Tibetan Buddhist Historiography
THE MIRROR
ILLUMINATING
THE ROYAL
GENEALOGIES

An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century
Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long

1994
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The signet shows the mythical goat, a symbol for Lhasa (as depicted in a mural in the Potala).

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Erik Haarh
- in memoriam
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Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan,
(1312–1375 A.D.)
Preface

The present annotated translation can look back on a long and tortuous way in its making. My interest for the text was initially aroused through discussions with my former teacher, the late Professor Erik Haahr. A preliminary study of the text, now superseded by the present book, was conducted by me in 1982 and was subsequently published in 1986. Decisive for the final completion of the present translation was a generous allotment of an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship at the Zentralasiatisches Seminar, University of Bonn, 1991-1992, which enabled me to devote the text my undivided attention.

The chronicle ρGa-l-ral ρgsal-ba'i me-long compiled by Bla-ma dam-pa bSo-d-nams ρgyal-mtshan (1312-1375 A.D.) occupies a normative position in Tibetan Buddhist historiography and its general popularity as a source as well as the numerous topics delineated and historical incidences narrated in this chronicle are bound to render a richly annotated translation into a Western language useful. Real progress for undertaking a thorough assessment and analysis of the text and its sources has moreover improved palpably in the light of the recent wave of publications of rare Tibetan historical sources which have surfaced within the last years. An attempt has duly been made to incorporate these latest publications issued in Lhasa, Tibet, in the People's Republic of China as well as from Bhutan, Nepal and India and it is my modest hope that the present study in this regard shall prove exhaustive, at least du courant. The incorporation of new fundamental texts, all from the earliest centuries of the current millennium, shall permit us to acquire a less nebulous picture of the basic sources and the textual fundaments behind central parts of the Buddhist historiographical tradition. The present book offers in this respect, for the first time within Tibetology, a cumulative and comprehensive study, providing the relevant textual references for a series of historical data that eventually shall allow the reader and fellow researcher easy access to conduct an evaluation of the development of a number of historical events recorded in this literature. Should the present book eventually merit a modicum of acclaim, however paltry, it is barely more than the rich fruits harvested by me from gleaning and studying the papers of my predecessors, the true trailblazers in our field. Without these pioneering contributions from the pen of scholars such as G. Tucci, G. Uray, E. Haahr, H. E. Richardson, L. Petech and A. Macdonald - to mention only a few - this book would have looked much different.

In Bonn with its thriving academic milieu, I had the good fortune to avail myself of a library amply stocked with extensive holdings of original Asian, mainly Tibetan sources and an almost exhaustive stock of secondary Western literature. Conjointly with my private library, it altogether provided a sound platform of original and secondary sources for my research. The protean task set by me turned out to be a laborious, but, it is my conviction, rewarding one.

I have incurred debts of gratitude from a number of persons and colleagues. To my hosts in Bonn, Professor Klaus Sagaster of Zentralasiatisches Seminar, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the genuine hospitality extended me, officially as well as privately, making my days there less lonesome, for stimulating discussions and for constructive advice on how to improve on the running and final result. To Dr. Helmut
Eimer of Indologisches Seminar, Bonn, I am equally beholden for his spontaneous readiness to comment on my research, his meticulousness and unfeigned enthusiasm and for his generosity in supplying me with his own publications as well as that of others.

The competent and learned Tibetan scholars active in Bonn, dge-bshes Blo-Ildan Shes-rab Brag-g.yab Rin-po-che (L. S. Dargyab Rinpoche) and dge-bshes Padma Tshe-ring (Pema Tsering) my heartfelt thanks must be extended for finding time to discuss and enlighten me on a few particularly intricate textual conundrums. Finally, a warm appreciation for the reception roundly tendered by students, colleagues and staff, too many to single out individually, must not go unmentioned, but none are forgotten.

The learned bkra-shis Tshe-ring mThil-’sgo (T.T. Thiento), alias mNga’-ris Rin-po-che, went with me through a unique and recondite piece of rDozugs-chen literature embedded in our text and for his elucidating comments I am equally obliged.

To the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, Bonn-Bad Godesberg which hosted me as a Research Fellow and provided the financial basis for the printing of the book and thus made it all possible, I feel deeply indebted. I should like to express my heartfelt gratitude to this institution. The AvH- Stiftung gave me the financial support and thereby the freedom to deal with my project exclusively, in a time when it stood in the greatest need of both. The classical and philological disciplines within the Humanities must worldwide fight in order to survive or, equally unworthy, are not seldom compelled to readapt or redefine themselves in order to suit new or ephemeral academic trends. In this light, it is particularly rewarding and gratifying to experience the respect and priority with which these century-old disciplines are still cultivated and to witness how Geisteswissenschaft in Germany is met with anything else than indifference and encroachment.

A special debt of gratitude I owe to Dr. Susanne von der Heide, who secured for me in Köln an ideal refugium. It thus enabled me to cover the last leg of my work in Germany.

CESMEO and Dr. E. Lo Bue of Torino, Italy must be thanked for supplying me with a picture of a statue representing the author of our text and for allowing me to reproduce it in this book. Mr. Gregor Verhüten, M.A., Bonn brought my manus in a better readable form for the final print than I myself could do and thus saved it from not a few technical flaws. Needless to say, should remaining incoherencies and solecisms still mar the book and thus vex the readership I can only crave indulgence, such imperfections rest with me alone.

A very special thank, finally, I should like to extend to Prof. Walther Heissig, the great doyen of Central Asian Studies for his kindness and readiness to include the present book in his flourishing *Asiatische Forschungen*.

Bonn/Köln 1993

Per K. Sørensen
Before we embark upon a discussion of the author and date of gGyal-rabs [chos-'byung] gsal-ba’i me-long as a necessary preamble to our annotated translation offered in the present book, it is deemed imperative to discuss, at some length and from the very outset, the literary and scriptural background behind the major bulk of literature found embedded in our text in order to assess properly the literary tradition in which our author stands.

We shall probably never be able to answer exhaustively the most crucial questions as to exactly when, how and, in particular, who was ultimately the author(s) or compiler(s) behind the bulky, predominantly legendary Vitas narrations dedicated to the life and feats of King Srong-btsan gsang-po, and, for that matter, the Vitas cycles of Padmasambhava, while both Vita-traditions have a number of literary features and narrative themes in common, as more than a few references in the present study shall amply verify. Common points, it moreover would appear, that the question of borrowing and even plagiarism rather shall give way for the assumption that both gter-ma cycles at some point have been through the same editorial or redactional hands. And indeed a small group of reputed gTer-ston-s is known to exist, key figures who took a vivid interest in the dissemination of these traditions.

Judged from a literary point of view, the embryo for these Vitas may most probably be traced back to an oral and popular narrative tradition, a living narrative possibly also bardic tradition,1 which in Tibet since documented time constituted the art of story-telling par excellence and which never ceased being a cherished source and means of myth-making.

Oral recitation with historic and mythic (often heroic) themes in pre-literate Tibet, rooted in pre-Buddhist times but blossoming well into times with increasing Buddhist supremacy, once maintained a key function in preserving the Tibetan state and in upholding its cultural, religious and social structure. In Tibet’s pre-historic and early historic times the power and royal authority (chab srid) was, as recorded by a chain of monk-historians also,2 in fact governed (bagyur) (i.e. guided and legitimized) by a living narrative, recitational or educational tradition, predominantly by way of sundry forms of story-telling (sgrungs), riddle-telling (le’u) and songs.3 This can be witnessed by the rich and disparate mythological material which has come down to us, mainly preserved in the Dunhuang dossiers, but otherwise layered in the bulky mythographical writings partly dealt with in this study. Albeit here predominantly retained in an utmost fragmented condition, a mere perusal discloses that the material is replete with narratives of euhemerization and reverse euhemerization. The principal actors involved in disclosing these euhelodical narratives and oratory dramas were sacerdotal guardians and national bards, possibly with overlapping functions, and their main task was primary religious, only it is far from evident to what extent.

1 The transmission of an oral narrative tradition, in forms such as the bardic sgrung and euhelodical le’u but also rhetoric, poetic and vatic shags (prose and verse) etc. as documented in the Dunhuang material and in later literature, was perhaps the foremost medium for narration employed in Tibet in the incunabular part of the dynastic period. However, solid knowledge on these themes, due to lack of detailed and substantial data, is still next to naught.

2 Cf. e.g. GBCHBY 249.4-6; DCHBY 105.5-6, 163.6; YLJBCBY 47.1-2. For details, cf. note 391 infra.

3 For samples of these traditions prevailing at an early point in the Tibetan cultural history and even chronicled to have been depicted artistically on walls (rgyud rite, ledeh rite) for edifying reasons, cf. e.g. KCHKHM-2 5.15-6.18, 252.12-253.13, 254.11-256.8; CHBYMTNYP 260a5-b2; HBCHBY (JA) 9a1, 44a1-3, 44a7-b2 etc. For further details, cf. e.g. the notes 391 and 874 infra.
By means of retelling and replicating and thereby reviving and actualizing origin-myths, clan or royal genealogies and sundry power-affirming tales and historic myths considered vital for people and society, the daily rituals as well as the sacred and temporal affairs pertaining to state and people were maintained. These narrative sources were typologically designated as mi cho or ‘popular (or mundane, i.e. non-divine) convention’, in contrast to lha cho or ‘divine or sacred (i.e. supramundane) convention’ (first later = Buddhism). The very act of recounting e.g. the historic past and feats of mythical significance doubtlessly became a crucial ritual act of confirmation and legitimation. The narrative content and thematic aspects employed in these genres were often etiological, didactic, forensic or rhetoric in nature and diction, seeking to account for (and eventually gain anarity over) the origin and meaning behind the phenomena of things and behind historic, often mythical, events. Associated with the coeval sacerdotal Bon-religion, those embodying the medium between the past and the present by way of these mythical and sacral recitations or mimetic replications were, as said, mainly professional guardian priests, bards, storytellers and diviners.4

In passing it is worth noting that one cannot help acquiring the impression that the Buddhist conquest and conversion of Tibet at least in one missionary pursuit was artistic or pictorial rather than scriptural in nature, in particular in its initial phase. As unanimously documented in the narrative expositions describing the wall-paintings or murals of the largest edifices raised in the dynastic period, the Ra-sa ʻPhul-snang (i.e. Jo-khang) and later bSam-yas,5 it is added how not only the above mentioned themes sgrugs and ledu were represented in an artistic and pictorial fashion, but equally so these contemporary murals and frescoes were executed with edifying scenes and extracts from a large number of illustrative kyi rta-s portrayed or being depicted for propaedeutic reasons. This however was the work, the same tells us, of foreign artists and craftsmen, amongst which the Nepalese, Khotanese and Chinese were strongly represented. This is not an insignificant point to make. The Buddhist culture, not to speak of its scriptural complexity and its rich mental and doctrinal stock of ideas remained for long a highly alien factor in dynastic Tibet. The Buddhist transformation of Tibet, both cultural and mental, was a painful and radical process which in the end paved the way for the collapse of the dynasty with a centralistic royal power. In this process, with an alphabet barely having been invented and facing immense technical difficulties in translating these exotic and complex Buddhist concepts, it is small wonder that recourse was initially taken to preach and spread the Buddhist creed by simplified illustrative and artistic means in form of murals.

