Bla-ma Dpal-'byor. The last person passed the tradition on to a certain Chos-rje Seng-ge rgyal-mtshan, who was for some time the abbot of Stag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang in Gtsang province. Of him we know that he saved the

²² The captions of the individual spheres as reproduced on the painting should be compared with *Nyams len snying gi thig le'i gsal byed zung jug nyi zla'i thig le*, Pha-chos 1994: 533.4-555.20. Among the later works concerning the rituals related to the Sixteen Spheres and its mandala I shall only refer to three works of Yongs-'dzin Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan: *Bka' gdams thig le bcu drug gi ngag 'don*, 28 fols., *Bka' gdams lha chos balun idan gyi man ngag*, 42 fols., and *Bka' gdams thig le bcu drug gi dkyil chog bka' gdams gsal byed*, 100 fols.; the first two works are contained in vol. da, and the third one in vol. isa of his writings. For the visit of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma to Rts[iv]a Sgyer-mo at the age of 36 years and his vision of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas see KARMAI 1988: 34-35. Cf. *Gsang ba'i nam thar rgya can ma: A Record of the Visionary Experiences of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho*, Leh: S.W. Tashigangpa 1972. (Smanrtsis Shesrig Spenzdod. 42), 23.5-25.1.

teachings centring on the text *Byang chub sems dpa' nor bu'i phreng ba* from being nearly extinguished. The merit gained in preserving the "lineage of the [sevenfold] divine doctrine" (*lha chos kyi brgyud*) earned Chos-rje Seng-ge rgyal-mtshan recognition for being a reincarnation of 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i 'byung-gnas. From him the tradition reached the "translator" (*skad gnyis smra ba*) Thugs-rje dpal (14th/15th century) and then Rje Dge-'dun grub (1391-1451), who later became known as the First Dalai Bla-ma.²³

The *Gsan yig* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma shows the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* passing through the same lineage up until it branches off after Bya-bral-ba Bsod-nams bzang-po. From there it goes on to one Bla-ma Dpal-idan-pa and then to Nam-mkha' 'od-zer, an otherwise unknown person who also bears the name Stag-tshang Chos-'khor-ba Mkhan-chen. In either case we see that the monastery of Stag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang played an important role in keeping this special *Bka' gdams-pa* teaching alive in the 15th century. After two further teachers this transmission is vouchsafed to Gnyug-la Pan-chen Ngag-dbang grags-pa (1458-1515), another important link in the further spread of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*.²⁴

There exists a short biographical sketch of this master from Gnyug-la or Smyug-la in the province of Dbus, and it tells us that he not only

²³ This is the line of transmission recorded by Las-chen Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, who had received it from Rje Dge-'dun grub; see Chos-'byung III: vol. 2, 248.6-250.4. Concerning Chos-rje Seng-ge rgyal-mtshan it is stated that in the later part of his life he held the seat of the monastery Stag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang; for the foundation of this monastery in Gsang by Lo-chen Skyabs-mchog dpal bzang-po see *ibid.*, 181.5. The same line of transmission up to Rje Dge-'dun grub can also be found in the historiographical work of Pan-chen Bsod-nams grags-pa (1478-1554), written in 1529: *Bka' gdams gsal rnying gi chos 'byung yid kyi mdzes rgyan* in "Two Histories of the *Bka' gdams-pa Tradition*", Gangtok & Delhi: Gonpo Tseten, 1977, 35.1-2. Pan-chen Bsod-nams grags-pa, the 15th throne-holder of Dga'-ldan, was a disciple of Las-chen Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan.

²⁴ For the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* in the record of teachings received by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma see the text (as in note 9), vol. 2, 88.4-95.1. Further lineages include the one passing through Bsod-nams lha'i dbang-po, who was also a teacher of Gnyug-la Pan-chen Ngag-dbang grags-pa; see, for example, the two transmissions of the *Bka' gdams lha bzhi* in the chapter on the Kriyāntara in the same text of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma: vol. 1, 221.6-222.6, and 222.6-226.2. Cf. also the lineages of the transmission of the *Bka' gdams lha bzhi* and the *Thig le bcu drug* as part of the collection of the "[More than] One Hundred Instructions" (*khrid bgya*) of Jo-nang Kun-dga' grol-mchog (1507-1566) in vol. 2, 283.1-3, and 284.1-4.