Returning again to the seminal beginning of literate Tibet in the VIIth and VIIIth century there are reasons to assume that a number of narrative traditions and texts, similar to the genealogical and genesis accounts retained e.g. in the Vita-cycle of Srong-btsan sgam-po, can seek their roots in this bardic and scriptural tradition.6 Here as elsewhere, it is not easy to penetrate beyond the thick-layered veneer left behind by the later Buddhist tradition. This holds true for the Srong-Vita rather than, if at all, for the more fanciful and glorifying (i.e. predominantly hagiographical) aspects traced in the biography of the Tantric Magician Padmasambhava. The rich biographical tradition attributed to him and his life is distinctly more literary conceived and artificial, at least in the versions which have come down to us, when not repetitive and stereotypical in its concept and composition compared to the ditto narrative dedicated to the exploits and feats of king Srong-btsan sgam-po, in particular when we restrict ourselves to the purely biographical themes.

The original kernel of the Padmasambhava biographies was possibly sketched out already in the late part of the dynastic period, arguably in the wake of the erection of the bSam-yas vphra (763-775 A.D., consecration 779 A.D.), at the inception of the IXth century, although to what extent Padmasambhava did play any major or even factual role in its erection and inauguration still is far from clarified and documented. One of the greater mysteries of Tibetan dynastic history has always been centered around the fact that credible information about his person and his alleged activities are lacking in the traditional documents and sacred literatures.

4 Cf. e.g. Stein, Tibetan Civilization, pp. 191-198; Kvaerne, 1972, p. 34; and for similar or parallel traditions in later local Tibetan cultures, where e.g. the traditions of a bardic and oral porte-parole, such as molla (T. mol bo), tampa (T. gian pa, ston pa) and pro (T. dpe) still are found to persist, cf. Jackson, The Mollar of Mustang, pp. 83-86; B. Steinmann (1987) and S. S. Strickland (1983), Kailash, X (5-4); JRAS, 1987, further ref., A. W. Macdonald, 1989, Kailash, XV (3-4), pp. 175-177.

The central mythological domain of a(n) society remains an area of special authority. When appropriated, it becomes the core of a system of beliefs, values and ideas which gradually and imperceptibly permeate the entire society. Cf. e.g. the reflections by Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance, 1976, pp. 6-27.

This process can be observed in many places and cultures of all periods. These power-affirming cults and myths in turn impose a consensus, while they contain elements which justify and account for the existing order of things. In hindsight, we should properly note these as deliberate power-sustaining contrivances of a ruling class designed to secure its own privileges only, but assume that they were originally rooted in a set of beliefs commonly considered of divine origin.

5 Cf. Chap. XV (note 874) and Chap. XVIII (note 1240ff.) infra.

6 BZH (Stein ed. 53-58, Chis. ed. 62-8-12) = CHBYNTNP 427a-5 = MBNTH 120a±b1 = YLJBCHYB 61,6-11 = HBCHYB (JA) 111b5-7, 112a±5 all chronicle a similar-worded passage which informs us about the existence of a number of mi cho texts dealing foremost with genealogical matters during the reign of king Khri-long btsan sgam-po (742-797 A.D.). During his reign the Buddhist tradition gained increasingly a firm foot in Tibet. In order, no doubt, to reconcile and neutralize the growing resentment to this development, the minister mGos (Khri-long yab-lon) is recorded to have requested, probably around 780-785 A.D., the king to effectuate the composition and compilation of a series of skye bo mi cho kyi rgyas, i.e. texts and accounts of the ruler’s genealogy (ye’i gling rabs), on social (or territorial) division (ta bca’id) of the people and narratives on conventions, etiquette and protocol vis-a-vis the nobility (ya raṣu), but also stories (gsum sgrangs), accounts and expositions on general good social deportment and on the heritage and virtues of the royal ancestors etc. including possibly also a general guideline for an ancestor cult or worship. Cf. also note 21.

A similar attempt was made during the reign of king Rab-bsun-can (cf. ca. 817-836 A.D.), cf. BZH (Stein ed. 75 9-12) = CHBYNTNP 460a-4-6. Here it is related how this king, himself an ardent Buddhist, attempted, probably around 830 A.D., to systematize or regulate (gsum la phab) and thus distinguish the mi cho tradition, be it narrative (or scriptural) and otherwise from the now very dominant ditto lha cho = Buddhist tradition. This exertion was doubtlessly also intended to counter a still growing dissatisfaction in leading circles and among the people still hostile to the new religion. This, among other things, led to the compilation of a number of authoritative accounts and genealogical sources, which came to constitute the scriptural backbone for later Tibetan genealogical theories and accounts. These original sources, we may conjecture, circulated in Tibet until, at least, the XIIIth century. For a fuller discussion, cf. Appendix, note 539 and note 1488 infra.
Chinese princess giving birth to the child of the minister mGar at some point even found its way into the biography of 12

Decidedly more literary in concept and structure (at least in its final form), the origin myth of the Tibetan race from a union of a monkey and a rock demoness, another cherished legend (gsam gsprungs) of great antiquity, even making out an entire chapter in GLR as elsewhere and later rather than simultaneously perhaps embedded into or closely bound up with the Avalokiteśvara-cult, may in fact have originated in the snga-dar period too in some form. The king’s Vita-tradition is replete with descriptions as to how many scenes from the king’s life, also the above origin myth of the Tibetan people, were limned on frescoes in a number of temples associated with the king. 13 The crucial question is: to which period can the (majority of) murals actually be ascribed? This pictorial dimension could have taken place, partially or fully, prior to the point when his biographical tradition assumed a more final literary form at the inception of the phyi-dar period, but plausibly already in the dynastic period. All along, it cannot be excluded, in fact it appears to be a more sensible solution altogether, that the so-called biography of the king served as Vorlage or model for the execution of the paintings, and that both are the literary and artistic product of the XI-XIIIth century, although we shall attempt to argue that a small part of the most ancient murals executed in Ra-sa ‘Phur-slun in the VIIIth century actually was the result of contemporary Newari artisans.

The possible roots of at least parts of this Vita are consequently to be searched in a floating poetic and oral historiation narrated by the common people or by bards, rather than being conceived, at least in the beginning, as the literary outcome produced by some saintly GTer-ston-s, possibly composed and revised over a long period, or conceived orally in the late VIIth and VIIIth century, before being written down and thereby assuming a literary form. But as it may be gleaned from the numerous subjoined notes and the discussions offered in the present work, a number of data may produce more questions than answers, given the scantiness of convincing and telling testimonies. Unknown quantities still preclude us from gaining a full overview of the Vita text-tradition, especially in question of its very origin.

One important clue conducive to the dating of these Vitas could in fact have been the language and diction employed in these texts, and relevant for the present study primarily the bKa’-chems Ka-khol-ma (abbr. KCHKHJHM) and the Ma-ni bKa’-‘bum (abbr. MNBK). But an investigation yields in my eyes disappointingly little clarity, as the language in many

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7 Cf. also Bishoff, 1971. Aside from PT 44, a late dynastic work describing the practice of the kila-rin by Padmasambhava in Tibet, our best and most credible source is in fact sBa-bzhed (abbr. BZJ) (Stein ed. 18.7ff., Chin. ed. 22.2ff.), a source and witness of considerable antiquity. But also therein his role is a modest one, at least compared against later hagiographical writings, being restricted to the demesne of eroticism. In his time, no doubt, Tantrism was, when not unpopular, still accorded a rather insignificant role. The validity of this testimony in BZJ, moreover, is subject to the proviso that the passages which mention Padmasambhava pertain to the original core of this IXth-century historical source. But there is no ground to doubt this.

8 The hitherto oldest scroll-biography of the Indian Master, the Zangs-gling-ma, traced/compiled by Nying-ral was in fact ‘found’ in bSam-ya. See also note 24 infra.

9 For cases of parallelism, e.g. the notes 266, 455, 726 and 790 infra. Cf. also note 19 infra.

10 Cf. the almost identical narrative structure of the initial part of GLR Chap. XII and XIII infra; consult also the parallel ode in Chap. X ad note 528 and Chap. XVIII ad note 1318.

11 Cf. the notes 608 and 625 infra. Chinese sources independently confirm the Tibetan minister’s ingenuity and intelligence.

12 Cf. note 704 infra. A central plot extracted from the Vita even turned into a most cherished drama-play (a lce ba mo) named rNone-bza’ ‘Bal-bca’. Cf. chapter XII and XIII infra. This fact also strengthens our assumption that the origins of the biography of the king are rooted in a popular narrative tradition.