"held the true system of the Bka'-gdams[-pa tradition]" (*bka' gdams kyi srol dngos 'dzin*), but was also regarded as a reincarnation of Sgyan-snga-pa, one of the "Three Brothers". It is said that Ngag-dbang grags-pa had made the promise to give the teachings of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* and the empowerment of the *Thig-le bcu-drug* every year, and that these teachings had been followed by auspicious signs—rains of flowers and so forth. We have at least one eyewitness account of this hagiographical episode, which shows the importance of Gnyug-la Pañ-chen for the popularization of this teaching lineage at the beginning of the 16th century.²⁵

The residence of Ngag-dbang grags-pa in Gnyug-la or Smyug-la was called g. Yul-rgyal rdzong. This is the same place in the province of Dbus that brought forth the manuscript copy of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* on the basis of which the first xylograph edition of the collection of texts was produced. A pair of brothers, known to be nephews of Gnyug-la Pañ-chen, provided the copy. Although this fact is known from earlier research, the date of the printing project was thought to be in the years 1478 and 1479. As the biography of the person behind the project is now available, we can correct the dates and shift them one sixty-year-cycle forward to the period between the years 1538 and 1539. I have dealt with this oldest block print of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* elsewhere, and here merely reproduce a passage from the biography of the Bo-dong-pa scholar Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan (1484-1549) describing the events immediately after the manuscript copy arrived from Central Tibet:

²⁵ The biographical sketch of Gnyug-la Pañ-chen is contained in *Sgrub brgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che 'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla shel gyi phreng ba*, written by Si-tu Pañ-chen Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas and completed by his disciple 'Be-lo Tshé-dbang kun-khyab in the year 1775, New Delhi: D. Gyal-tsan and K. Legshay, 1972, vol. 1, 648.3-649.3; see especially 648.6-7 (*bka' gdams glegs bam kyang lo re la lan re gñang ba 'i dam bca' mdzad*). The eyewitness account of this event can be found in the biography of the 'Ba'-ra-ba Bka'-brgyud-pa master Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan (1475-1530); see *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sprul sku nam mkha' rgyal mshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa / dgos 'dod kun 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, NGMPP reel-no. L 18/14, fol. 18a5-b1 & fol. 19a3-5 (... *zab chos bsam gyis mi khyab pa gzan / bka' gdams glegs bam gñang ba'i dus su / me tog gi char dang / dri bzang rgyun mi 'chad pa yong gin dag pas / dam 'di nyid ngon po sgyan nas gñags kyi sprul pa yin nges snyam nas / mi phyed dad pa thob / sge sgyor la bogs thon zhing / khyad par snying tje la bogs chen po byung gang*).

The steward [Nam-mkha' dkon-mchog] and close friends brought the original copy of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* from Dbus [and] Gtsang on the twenty-fifth day of the month of December [in the year 1537] after the Precious One [=Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan] had taken up residence in [the palace of] Rdzong-dkar. They arrived safely.

As at that time the official Kun-spangs don-grub from G.yul-rgyal rdzong offered [to Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan] a silk scroll painting of the White Tārā, [the latter] was especially pleased, and consecrated it, [on which occasion] he said: "It has happened that Bhaṭṭārīkā Tārā from among the four gods of the Bka'-gdams[-pa tradition] has arrived [in person]. It is an opportune favour [and] an auspicious sign that the printing of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* will be completed [in time]." Wherever he went [later], he [always] carried this sacred object in his hands.²⁶

The palace of Rdzong-dkar in this quotation refers to the residence of the kings of Mang-yul Gung-thang. In the 16th century their domain offered good conditions for producing block print editions of what one might call "Buddhist Classics." A final point I want to make concerning the printing colophon of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* is that we find, among the sponsors of the undertaking, representatives of the teaching lineage of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition going back to Nag-tsho Lo-chen Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba (b. 1011). This translator brought Atiśa from the Indian plains via Mang-yul Gung-thang to Tibet and stayed many years in the company of the master. Nag-tsho Lo-chen was a native of this kingdom bordering on Nepal, while another person contributing to the production of the printing blocks of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* came from Yang-thog, the former residence of Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba.

²⁶ See *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa nyam med chos dbang rgyal mshan gyi rnam par thar pa / rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba*, NGMPP reel-no. L 66/5 [= L 389/13-390/1], fol. 90b/3-6 (rgyal zla'i nyer lnga la / gsol dpon grogs mched kyi dbus gñang nas / bka' gdams kyi phyi mo sgyan drangs nas / rin po che pa (sic) rdzong dkar na bzhuṅgs ring la nye zho med par 'khor re / de dus g.yul rgyal rdzong pa nang so kun spangs don grub gyis / tje bsun ma sgrol ma dkar mo'i gos thang gcig phul bas / lhaṅ par dges shing rab gnas mdzad cing / bka' gdams lha bhi'i ngang nas tje bsun ma sgrol ma phebs byung / thugs tje myur / bka' gdams glegs bam gyi spar 'grub pa'i rien 'brel yin gñang / sku de gang phebs su snoms phebs par mdzad do). The first attempt to date this print was made by SCHUH 1981a: 353-355. For the four different print editions of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* (not including the print from Sde-dge) see EIMER 1977: 72-96. On the life of Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan see EHRHARD (in press).

V. CONCLUSIONS

The change from a manuscript culture to a block print culture in the transmission of the *Thig-le bcu-drug* and the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* occurred in a geographical area in which originated not only the writings concerning the biographical tradition of Atiśa, but also a particular lineage of his Avalokiteśvara teachings. In the later historiographical writings of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition, this teaching lineage is known as the "Transmission of the Pronouncements of Nag-tsho [Lo-chen]" (*nag tsho'i bka' brgyud*). The origin of the biographical tradition—and the role played by Lag-sor-pa (or Phyang-sor-pa) in going to Yang-thog in Mang-yul Gung-thang in order to solicit from Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba the life-story of Atiśa—has already been dealt with in earlier research.²⁷ It should be added that the transmission of Mahākaruṇika-Śaḍakṣara teachings which Atiśa had received from his teacher Rāhulaguptavajra also ran through Nag-tsho Lo-chen and his disciple Lag-sor-pa, the special feature of this lineage being that all its members encountered the Great Compassionate One face to face.

After Lag-sor-pa the lineage was continued by Bya 'Dul-ba 'dzin-pa (1100-1174), also called Dge-bshes Zul-phu-ba, the author of the biography of Atiśa known as *Rnam thar rgyas pa*. He in turn gave these special teachings to 'Phags-pa Lce-sgom-pa and Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan. 'Phags-pa Lce-sgom-pa has received some attention recently, so there is reason to come back to Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, whom we have met already as a key figure in the early transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*, and as a teacher of Phu-chung-ba. We thus have a chronological problem with his being a contemporary of Lce-sgom-pa (ca. 1140/50-1220). As already pointed out, information disseminated concerning Phu-chung-ba can be seen as an attempt to construct an independent teaching lineage in the 12th and 13th centuries, and I would regard the inclusion of Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan in the early—or legendary—transmission of the book of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition as part of this attempt. Both 'Phags-pa

²⁷ For Lag-sor-pa as initiator of the biographical tradition of Atiśa see EIMER 1982: 41-51.