13 Cf. foremost the Appendix, notes 84, 92, 329, 391, 874 infra. It is worth noting that Rab-pa-can, during the construction of his spiritual bond (i.e. shugs dam, tutelary) temple at ‘U-shang-rdo, possibly erected around 823-824 A.D., paid respect to his mes po Srong-btsan sgam-po by providing Ra-sa ‘Phur-slun with a number of artistic or architectural refinements. He ordered frescoes of one hundred and eight silk painted he ‘bum to be executed (dPa’-bo in his testimony of the same passage appears to maintain that the frescoes (merely) underwent restoration, thus implying that the original paintings predated 800 A.D., perhaps even being contemporary with the erection of Ra-sa ‘Phur-slun around 640-645 A.D.). These frescoes or murals may well have included the above tales and riddles, but also glorifying scenes from the mes po’s life. Cf. the notes 874, 1145, 1448 infra.
versions appear fairly uniform, at least in the texts which have come down to us, being couched in a diction not radically different from traditional classical and medieval religious narrative Tibetan,14 a sure indication that they were or had been massively reworked, rather than being overall composed, at the beginning of this millennium. The latter mentioned text tradition does display some archaic traits, but the linguistic oddities seem to restrict themselves mainly in rendering stray few cases or a few characters of archaising or medieval dialecticism.

A number of papers has attempted to encircle the religious ambience and cultural background of the gTer-ston-s ultimately responsible for the detection (or compilation) of these Viita-s. While the very mechanism of treasury-finding, the very modus operandi of recovery (spyan 'dren) involved probably never shall be exhaustively clarified, remaining, as it does, in the misty borderland between inner motivation and divine revelation versus outer confirmation and acknowledgement, we are probably not much amiss if we allow ourselves to assume that the actual function of these treasure-finders not infrequently was that of writing down, compiling and reshaping, as indicated above, already existing Vorlage, be it bka'-'ma or gser-ma, into final versions. On these points we shall currently only add little, while we lack conclusive information which may shed new light into the matter.

As already shown by Blondeau and Kapstein in a number of papers, and further documented here, the rdzogs-chen religious tianting or coating of parts of Strong-btsan sgampo's alleged writings and narratives as found embedded in MNKB, when not massively presented, is nevertheless quite tangible.16

14 This language is on one side heavily influenced by traditional and medieval chos skad known primarily from the canonical dzra literature, on the other side it shows a remarkable resemblance to the language and diction known from historical sources from the Xi-Xilith century, occasionally laced with contemporary vernacular and dialectical idioms. The linguistic testimony or language background of language features found in the first Tibetan lo rgyus, the bka'-'chugs/ki of Khris-long lde-btsan (from ca. 780 A.D.) already contains elements pointing towards a classical diction that moves away from the unmistakable archaic diction found and documented in other coeval inscriptions and documents.


16 In the Lo-rgyus chen-mo, the initial part of the Sutra-section of MNKB, the chapters XVII and XVIII introduce the legendary king Dza'ja, a cherished figure and mythological king in the mythical transmission of Tantra in India according to the Nying-ma and the rdzogs-chen tradition. Of significant importance, we can now add, this royal figure was assigned a key role in the legend of the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, the story about the 'Rain of Books' that fell upon Tibet at the first introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, the story about the abundance of books that fell upon Tibet, the story about the presence of books that fell upon Tibet. The paradoxical point is only that this Testament cannot be ascribed to these Treasury-finders, but must, without any doubt, be associated with Atisa and his milieu, as seen below. In the last analysis, it remains to be clarified to what extent this version of the myth represents the earliest version or just a station en route the development of this legend. Cf. Appendix, note 400 for details.

As adduced by Kapstein, 1992, op. cit. pp. 96-93, MNKB as a whole but particularly the sections E (D), E (E) and WAM (F) and (G), which are made to constitute a sort of religious legacy or manifesto of the king, display a rich syncretism in terms of doctrinal tenets and religious views. Inappropriate discriminate doctrines ascribed by different denominations are delineated or mixed: the nine successive stages (graw pa rNam pa dpus), as propounded in the Nying-ma-pa

While the central role of the Avalokitesvara-cult, in particular its sādhana tradition, among the gTer-ston-s responsible for the detection and initial dissemination of MNKB is well known, the actual role played by Atisa in the promotion of this cult is initially somewhat more dubious, yet the material at our disposal now allows us to gain a fairer picture. The overall doctrinal concept in the religious literature of the gTer-ston king par excellence in Tibet, Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer (1124-1192 A.D.) is best epitomized by the triad-
compound bla rdzogs thugs gsum, which alludes to bla ma sgrub pa, sādhana-instruction aiming at the meditative identification or contemplation of the adept’s person with the Guru, i.e. Padmasambhava. The element rdzogs indicates the teachings of the rDoRigs-chen school and thugs i.e. thugs kyi sgrub pa alludes to the sādhana-s (i.e. sgrub thabs) related to Avalokiteśvara (in form of Mahakāraṇika or Thugs-rje chen-po). 18

With this doctrinal backcloth it is small wonder to find, as explicated in MNKB E (dKar-chag) 11a5–12b5, the tradition behind the cycle authorized and legitimized in the following Tridbya-based emanational or incarnational nexus listed prior to the transmission-line of the entire cycle: 19

Dharmakīya: Amalābha
Sambhogakāya: Avalokiteśvara
Nirmāṇakāya: king Srong-btsan sgam-po/slob-dpon Padma ‘byung-gnas

The role assigned to da’ārya Padmasambhava in connection with the writings of Srong-btsan sgam-po is formally restricted to be the person showing the scrolls with the king’s zhal gdams and sgrub thabs cycles, 20 purportedly earlier hidden by king Srong-btsan sgam-po, to king Khri-srong lde-btsan, whereafter the writings were concealed again, to be found later by grub-thob dNgos-grub, Nyang-ral and rje-btsan Shākya bzang-po, the original XIIIth-century triumvirate of gTer-ston-s behind the detection and protracted compilation of MNKB. To what extent this intermezzo with Padmasambhava and the king reflects historical fact, we have no way to tell. A sound guess would be that it is a historical reconstruction or idealization contrived by the gTer-ston-s in order to tinge the cycles successively found or compiled by them with historical and spiritual-royal legitimation. But it is nevertheless

\[ \text{briist sbyed brtse 2 ach byla}. \]

tempting to speculate that some scroll (phang yig) or writings (yi ge) 21 describing the story about the erection of the first (at least major) religious building in Tibet, the Ra-sa ‘Phral-snang, was put to writing at the behest of king Khri-srong lde-btsan, compiled in an act of commemorating his own mes po 22 and his founding enterprise for the promotion of Buddhism in Tibet. Speculating along this line, one could suggest that the composition or compilation of the history of the Ra-sa ‘Phral-snang, in other words the main bulk of the biographic story anent the erection of bSam-yas (sBa-bzhed (abbr. BZ), Chin. ed. 82,16-17; bSam-yas bzheng-pa’i sgam-rgyud), in case of which it is tempting to conjecture that both respective stories of the erection went through the same hands.

**The Cralri Histories of bSam-yas and BZhi**

In Tibetan Buddhist historiography we can observe a striking case of scriptural parallelism: Centered around the two most prominent royal figures in the dynastic period: king Srong-btsan sgam-po (569-649 A.D.) and Khri-srong lde-u’u-btsan (742-797 A.D.), during whose reign the Ra-sa ‘Phral-snang gtsug lag khang and the dPal bSam-yas gtsug lag khang were erected, two fundamental records grew forth:

\[ \text{IHa-sa [b]Ka’-}\text{gtsigs chen-mo, 23} \]

21 As stated by BZIH Stein ed. 53.5-8, Chin. ed. 62.8-12 and Nyang-ral, CHBYMTNP Y422a-6, during Khri-srong lde-btsan’s reign, many bka’i zhing yid, bka’i gtsigs kyi yi ge and rgyal rabs (i.e. mi chos) texts were in circulation. Cf. also note 6 above for further details. The testimony of the king’s famous bKa’-mchad, also termed a lo drung (i.e. lo [rgyus don] gsum) gi yi ge (cf. HBCHRBY (IA) 110a3-4), the oldest documented religious Tibetan-written narrative (compiled ca. 779-780 A.D.) which has come down to us, suggests also that these traditions were alive in this period.

22 It is worthy of note to recall that sBa-bzhed in fact opens with a direct quote from a testamentary prophecy allegedly tenored by Srong-btsan sgam-po and foreseeing the advent, in the fifth generation from himself, of king Khri-lde gtsug-btsan, alias Mes-Ag-tsho-mi (704-754 A.D.) as a Buddhist champion and doyen. This opening is doubtlessly a simple act of legitimation. This piece of esoteric prophecy has moreover been conceived, at the earliest, during the time of the very same king or rather during his son, Khri-srong lde-btsan (742-797 A.D.) during whose reign the sBa-bzhed was compiled. Cf. note 954 infra. The same king, in his famed bKa’-mchad, a narrative collateral to his bKa’-gtsigs or edict (both dating from ca. 779-780 A.D.) and both compiled by dPa’-bo, HBCHRBY (IA) 108b1-111b5, expresses not only this gratitude to the mes po Srong-btsan sgam-po, but also corroborates also the prophecy of the span of five generations between these two previously mentioned kings and testifies thereby, in my eyes, to the antiquity and validity of the above textual segment in BZIH.

Parallel testaments and predictions (forecasting the advent of religious figures up to and incl. Atśa) are moreover found in the Vita of Srong-btsan sgam-po (cf. the notes 954 and 1044 infra), an observation which naturally indicates that all those predictions are the fabrication of the phyil-tyar period, added into the text in the wake of this master’s sojourn in Central Tibet.