Lce-sgom-pa and Mnga'-ris-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan transmitted the instructions of the "Transmission of the Pronouncements of Nag-tsho [Lo-chen]" to the "mahāsiddha" (*grub thob chen po*) Skyer-sgang-pa, who had already played a role in the account of Phu-chung-ba's special status as transmitter of the sevenfold divine doctrine.²⁸

I come back now to the incarnation status of the Bka'-gdams-pa masters Po-to-ba, Phu-chung-ba and Spyang-snga-pa, and their identification respectively with the Avalokiteśvara icons Ārya Va-ti bzang-po, Ārya 'Ja'-ma-li and Ārya 'Bu-khang. From the 12th century onwards the cult of these statues, like the one for the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara in the 'Phrul-snang temple in Lha-sa, gradually became quite popular in south-western and Central Tibet. As the three statues of Padmapāṇi Lokēśvara were located either in Mang-yul Gung-thang or Nepal, they eventually became known to early members of the teaching lineage of Nag-tsho Lo-chen Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba, who transmitted the biographical tradition of Atiśa and a particular spiritual practice of the Great Compassionate One. Such identification of Avalokiteśvara icons with Bka'-gdams-pa masters, at a time when Phu-chung-ba's status was being raised to an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, can only be explained in the context of an oral tradition.²⁹ It was probably spread by travellers who visited the three statues in Mang-yul Gung-thang and in Nepal, whence it found its way into the biographical writings of Atiśa, supplementing the role of the "Three Brothers" as embodiments of the protectors of the three tantric families known from the *Ma 'ongs lun bstan* section of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*.

²⁸ The transmission history of the *Nag tsho'i bka' brgyud* is again to be found in Chos-'byung III: vol. 2, 390.4 ff.; for the Mahākaruṇika-Śaḍakṣara lineage see *ibid.*, 397.3 ff. A treatment of 'Phags-pa Lce-sgom-pa was recently undertaken by SØRENSEN 1999; for the contacts of the siddha with Skyer-sgang-pa see especially pp. 193-194. The lineage of Skyer-sgang-pa was later absorbed into the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa tradition and was known as one of the "Four Families of Direct Instruction [on the Practice of Mahākaruṇika]" (*dmar thrid rigs bzhi*); see EHRHARD (as in note 18, 199).

²⁹ The statue of the Ārya Va-ti bzang-po, the so-called "Lord of [Mang-yul] Skyid-grong" (*skyid grong jo bo*), occupies a central position in prophecies concerning the spiritual identity of Byang-sems Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan (11/12th cent.). The latter transmitted Avalokiteśvara teachings of Bhikṣuṃi Lakṣmī[karā] which passed through Atiśa as well; see Chos-'byung III: vol. 2, 328.3-333.1. The teaching lineages of Byang-sems Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan and Bhikṣuṃi Lakṣmī[karā] are counted as two doctrinal systems when subsumed under the "Four Families of Direct Instructions [on the Practice of Mahākaruṇika]".

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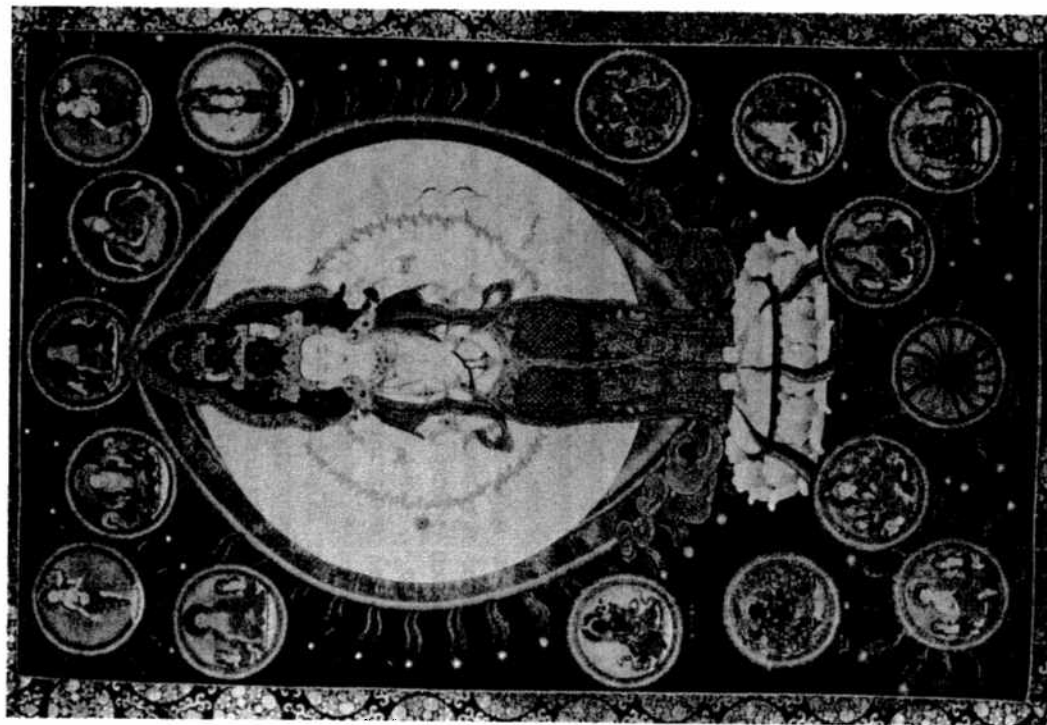
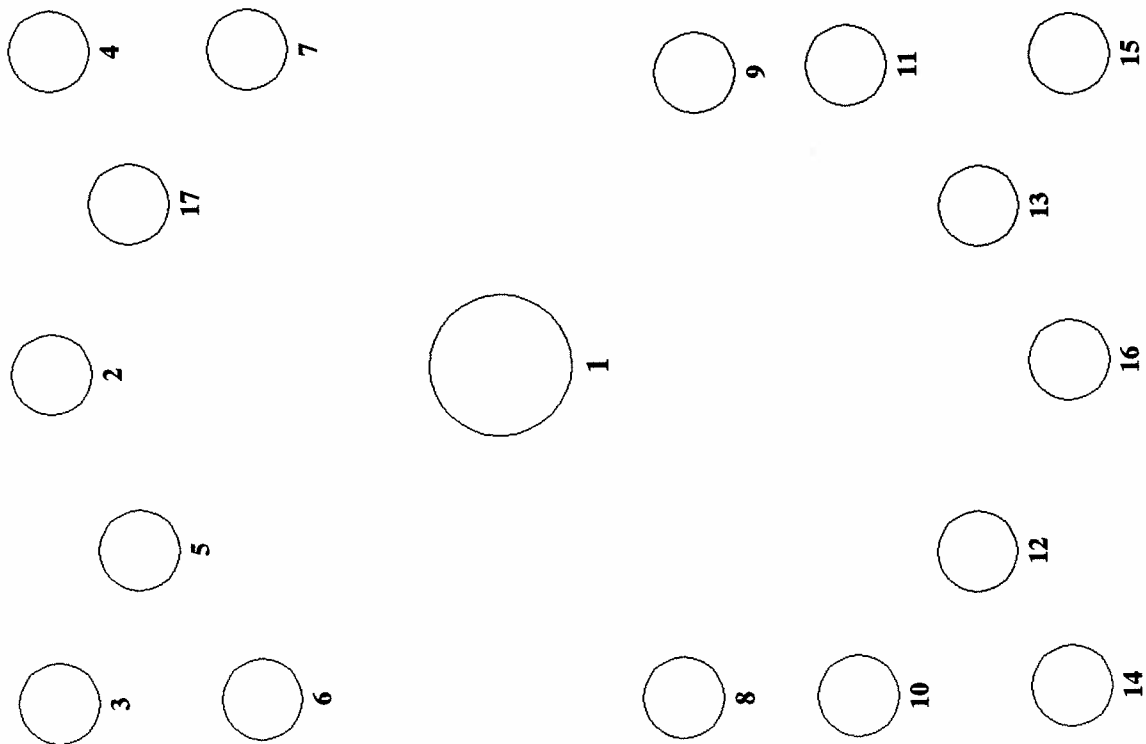
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APPENDIX