23 Cf. e.g. GLR itself, the notes 434-35, where Bla-ma dam-pa in a list of sources for Chap. VIII, mentions Ka-gtsigs chen-mo and bKa’-chems Ka-klho-ma as two distinct texts. But see also the notes 950 and 1379 infra and Bla-ma dam-pa’s own colophon. No doubt, during Bla-ma dam-pa’s
They both purportedly constitute the written Testaments of the respective rulers, while at the same time they functioned as a sort of record or chronicle (bka' gtsigs/ka gtsigs = lo rgyus) delineating the erection of the two royal key edifices of the dynastic period. In question of the Great Chronicle of bSam-yas or BZH in some early form (rGyal-bzhi?ed?), its genuineness as a document hailing from the dynastic period should be outside the realm of doubt. As to the Great Chronicle of IHa-sa, while we cannot conclusively accept it the same age as the bSam-yas, it is noteworthy that e.g. Nyang-ral, the first historian to employ the king’s Vita extensively, coins King Songtsen gampo’s Testament found in Jo-khang by Atiśa bKa’-rtse = [gtsigs] chen-mo, i.e. the IHa-sa as shown. This was arguably either a commonly used epithet or rather a secondary title for the (oldest) of the numerous versions of KCHKHKHM. Or all along a record or chronicle carrying this title and
time these two works were thus in circulation as distinct works. Nyang-ral designates king Songtsen gampo’s Vita unearthing by Jo-bo-rje bKa’-gtsigs chen-mo and a brief passage cited by Nyang-ral indicates that this title refers to KCHKHKHM, cf. note 38 infra, also corroborated by an entry in DTHMP 1563-4, where a work titled IHa-sa’I Ka-tshigs ka-khol-ma is cited.

Given the meager data at our disposal, the upshot of our considerations in the sequel shall deplorably compel us to conclude that we cannot settle conclusively this most important question as to the origin of the Great Chronicle of IHa-sa and its affiliation or even identity with the king’s Vita.

24 BZH (Chin. ed. 82.10-18; CHBYMTNP 4393-6, where Nyang-ral evidently cites a passage (or shares the passage in common) from the BZH-collophon also found in the Chin. ed. of BZH; Tucci, (TPS, I, p. 143 citing Rva Lo-tsa’s Rnam-thar: mVig-a-dbang Khri-srong Idg-u’bstan gi yid chams bSam-yas Ka-brtis chen-mo; cf. Sorensen, 1986, pp. 264-65. As can be adduced from the notes 1202, 1240 and 1379 infra, this work was at additional points different from the BZH-versions which have come down to us. It is perhaps an important observation to make that most (two?) exceptions are Sa-skya Pandita, in Thub-pa’s dngongs Rab-tu gsal-ba and his sNyags dam-pa la sprin-pa’i yigle. cf. Ruegg, 1989, p. 69) pre-XIVth century Tibetan historiographies, incl. the GLR, never use the title sBa-hzed, but almost exclusively appellations such as bSam-yas Ka-tshigs chen-mo or the like for what turns out to be BZH. See also the reflections on sBa-bzed in the bibliographical section to the present work. It is also worth paying attention to the information proffered by O-rgyan gling-pa, KTHNDNG (KHA) Chap. 19, 227-28 (the colophon), how the noted Lo tsa ba IHa-sa rtsis-rang, upon the request of Padmasambhava, king Mdi-tig bstan-po (here = Sda-ma-legs?) and consort, wrote down the rGyal-po’i dbar-chag Thang-yig chen-mo (also called sPhod-sgrigs gnyen grol-bo gsum-thang-yig) at the beginning of the IXth century and which supposedly served as Vorlage for O-rgyan gling-pa’s own homonymous gser-ma. The same text, e.g., 215.7-10, chronicles the burial of this text and other sources such as the sDro-dpon rGyals-po’i rnam-thar-gsung (serving as model or source for O-rgyan gling-pa’s PMKTH)? and rGyal-po’i thugs-dam bSam-yas dbar-chag. It will be recalled that one of the (supplementary) titles of BZH is bSam-yas kyi dbar-chag chen-mo, cf. e.g. HCBHY (JA) 294l. Although O-rgyan gling-pa’s pentad is classified as a gser-ma text, it is being brought with material culled from very old sources. However, of these deplorably lost works with the extant Padma-Vitas and BZH cannot be clarified. But the relationship between the figure Padmasambhava, bSam-yas and the king was, at least seen with later eyes, a close one, to the effect that O-rgyan gling-pa even designated his PMKTH by the supplementary title Khri-srong Idg-u’bstan bka’-chen. cf. id. 711.2-4. Cf. also note 500 infra.

25 Lit. ‘edict’, but doubtlessly it lost its original meaning or, at some early point, came to designate a common historical record = lo rgyus or bka’ mchid, possibly while it contained edictal matters.

delineating the erection of Ra-sa’s Phrub-snap existed and at some early point, while largely covering the same ground as the Ka-khol-ma, it fused with the latter-mentioned to form a separate work. But this is sheer conjecture. Being on the safe side, the Vita itself came into existence at the beginning of the phyi-dar period, being compiled into a final form at least, during Atiśa’s sojourn in IHa-sa and near-by sNye-thang sometime in the period between 1047 and 1052 A.D., when the anonymous compiler(s), being motivated by Jo-bo-rje, may have had access to local texts or records kept in the Jo-khang in order to produce this document. Or perhaps - a fascinating albeit hardly tenable conjecture - the Great Chronicle of IHa-sa has, similar to the Great Chronicle of bSam-yas, its root in the late dynastic period as hinted at above. But, as said, with the meager material at our disposal our deliberations yield for the moment more modest questions than clarifying answers are found.

But as it shall be seen from the discussion of KCHKHKHM below, further conspicuous parallels between the two grand biographical Testaments can be wrung from the material at our disposal: They both were conceived or executed in three sizes (che or (rgyas) ‘bring bsud) and, moreover, in three versions. They were both, it appears, centered around an Indian master and his sojourn in the respective sanctuaries: Bodhisattva Sāntarakṣita/Padam-sambhava and bSam-yas and Jo-bo-rje Atiśa and the Ra-sa’s Phrub-snap temple. Both temples were patterned respectively upon a Nepalese and an Indian model and the role played by these masters, which in case of bSam-yas consisted in performing the geomantic probe and the terrestrial rituals (sa dpyod, sa cho ga mzigd) prior to its erection and the subsequent consecration and abbatial responsibility after its erection and in case of Ra-sa consisted, for all we know, in the instigation to record the story of its erection (bzheng pa’i lo rgyus, therefore seems to be that of adding glory and legitimation to the sanctuaries.

The importance of these two parallel records throughout later Tibetan (Buddhist) historiographical tradition cannot in any way be overrated. It is tremendous. They are constantly and copiously quoted, a fact documented in the present study alone. If we restrict ourselves to the sections that deal with in almost any extant historical treatise of any note produced in Tibet such as Nyang-ral’s monumentalchos-byung chen-mo (abbr. CHBYMTNP), the two IDe’u Chos’byung-s (abbr. resp. GBCHB and DCHBY), Bla-ma dam-pa’s rGyal-rabs gsal-ba’i me-long (abbr. GLR), Dpa’bo gTsuglag’s IHo-brag chos-byung (abbr. HCHBHY), the Vth Dalai Lama’s Bod kyi rgyal-rabs deb-thar rdzogs-idan gzhon-mu-ma (abbr. DTHZHG), etc. we shall find the textual correspondence and dependency striking. True, major works such as the one by Nyang-ral and the works by the IDe’u’s are present work that byung-s which have a fairly well-defined topos focusing on the dissemination of Buddhism in India and Tibet and, in addition, by doing so present us with new dynamic material of greatest rarity and historicity drawn from hitherto unknown sources. It is nevertheless a fact

26 As may be deduced from note 435 infra, the (or one version of) IHa-sa’s bKa’[I’]-tshigs chen-mo, contrary to KCHKHKHM, contained chronological calculations and historical comparative material. Attempts at dating the span of time elapsing between individual royal figures (originally collateral, no doubt, to the attempt at calculating the duration of the Doctrine (brtan rtse)) are a unique trait of the phyi-dar period. This suggests that the IHa-sa’s bKa’[I’]-tshigs chen-mo is the product of the early phyi-dar period, say the Xth century. That numerous versions or copies of the Ka-khol-ma moreover were in circulation is attested e.g. by Dpa’bo’i, HCHBHY (JA) 5a7, where we are informed that the original Ima (phyi mo), at some point disappeared and that new copies of the (original?) had to be recopied, probably in the late XIIIth or XIVth century, when the text in its transmission-line came in the custody of the Jo-khang caretakers (dkon gyen bar). Cf. note 55 infra.
that while rendering the general dynastic history, we find a clear thematic and textually sequential correspondence between Nyang-ral’s and the two 1De'u-s’ historical opera and e.g. Bla-ma dam-pa’s GLR and dPa’-bo’s history. Restricting ourselves to the historical sections (and leaving out again historical passages such as those found in the chos byung of the two 1De'u-s’, foremost in GBCHBY and to some extent rendered by dPa’-bo also, and drawn from hitherto unknown or non-extant sources), they all basically draw from these two common sources, albeit they rely upon or quote these sources with diversifying intensity. We of course also find exceptions to the above mention, to a few: Nel-pa’s Me-tog phreng-ba (abbr. NGMTPH), Yar-lung Jo-bo chos-'byung (abbr. YJBCHBY), to a large extent a calque on DTHMP and GLR in the dynastic section) and dPa’-byor bzang-po’s rGyA-Bod yig-'tsang (abbr. GBYTSH). But either their scope and emphasis or even topical speciality are different altogether, being either predominantly sectarian, doctrinal, cultural historical or purely genealogical oriented. Even then, in the pertinent textual and thematic passages and sections of these works the influence is tangible and obvious.

A mere perusal of Tibetan historiographical writings shall even induce us to risk passing the verdict that neither originality nor scriptural or literary novelty highlight this genre of Tibetan literature. The cases of plagiarism with page-long quotations, most often uncritically and haphazardly rephrased, are well-nigh legion. Nor is a critical attitude a dominant feature among Tibetan monk-historians, though we, again, can enjoy a few refreshing exceptions to the rule, such as, in part, Nel-pa, dPa’-bo gTsug-lag, bSod-nams grags-pa, Kah-thog Rig-dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu and, approaching our time, Sum-pa mkhan-po.27

Returning again to the narrative Vita tradition of king Songtsen-gampo and recognizing the paramount import of these traditions and teachings focussing on Avalokiteshvara and on Padmasambhava for these gter-ma masters, it is small wonder thus to find not only Nyang-ral but also his teacher dNgos-grub28 and later Guo-ru Chos [kyi] dbang-pphyug (1212-1270/73 A.D.)29 recorded to have rendered great service to Jo-khang, the central temple in Lhasa raised by Songtsen-gampo and by then housing the two

27 Within Buddhist religious historiography the unique concern for chronology was almost singularly and most impressively pursued by gZhon-nep-dpal. This approach was followed, taking his pursuit as a model, by numerous Tibetan sect-historians. Any careful reader of Dey-bei semgon-po (abbr. DTHNGP) will fully appreciate the invaluable efforts demonstrated by this monk-historian in his attempt to set the rich and complex sectarian and biographical history of Tibet annalistically right. Without his work (with due homage to G.N. Roerich and dGe-'dun chos-'phel for their almost flawless rendition), much of our knowledge of early and medieval Tibetan religious history would still be shrouded or floundering in darkness.

28 Nyang-ral, CHBYMTNYP (Meisezahl, Tafel 363.2.6) mentions that he employed the gter yig found in Jo-khang by grub-thob dNgos-grub. This most probably refers to the cyclic sections which later found its way into MNBK. The same writings were e.g. transmitted to Shes-rab 'od in 1184-85 A.D., cf. note 39 infra. Cf. also Aris, 1979, pp. 8-10; Blondeau, 1984, pp. 77-79.

29 Guru Chos-dbang is e.g. famous for having executed an important biography of Padmasambhava titled rNam-thar mgoa-ba bcu-ge-pa. Unfortunately, this important chain in the history and dissemination of the biographical tradition of Padmasambhava has not come down to us. This makes it so for easy to attempt to sketch out the history of the mutual relationship between the numerous Padma-Vitas. Some of his preliminary attempts to gain an overview of the literature have already been conducted by Blondeau.

famed Jo-bo statues, both directly associated with the king and his two consorts.30

Recent research has hinted at a possible hybrid Buddhist-Bon ambience behind the enterprise of some of the gTer-ston-s. It should be recalled that the texts went through many hands, but in the versions which have reached us, the elements of Bon influence seem scarce,31 being more, it transpires, accidental than consciously introduced. This would seem to disprove the testimonies of some later Bon-historians, who maintain that the Buddhist grub-thob dNgos-grub, a key figure behind the discovery (or: compilation) of MNBK, could be identified with a Bon sage named bZhad-ston grub-thob dNgos-grub.32

It nevertheless remains a high-priority descriptive and a rewarding task indeed for future research to attempt to trace and to sketch out not only the internal literary history, transmission-lineage(s) but also the general dissemination of MNBK from its beginning in the XIIth century until modern times. It is beyond the scope of the present study to conduct such a literary historical investigation, although the present book may constitute a good step in this direction. To conduct such an analysis, it shall require not only direct access to all available redactions of this bulky and heterogenous gter-ma cycle, but also a thorough study of the many scholarly comments glossing its transmission. Its journey through a number of redactions has decidedly altered its form, mainly by way of omissions and contractions.

So had Lo-rgyus ches-ma, a key source for the Avalokiteshvara cult in the SaMa-section of this gter-ma, originally forty-four, then forty-one and in more recent redactions of MNBK

30 Cf. TSLKHHK 14a5, 18a3. MNBK E dKar-chag 11b4-5 adds how the-bsun Shakyi bzang-po, who is recorded to be responsible for the discovery of the Gab-pa mgon-phug-pyung-cycle (= WAM (Q), cf. note 961 infra) and the important SaMa-cycle (= E (A + C)), attributed himself by respecting the embankments and by securing that Jo-khang underwent restoration work (na ra chu rags dang zhig gser); cf. also Aris, 1979, p. 9. For the importance of constructing embankments in order to protect the Jo-khang, cf. the notes 952 and 1023 infra. This tradition of installing barricades and restoring the site of Jo-khang, a tradition which was initiated already in the later part of the dynastic period, continued throughout the first centuries of the phyi-dar period as recorded in numerous sources. For it importance, it can be noted that Atisa too is recorded to have secured the erection of a water-barricade in one place against the gTsang-po river, cf. DTHNGP (I, 314.11-12, Roerich, p. 250).

31 The mention of Bon and Bon-elements are found meagerly scattered in MNBK, and there mosty reduced to themes also found in CHKHHKHM, suggesting that the relevant biographical part (i.e. E (Ca) and (Cd)), contrary to other sections such as E (D) and WAM (F) (G) which are strongly faced with dNgos-grub-chen diction, relied heavily upon this text-tradition. In CHKHHKHM, representing as such the biographical narrative of the king pur excellence and as a gter-ma of Atisa originating in a different religious milieu than the one surrounding the gTer-ston-s, the Bon presence is equally pathy, but, stry mention of the term yung drung Bon and Bon in combination with the present key concepts sgyung, le'sa and bon (cf. note 874 infra for details) are met with along with a lengthy Bon origin-myth given in connection with the description of the progenitor gNya-khri bsan-po, e.g. CHKHHKHM 2 6.3-7.3, 78.14.82.15, 254.8-256.8 and Appendix, note 357 infra. To what extent possible earlier (pro-)Bon-elements have been censured away or rewritten by the successive (pro-)Buddhist redactors of these Vita-s, at least in the light of those which have come down to us, remains ultimately to be settled.

32 Cf. Blondeau, 1984. Is this identification in later Bon-writings due either to a syncretistic or eclectic attempt, foremost introduced by the Buddhist Kong-sbru, himself with a Bon-background as suggested by Blondeau, is it originally due to a simple confusion of names, while both were active in approximately the same period, being occasionally active in the same region and finally both operative in the dNgos-grub-chen tradition albeit with different denominations?
This text-tradition and its literary outgrowth were and still are of immense popularity not only among the Tibetan people due to the pervasive Avalokiteśvara cult, a popularity it cherishes within almost all religious denominations too, but it has also exerted its influence in the neighbouring Tibetan-speaking areas living under strong Tibetan cultural and religious domination.

This literary tradition consequently remains our point of focus when an attempt is made to evaluate the position and the tradition in which GLR itself stands. The point of origi and the central gier-ma dedicated to the Vita of this king is bka'-chen-ka 1347.3 Ka-khol-ma, the formal discovery of which is attributed to Jo-bo-rije Atia, alias Dipamkararajwāna, around 1048-50 A.D. from beneath the pillar with a bottle-shaped capital (ka ba bum ba can) in the Northern Chapel of Ra-sa 'Phurlung in accordance with a jñānādikā's lungs bstan or revelatory prophecy. 38

37 Rather than seeing in the etymology of Ka-khol-ma a meaning in the sense of a 'boiling (khol mo) pillar (ka bu)' or the 'pillar with an outlet for smoke (lit. window (khol ma = skar bhang) in the roof' or even a possible distortion of *bka' bish ma, the 'king's' behest' (i.e. Testament), we should rather see in the contracted form Ka-khol-ma, in full ka bhu mo, an allusion to a certain architectural feature akin to the term gyang [ me] khol, cf. e.g. MNKB E (dKar-chag) 11a5 and HBCHY (J) 14a45, where khol ma designates a corner or the side (var., logs) at the base of a pillar.

As in almost all other fields, the Bon tradition can similarly boast of a Ka-khol-ma gier-ma, in full Sams-yan Ka-khol-ma, allegedly found in Sams-yas by one Yes-sgron-thing-ma in 662 A.D. (which arguable may be altered to 1022/1027 A.D., in the light of the tendency of procreomorph found in some Bon chronological works, cf. Kyerem 1990). Its content, however, is mainly confined to talk and narrative, cf. Karmy, 1952, pp. 120-123, 215-216. The crucial question is, if we shall accord a case for direct influence, which tradition took over from the other? Incidences of plagiarism and parallelism between the Buddhist and the post-dynastic Bon tradition are legion indeed, mainly with the Buddhist one being the donor.

38 Cf. GLR itself, the notes 960, 1057 infra. For a much-almost-worded account (lo gryus), albeit of different length, of the text's Entstehungsgeschichte (byung bhang) and its transmission-line: KCHKKH-1 615.2-619.4; KCHKKH-2 11.15-10, 565.5-565.15, 315.3-321.19; KCHKKH-3 366.3-367.5.

Cf. also CHYMBTNYP Tafel 363.2, 2, 5: bka'-stignigs chen-mo; YLJBCHY 53.8-10; HBCHY (J) 15a46; yiS-den-nu-dpal, DTHNP I (315, 5.10-15, Rossi, p. 228); Kun-dpa' gyal-mtshan, bka'-gdam chos-'byung gsal-ba'isgron-me, 546b-550b; TSSLKHK414a, 13a1, 14b5-6; tStong-kha-pa's N-rnam-thar IV. 15a (ed. and tr. Keskhuwaj). PSIZ 138.4, 138.32; bSkang snags rnyi-ma' chos-'byung bgegs-bsdud by Gyu-mu mkha-shis (pp. 491-90), in the mod. Ch. ed., 1903); further Savitskiy, 1953, Chatopa-badnya, 1967, App. A, sect. 2; Eimer, N-rnam-thar-rgya-pa, sect. 328, 337 (pp. 261ff); Eimer, 1983 (mainly translating the relevant testimony in KCHKKH-1 above), Vostroknik, 1970, pp. 28-32.

As foremost recorded in the king's Testament, it was on directions given to Atia by an old woman which the Indian master was able to find in the texts two-and-a-half fathoms down below the ka ba bum pa can pillar. This syllable line is due to contemporary literature depicted to assume protective garbs and identities while she was variably called M-.grüm 'Se [sic], but also the mad female beggar or 'Mad Woman of Iha-sa' (Iha sa'i sgron ma), who, yiS-den-nu-dpal informs us, found in some Bon chronological works, cf. Kyerem 1990); DTHNP II, 1143.12-14, Rossi, pp. 984-985) was a gCla-po-practitioner and an elder contemporary of the 11th century Ma t'-ggis Lab-sgron-ma (1055-1114 A.D.), famed inter alia for settling religious disputes in her time. In reality, as the Vita tells us, she turned out not to be Atia's yoginī and a disguised jñānādikā, but also a reincarnation of the king's Chinese queen Kong-jo.