The scroll painting of the Sixteen Spheres reproduced here is from the volume *Bod kyi thang ka*, Peking: Rig-dngos dpe-skrun khang, 1984, no. 98. In the description on p. 173 of the volume it is said that the painting is located in the Potala palace. The caption of the seventeenth *thig le* reads "Thams cad mkhyen pa ngag dhang blo bzang rgya msho la namaḥ". The central deity's caption has also this formula of veneration, while all other captions simply give the name of the *thig le* in question as found in the "instruction text" of Mkhan-chen Nyi-ma rgyal-mshan. The numbering of the spheres and the wording of the legends in the following list is according to this text:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Phyi'i bkod pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa</i>
[=Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara] | 5. <i>Yum sher phyin</i>
[=Prajñāpāramitā] |
| 2. <i>Mi nyed kyi bkod pa</i>
[=Buddha Śākyamuni] | 6. <i>De'i sras thub pa</i>
[=Buddha Śākyamuni] |
| 3. <i>Bod kham</i>
[=Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara] | 7. <i>De'i sras snying rje chen po</i>
[=Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara] |
| 4. <i>Gnas khang dang bris pa dkyil 'khor</i>
[=Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara] | 8. <i>De dag gi ye shes sgrol ma</i>
[=Tārā] |
| | 9. <i>De nyid khros pa</i>
[=Ugratārā] |



10. *De mams kyi rang bzhi mi*
 g.yo ba [=Acala]
 11. *Thams cad kyi ngo bo a ti sha*
 [=Atiśa Dipamkaraśrījñāna]
 12. *Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas*
 [= 'Brom-ston]
 13. *Rgya chen spyod pa*
 [=Maitreyanātha]

14. *Zab mo lta ba*
 [=Nāgārjuna]
 15. *Nyams len byin rlabs*
 [=Vajradhara]
 16. *Byang chub chen po*
 [=Bodhicitta]

ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE TIBETAN KANJUR*

HELMUT EIMER (BONN / GERMANY)

The basic, unspecific meaning of the Tibetan word "Kanjur" (*bka' 'gyur*) is "translation of the authoritative word". This means that in general it can be applied to any collection of canonical Buddhist texts. In the following considerations, however, the term will be used in a narrower sense, viz. to designate those blockprints and manuscript editions of authoritative Buddhist texts which were most widely spread in Tibet and may therefore be regarded as belonging to the "mainstream tradition".¹ These standard versions of the Kanjur usually comprise between 750 and 1200 texts,² which, quite understandably, made it necessary at an early stage to establish an order for their arrangement. Other religions, too, established principles of order for their holy scriptures, thus the Koran (*Qur'ān*) is structured according to the length of its individual texts, the more extensive Suras—with only one exception—preceding the shorter ones. In the original Mosaic canon, on the other hand, the texts are arranged according to their importance: the law obligatory for all (*Torāh*) is followed first by the prophetic books (*Nebi'im*), and then by the further scriptures (*Ketuvim*).³ In the Pāli Tipiṭaka (Sanskrit: Tripiṭaka), the canon of the Theravāda Buddhism, these two organizing principles occur in combination: the order of its main parts, i.e. the divisions Vinaya "monastic discipline", Sutta (Sanskrit: Sūtra) "word of the Buddha" and

* The present paper was kindly rendered into English by Dagmar Benner M.A. and Susanne Kammüller M.A.; Philipp A. Maas M.A. made a number of valuable additions to the preliminary version. For all this help I offer my sincerest thanks.

¹ In an earlier paper the expression "vulgate" (EIMER 1994: 230) was used instead. Apart from this transmission some other manuscripts are extant that were only of local importance, e.g., those from Phug brag (catalogued by SAMTEN 1992), Örgyan gling (cf. SAMTEN 1994) and Mustang (*dkar chag* written by Ngör chen, ed. by EIMER 1999).

² The Tokyo Them spans ma manuscript, e.g., comprises 761 (cf. SAITO 1973) and the print from Derge 1110 texts (cf. Uri *et al.* 1934).

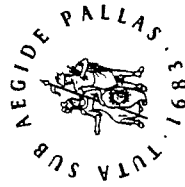
³ The short title for this canon as a whole is *Tanak*.

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THE MANY CANONS OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar
of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000.
Managing Editor: Henk Blezer.

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2002