At the place in question inside Ra-sa 'Phurlung/Lo-khang, Atia allegedly extracted the...
The Ka-khol-ma version is the oldest among the biographical narratives attributed to the king. Albeit the versions of this work that have reached us at first glance leave a compositionally heterogeneous impression behind, being made up of a variety of biographical, cosmographical, devotional and mythological narrative fragments which individually may claim separate provenance, the work altogether nevertheless appears homogeneous. Turning to the Ma-nil bka'-bum, the picture is, as already noted by Aris, op. cit., 1979, p. 10, a muddle, a state of affairs obviously accounted for by the fact that the cycle is a conglomerate that has been through too many redactional hands. The major part of the Sārā-section of MNKB E (C) denoted Chos-skongs-ba'i rgya-po Srong-btsan sgam-po'i mdo-dad-pa rnam-thar, also coined mdo-dad pa lo-rgyus kyi skor, the "Cycle of the Biographical Narrative" (of the King) and a collateral cycle titled gSung-chos man-ngag gi skor, contain in their sub-sections two brief biographical narratives, respectively:

(Ca) Sangs-rgyas Šākya thub-pa'i bstan-pa ma mdo-dad-pa lo-rgyus (16 skabs) and
(Cd) rGyal-po'i mdo-dad-pa nyi-shu rtsa gcig-pa (21 le'u).

These versions, though of varying length, comprise over a number of chapters an almost similar-worded narrative of the king's life. Both are in fact cognate redactions displaying a wording which is fairly close, albeit in no way so detailed, to the one conserved in KCHKKHM, although a scrutiny would unravel minor and possibly decisive discrepancies that more precisely shall account for the extent of textual affiliation between the individual versions. It would be a laudable task to undertake a thorough investigation of these cognate biographies, a task which to some extent has been explored in the annotations to the present study but which is outside the scope of the present book to provide a minute collation of the textual evidences of these bulky biographies. It would, as already pointed out, require the inclusion of all relevant textual testimonies characterizing the various redactions of MNKB.

This must consequently be reserved a serious philological analysis of the internal history of MNKB and KCHKKHM. A brief impression of the extent of concrecy may nevertheless be acquired through the numerous references to corresponding and parallel passages listed in the notes attached to the present study. But the picture is more complex, all the while we have reason to assume that a number of textual links in the stidma is lacking or while, as

first, a text-scroll (shog [diril] known as the bKa'-chams Zla-ba'i 'dod-po composed by the king's ministers. He thereafter extracted the bKa'-chams Dar-dkar gsal-ba'i me-long written by the king's queens and finally he recovered the king's bKa'-chams Ka-khol-ma. They are all thus to be designated geter ma's.

The first two writings are deplorably no more extant, but probably still existing in the XII-XIIIth cent. (they were at least, it appears, used by or known to Nyang-ral), whereas they somehow disappeared, their content being superseded(?) or generally represented by the main Testament of the king: KCHKKHM. At least, they appear to be unknown to Bla-ma dam-pa, who, like lPa-bo, definitely would have employed them when or if he and subsequent historians would have had access to them. The content of parts of these texts were incorporated or perhaps already found delineated in the larger version of KCHKKHM and through this also in CHBYMTNP as indicated in Appendix, note 770. The final section of KCHKKHM-2 315.7-14 describes briefly the topic of these two now-lost testimonia of the ministers and queens, maintaining that the Zla-ba'i 'dod-po and Dar-dkar gsal-ba inter alius gave details about how the 'king's' queens competed with one another (on dowry and seniority) and how service was rendered by all the ministers and the king's dbon po rnam (i.e. the king's successors in the royal line?) in the present of the king and how they erected tombs etc.

is the case with any kind of Tibetan scriptural material, a fair degree of carelessness in (re)copying and interpolation bastante taken place. No doubt, the geter-ston-s responsible for the purely biographical part of MNKB must have taken recourse to the original KCHKKHM (= lhAs-sa bKa'[d]-tshigs chen-mo) discovered or compiled during Atiśa's time for the compilation of these sections of their geter-ma rather than we shall assume that they both draw from a common proto-version. While the final compilation of MNKB arguably took form around 1170-1200 A.D., the KCHKKHM came into being some one hundred years earlier, say approximately 1050-1360 A.D. For instance, Nyang-ral shows, as already noted, in the appendix to his magnum opus, while briefly describing the king's Testament, which he, as discussed above, designated bKa'-rtsig[r]s chen-mo, that the work in reality is nothing but the KCHKKHM.39

39 Either grub-thob dNgos-grub or Shākya 'od/bzang-po, the glosses commenting the transmission and dissemination of MNKB differ, cf. MNKB E dkar-chags, 6sa-l-12sa, Rača ging-pa, gTer-bzung chen-mo, KA, 54.3-56.5 (276b-285b); 'Gos gZhon-nu dpal DTHNG (II) 1073.1-1175.5, Roerich, II, pp. 1005-68; lPa-bo's HBCHBY (IJA) 1494-61; The Vihār Lalitā, gSan-yig, III, 130.5-131.3 (65b-63a); cf. Aris, 1979, pp. 9-12, but also Bloudeau, 1984 and Kapstein, 1992 passim.

The earliest testimonies or references to (parts of) the MNKB being transmitted are e.g. chronicled in DTHNG (II, 1095.12-13, Roerich, pp. 941-42), where She-rab 'od (1166-1244 A.D.) in 1184-85 A.D. received the three cycles of Avalokiteśvara from dNgos-grub. Cf. also note 28 above. An almost contemporary witness is provided by Pho-jo 'brag-sgam Zhig-po (1184-1241 A.D.), in which (you)th around 1190-95 A.D.?), according to Aris, 1979, pp. 9-12, the existence of MNKB cannot be added. Another part of MNKB, the section Gab-pa mgon-po-pa (cf. note 29 above) was, as recorded by lPa-bo and gZhon-nu dpal (cf. HBCHBY IJA) 1488-1494; DTHNG (II, 165-17-170.13-180.1, 180.13-186.10, Roerich, pp. 129-30, 134.141, 142-148), transmitted from the noted ldos-gron chen-sig Zhit-sig po bDud-rtsi (1149-1199 A.D.), a famous pupil of Nyang-ral Nya-ma 'od-zer and a colleague of lhAs-je dpal-ba-bum, himself a prominent MNKB text-transmitter, and a key figure in the dissemination of dRtags-chen precepts in Tibet. We can observe that the latter text along with collateral precepts, an exposition on its meditative practice, and the other dRtags-chen precepts, from dBus-po sTon-shak, alias Dam-pa sBrug-pa (? 1164-65 A.D.), when he was sixteen years of age in 1164-65 A.D. This may also add weight to our attempted identification of dBus-pa sTon-shak with the MNKB gTer-stong dSnags (rDo-rje bDud-rtsi) Shākya bzang-po, who is recorded to be the discoverer of this cycle in Jo-khang. Shākya bzang-po and Shākya 'od must therefore be distinct personages. Cf. also Prats, 1984, pp. 199-200.

Incidences where, on one side, local lords who were descendants and scions of the ancient Yar-khang court and thus ultimately boasting descent from king Srong-btsan sgam-po and, on the other side, spiritual text-headers transmitting the Vīra-tradition of this king are reported to have met could possibly be cited at greater length. Sufficient to it refer to one such incidence, where the above-mentioned She-rab 'od, to whom parts of the MNKB were transmitted, in 1195-96 A.D. is reported to have attended teachings professed by two text-holders of KCHKKHM, the Dharmasamādhi 'Bes-gung-pa (1143-1217 A.D.) and DGYA-ma Rin-chyung sNgag-pa, alias lPa-bon-ston (1138-1210 A.D.) at the Yar-khung court of Jo-bo rin-byor, a scion of the old dynasty. Cf. note 1796 infra. We need not confess any difficulty in envisaging how in such an environment, with spiritual and ancestral interests coinciding, the cult and legacy of Srong-btsan sgam-po would find genial soil for its promotion.

40 CHBYMTNP Tafel 363.2.5-2: de yang rgyal po bka' chams kyi yi ge 'di yang lchosho ba dang lhos po dang lnyed pa dka' ba se lji ljar dka' na lseg bod nam bsa pa'as gang [olg
The extant versions of bk’ha’-chems Ka-khol-ma at our disposal are all later copied apographs (dpe chung bshus pa), differently sized, of the original text-scrolls (phyi mo shog drift) extracted by Atisha in Jo-khang. In the largest (rgyas zhor) version of the three copies made from the original, \[41\] the general transmission-line of the king’s Testament(s) is delineated to comprise ten religious figures. \[42\]

From Atisha (982-1054 A.D.) the (set of three?) Vita-copy(ies) were/were transmitted to Bang-ston, then to Stod-lungs-pa, to sPyan-snga-pa, to sNge’u-zur-pa, to ‘Bri-gung-pa, then to Rgya-ma-pa, to Rva-sgra-gong-pa, to dKon-bzang, from whom it was given to dRo-rje tshul-khrims, who finally handed it over to the final (anonymous) text-holder. Many of these figures, as seen below, are predominantly illustrious and prominent bk’ha’-gdamgs-pa masters of their time, a fact which not only points to the general import accorded the Vita-tradition, but also signals the religious milieu that furthered and transmitted it.

Attempting to identify the individual text-holders, we can observe that from Atisha, who, it is stipulated, \[43\] was regarded as very the epitome of Árya Avalokitesvara Mahákásñika

\[m(a yin) pa] m i shas l dad pa yang m[í] shyth pa dman pas m ã go.[\]

The almost similar passage in KCHEKM-2 320.1:5: bka’ chems kyi yi ge ‘diyang ratshon bar dka’i thos par dka’ ba 1 mneyed par dka’ ba yin te 1 dje liar dka’ the na i ye shes rabs ‘gyur mas lugs bstan lai rgyan gyis mneyed pa dang bstan par nas par dka’ bar so; cf. also KCHEKM-1 619.2-3; KCHEKM-3 364.6-365.1.

\[41\] Without access to additional versions and to further information beyond the data given in the colophons, it is hardly possible to declare satisfactorily the actual procedure behind the transmission of the text. KCHEKM-2, op. cit. 319.14-320.6, 321.10-19, informs us that three sizes (rgyas ‘bring bsdud) of the matrix, the original Ms-scrolls (phyi mo shog drim gmuk po) of the testament(s) were properly executed. This possibly refers to the three testaments found by Atisha, cf. note 38 supra.

Another line of transmission, retained in all three extant versions, contains three names, cf. note 53 infra. It is stated how four or even five phyi ms-po were collected, then revised linguistically, and how dge-bshtes rNal’byor copied the text and handed it over to the two next text-holders. Cf. also note 960 infra.

\[42\] Cf. the colophon to KCHEKM-1 618.5-619.3; KCHEKM-2 320.6-11; 321.9-19; cf. also KCHEKM-3 367.4-5.

\[43\] KCHEKM-2 2.3-5, 315.14-316.1. This is doubtlessly a posthumous ascription produced in order to cement the spiritual anchoring and the emanational nexus alluded to at note 19 above.

On the importance of Avalokitesvara for Atisha and on gdamgs ngag, sādhana(s) and related teachings on his cult within the bk’a-gdamgs-pa school transmitted to Atisha from his contemporary Rähu lagcugtavargs and then again from Atisha to Nag-tsho and Lag-sor-pa etc., cf. Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan, bk’ha’-gdamgs chos-lugs phyi-srung-mes, 338b1-340b1. Cf. also Atisha’s biographical tradition, Eimer, rNam-thar rgyan-pa, sect. 376-377 (pp. 276-277).

Kapstein, 1992, op. cit. p. 85ff., has recently supplied us with some material, much of which go back to the earliest post-dynastic period and which shed some light on the genesis as to how Tibet became the bodhisattva’s buddhakaya and how his Six-syllabic mantra was destined to become the country’s lha skul etc., the scriptural authority of which was such as to make it the standard rule of conduct or appeal of the sūtras like Ka-ragphan têm. As already noted by Kapstein, it is most revealing indeed to observe the missionary Kāracāndryība. Also, the view of KCHEKM, where these views were fully endorsed. The role of Atisha in this formative phase, being the first great figure in promoting the practice in Tibet of mediational techniques focusing on Avalokitesvara, should therefore not be underestimated. Kapstein draws in this respect our attention to three major systems of khris on the.

Avalokitesvara-sādhana(s) originating from this Bengal master: bk’ha’ gdamgs lha phag bsdug rgyag gi, sKyur sgrang (i.e. sKyur-gang-pa Dharma seng-ge) lugs kyi sgrang rgyas gits and dpal-mo (or Laksam) lugs kyi sgrang rgyas gits. In fact, in the XIX-XIII century the picture of the teachings pertaining to the Avalokitesvara cycle had already become fairly complex. Ba-ri Lo-tsil (b. 1040 A.D.), for instance, is also recorded to have been a central figure in the dissemination of related teachings as delineated in the Blue Annals (Roerich, pp. 1020-21) and the latter (identical? here called Ba-ri dbang-ba dpal-gyi yon-tan) is also mentioned in an interlinear gloss in KCHEKM-2 278.7, where he is prophesied once to be the embodiment of a sgrags pa extolled in retrospect for the assassination of the demonic anti-Buddhist king and ministers who caused the abolition of Buddhism around 841 A.D. The same work, op. cit. 286.19-287.1, in another interlinear gloss, mentions lla-ma Zhang and Dvags-po sGom-lus, the later was disciple of Hpa-leg-pan-pa (1107-1155 A.D.).

Note: Finally, as is also pointed out by Kapstein, the popularity and special approbation accorded MNKB and the Avalokitesvara and Srong-btsan-sgam-po cult in the bk’ha’-gdamgs-pa and later dGe-legs-pa circles. Where in the first post-dynastic centuries Avalokitesvara, by now already a symbol for Tibet as a national protector and palladium, was extolled as the central figure in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon and Jo-khang constantly held in undivided esteem by all denominations as a religious heritage of national import, the dGe-legs-pa-s, and in particular the Vih Dalai Lama, seem to have stressed the religious aspects. While the later is recorded to have studied these teachings with enthusiasm and approval, with all its comestant religious or mythical implications, it certainly also carried political and historical significance, crucial for the notion and legitimation of divine kingship in Tibet, inasmuch as the Dalai-Lama institutionalization in form of his own person’s emanational nexus or rapport with this divinity was to become decisively cemented precisely during his reign.

44 Or Bang-ston Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan. A prominent pupil and benefactor of Atisha, who, e.g. invited him to sNyè-thang, cf. Eimer, rNam-thar rgyan-pa, s.v. index. DTINGPH (l. 315.18-19; Roerich, p. 256): bka’-gdamgs chos-lugs phyi-srung-mes, 79a3-b6. He established the temple of ‘Or (the district in which sNyè-thang is located) after Atisha’s death. No chronology of him has survived.

45 Cf. YLJBCHY 119.7-10; DTINGPH (l. 348.16-349.5, Roerich, p. 286); HBCHY (Chin. ed. l. 718.19-20); see also among numerous bka’-gdamgs-pa histories, Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan, bka’-gdamgs chos-lugs, 166b2, 166b3-167b3; Eimer, ib., s.v. index.

46 Cf. DTINGPH 26a1; YLJBCHY 99.5-6, 118.15-119.6; DTINGPH (l. 322.5-9, 347.1-348.16, Roerich, pp. 263, 284-286); bka’-gdamgs chos-lugs, 164b1-164b3; HBCHY (Chin. ed. l. 710.11-12); Eimer, ib., s.v. index. Famous pupil of Atisha, in 1195 A.D. he built the temple of Lo.

47 Cf. DTINGPH (l. 377.2-380.15, Roerich, pp. 311-314); bka’-gdamgs chos-lugs, 120a6ff., 155a2-b5; HBCHY (Chin. ed. l. 707.16-17); Eimer, ib., s.v. index. The lineage of sPyan-snga and sNe’u-zur-pa within bka’-gdamgs-pa is known as the so-called line of Preceptor-holders (gdamgs ngag pa).

48 Cf. e.g. DTINGPH (l. 702.1-703.8, Roerich, pp. 596-601). It is tempting to assume here a corruption for Iha (‘Bri-sngag-pa (7a 1100-11590), cf. Eimer, 1991, pp. 164-165 and bka’-gdamgs chos-lugs, 227a6-b3). The royal house of Iha (‘Bri-sngag could in fact boast descent from the ancient kings of Yar-lung and thereby to king Srong-btsan-sgam-po, cf. the 1579 and 1811
rGya-ma-pa, alias dBon-ston Rin-po-che (1138-1210 A.D.),\(^49\) then to Rva-sgrang-pa,\(^{50}\) dKon-[mchog] bzang-po,\(^{51}\) and rDo-rje tshul-khrims, alias the 'Bri-gung mKhan-po Rin-po-che, (1154-1221 A.D.).\(^{52}\)

Simultaneously, the colophons of the three differently sized extant versions list\(^{53}\) another line of in total three figures copying and transmitting the text based upon the original found by Atiśa. While being present in all three versions, this may specifically allude to the transmission of the extant bKa-'chems Ka-khol-ma:

> From Atiśa to his pupil kalydnamitra rNam-'byor chen-po, alias A-mes [chen-po] Byang-chub 'byung-gnas or Byang-chub rin-chen (1015-1078 A.D.)\(^{54}\) to kalydnamitra sPyan-snag-pa, alias Tshul-khrims-'bar (1038-1103 A.D.), who then gave it to his pupil kalydnamitra Bya-yul-pa, alias gZhon-nu-'od (birth-name 'Bum-stag) (1075-1138 A.D.).\(^{55}\)

From the above material it is evident that the last bKa-'gdam-pa copyist and text-holder can be situated respectively in the middle of the XIIth and the XIIIth century. Aside from the above biographical material which hitherto has come down to us, further

\(^{infra}\)

\(^{49}\) Alias rGya-ma Rin-chen sgang-pa. Cf. e.g. DTHNGP (I, 380.5-382.11, Roerich, 315-316).

\(^{50}\) It is currently impossible unerringly to identify the person among the holders of the abuttal see of Ra-sgrang.

\(^{51}\) Currently unidentified.

\(^{52}\) This is most probably the 1st hierarchical or the holder of the abuttal see (gda-rn as) of 'Bri-gung, cf. DTHNGP (II, 715.7-716.2, Roerich, pp. 608-609), holding the chair from 1217-1221 A.D. Cf. also H. Sato, “The Lineage of the 'Bri-gung-pa in Tibet during the Ming Period”, Tôyô Gakubô 45, 1962/63, pp. 434-452.

\(^{53}\) Cf. KCHKKHM-1 615.2-619.4; KCHKKHM-2 321.14-20; KCHKKHM-3 366.3-367.5. Cf. also Eimer, rNam-thar rgyas-pa, sect. 337, (p. 264); Eimer, 1983. Cf. also note 55 infra.

\(^{54}\) Abbot of Rva-sgrang, e.g. BCBBY (Chin. ed. I, 683.22-23); DTHNGP (I, 321.2-3, 324.10-11, Roerich, pp. 262, 265); bKa-'gdam-pa chos-'byung, 107b1-108b2; Eimer, rNam-thar rgyas-pa, s.v. index. A prominent pupil of Atiśa who also sponsored the master's sojourn in bSam-yas and sNyêe-thang.

\(^{55}\) Cf. e.g. VLBCBBY 119.10-121.5; DTHNGP (I, 349.5-356.7, Roerich, pp. 286-292); bKa-'gdam-pa chos-'byung, 155a4, 171b2-177b3; BCBBY (Chin. ed. I, 718.21-22).

The list in rNam-thar rgyas-pa, sect. 337, mentions two more generations of text-holder, aside from the above three, one Ri-gsom, who eventually handed it over to the custodian(s) of Ra-sa 'Phur- nag-po-khang, who, we may presume, from then on continued to be text-holders and guardians of the Va, cf. ref. to dPa-bo and note 26 supra.

This is an important observation. Precisely, and hence perhaps not unsurprisingly, the jo-khang custodians were the ones who motivated local rulers to have the editio princeps of GLR printed in bSa-sa in 1476 A.D. What could have been a more natural milieu to promote the Srong-btsan sgam-po cult than in the temple raised by himself.
The titles of some of these listed here most probably refer to additional or supplementary designations of one and the same work, the bKa'-chems Ka-brol-ma while these titles often appear in succession and thus indicate supplementary appellations. 58

Summing up, the upshot of our reflections allows us to reason that the compilation and dissemination of the king’s Vita are to be found in the milieu around Atiśa, possible also bolstered by the increasingly popular Avalokiteśvara-cult prevailing then, the decisive initiative however coming from a local ruler or dnam-pa in Iha-sa responsible for the care of the temple. 59 Yet in the final analysis, we shall not be able to clarify conclusively whether or not Atiśa was factually engaged in the discovery or recovery of the king’s Vita or whether it was first discovered, i.e. finally compiled after the master’s passing and posthumously connected with his name and universal repute.

The parallels between the two royal biographies and the story of the erection of two temples of Ra-sa and bSam-yas are so numerous and evident that a certain measure of affinity can be inferred. The concrete incentive to execute the king’s biography and his temple’s Enstehungsgeschichte may have materialized in connection with a belated or recombinatorial consecration of Ra-sa ‘Phrul-snang and bSam-yas conceivably conducted by Atiśa during his repeated sojourns at these sites, a direct testimony of which we do not possess, but which indirectly can be assumed from a note chronicled by DPa’-bo. This historian stated that until Atiśa’s time, the earlier attempts to consecrate Iha-sa and bSam-yas respectively performed in the wake of their erection had been inchoate, while it restricted itself mainly to the expression of maṅgala etc. and the proper ritual procedure of consecration was first introduced with or from the period of Atiśa.

62 Throughout the later part of the dynastic period his name is recorded as ‘Phurul gyi lha (i.e. sageking; for this metonymy, cf. note 642 infra) Khrī (~ khrī pa, i.e. throne-holder, king) Srong-brtan/bsa-ston. While the later souveniouri or hypocritical complement sgam-po added to his name already ascribed to him (and other kings) in the Chronicle, op. cit. 118.6 et passim and later (a Buddhist predicative arguably reflecting Skt. gomāra and qualifying the king’s (regarded on a par with Buddha) thought and intent (gongs pa, thugs, samāni), cf. e.g. note 961ff. infra) was prevalent from the phyi-dir period, the full form Srong-brtan sgam-po is also attested from the last part of the dynastic period, cf. e.g. the Danhuang Chronicle (date uncertain, possibly Xth century; Baccot et al., pp. 118.23-24, 161) and sBa-bzhi. Incidentally, the Chronicle has also retained the original form Khrī Srong-brtan, suggesting that this dossier is an uneven and concocted confluence of differently dated narratives. If the king’s full form nevertheless can be further substantiated in pre-Xth century material, it is yet another viable element in underpinning our contention that the posthumous depiction and Buddhist transformation of the king as an embodiment of Avalokiteśvara, so forcefully and uniformly propounded in the king’s biographical writings, has its root in the later part of dynastic period.

For a discussion of his dates, still conclusively unsettled, cf. the notes 449, 1046 infra.

63 Buddhist post-dynastic historians have attempted to classify the general (non-Tantric) introduction of Dharma in Tibet: One tradition speaks about the very early (mythic) introduction or beginning (dbyung brnyes) of Buddhism in Tibet, invariably ascribed to lHa Tho-tho-ri sray-sphan (cf. note 356 infra). This ascription appears to be post-dynastic, while no pre-Xth century material seems to warrant this depiction. Another (or parallel) tradition, this time connected with king Srong-brtan sgam-po, speaks about the introduction or opening of the tradition of Sadākṣara (in Tibet) dpa’ pa chos sro phe ba), its (subsequent) anchoring (slob bsdus pa) or establishment (rather than taking this phase to stand for the formative part) and its (final) full mastering (slob ‘dzin pa). Cases of a combination (at least succession) of the phases i.e. dbyung brnyes slob bsdus is e.g. found in Nyang-ral’s CHBY MTNYP 17546, 292a3. Albeit this phasic division in its final form was formulated in the Xth century at the earliest (and parallels a well-known similar division describing the phyi-dir period, cf. Vitali, 1990, pp. 37, 62), the ascription to the king appears nevertheless to have originated in the dynastic period itself, while Khrī-stong lde-bsan in his bKa’-‘chad (composed ca. 779-780 A.D.) ascribes the phrase sangs rgyas kyi chen thog mar rnam lzed to Khrī Srong-brtan [sgam-po], cf. HBCHY (JA) 110d2.

The king’s Vita itself (mid-Xth century) repeatedly stipulates this glorifying aspect of king Srong-brtan sgam-po, cf. KCK HHM 314.2-3, 315.6-7 and 318.3-4. There the king is merited for bsdus yul dus su dam pa chos kyi sro gshang bsdus nas lchos khor lha sa bcang po’i lugs sro paa’i bka’ chams kha brol ma chos bya ba.

A good parallel would be the role played by Iha-bsan sngon-mo reigning in bSam-yas and who lived in the beginning and middle part of the Xth century (cf. note 1595 infra). He was a scion of Ye-sun and himself recognized as a gTer-ston by being regarded as a key disseminator in the transmission or lineage of a number of biographical treasuries pertaining to the tradition of Padmasambhava.

61 Cf. the notes 897 and 1319 infra.
For a good survey of the mythic role, the creed and religious ambience of the king, not discussed here, see the epoch-making study by A. Macdonald, 1971 and for another readable summary, A.W. Macdonald, 1984.

64 A number of contemporary dynastic sources acknowledges that Buddhist activity flourished during the reign of King Khri-srong-blu-grub. Khri-srong lde-btsan, both in his bKa-’gtig-sig and in his bKa-’gyur-mchad (of 779–780 A.D.), as well as the sKa-chung yda-bzang-slu-ding[s] dating, no doubt, from the inception of the 17th century (i.e. ca. 800–815 A.D.) and the bKa-’gtig-sig or reconfirmatory edict by Sad-na-legs, all record that the temples such as the Rab-wa Phrul-snar-snang or, as it was also known, Ra-sa Bi-bur-ha-ra (= vdzha) and the rGya-bzugs (= rGya-stag, cf. note 831 infra) Ra-mo-che etc. (la stogs pa = la sogs pa) were erected during his reign. Cf. HBCHBY (JA) 109a-l-2, 110a-4-5, 120a-4-5 and Richardson, 1985, pp. 74-75. Cf. also the previous note and the opening passage in sB-bzhyed, where the occurrence of dam pa ’i lha chos is ascribed to the period of King Khri-lde gtsug-btsan according to a prophecy allegedly found in King Srong btsan sgyur-po’s bHa’’s che’ms. Naturally, this ex eventu prophecy itself originated at the earliest of the period of King Khri-lde gtsug-btsan. It does however tell us that at that point Srong-btsan sgam-po was conceived as a Buddhist monarch.

65 Cf. Chap. XIV paslim and note 831.

66 Cf. note 836 infra.

67 Cf. most recently Vitali, 1990, p. 71ff.

68 Cf. note 560 infra.


70 This source, op. cit. 320,11-15 has a strange passage which may serve at least to expand the scheme: rgya gar dang rgya nag nas bod du dam pa’i chos diggar pa’i lo stsho pa bstan po chen po sgrigs pa lchos mi sar bho ta dang ’yur gston sbson yul bsung gnis yin cing rgyal po srog bsan sgam po’i sgyan zngag diggar pa’i lo stsho chen por gargs so.

Information that the famous 17th century minister and general mGar, a popular protagonist in the Via of Srong-btsan sgam-po, should have functioned as Sino-Tibetan Dharma translator is nowhere documented. This is a piece of post-dynastic fiction. On the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that the minister mastered the Chinese language, spending, as he did, most of his later years in the vast borderland and territories between Tibet and China.
While convincing contemporary evidence is generally lacking in the early historical records, documents and inscriptions as well in the earlier Tibetan Buddhist tradition embodying older strata of historical data to regard Srong-btsan sgam-po as an embodiment of an Indian Bodhisattva, other clues are not entirely absent.

Albeit scriptural evidence of the Avalokiteśvara cult and teachings connected with this divinity therefore may appear signaly sparse in the earliest period, it is not necessarily indicative of the absence of any archaeological and artistic testimony as generally assumed. As alluded to above, the artistic representation of Buddhist vestige and idolatry, not unimportant in any missionary quest and campaign, appears to have supplemented, when not altogether eclipsing, the ditto scriptural and textual dissemination. Vestige of the cult’s popularity therefore appears to have prevailed. Our earliest lead to this seems to be traced in BZH, the matrix of which was compiled ca. 800 A.D. On one hand the text records that Srong-btsan sgam-po was regarded as an incarnation of Ārya Lo-ke-ta, i.e. Lokéśvara, (cf. e.g., Chin. ed. 2.14-15). It remains to be settled whether this piece of information pertains to the original core of BZH or whether it was later interpolated into the text, while BZH underwent a number of redactional revisions in the phyi-dar period. Another solid piece of argument, also chronicled in BZH, and this time unequivocally originating from the core-part of this ancient document, may be seen in the chapel (gling) dedicated to Ārya-palo and raised in bSam-yas (763-775 A.D., inaugurated 779 A.D.) during king Khri-srong ldie-btsan (742-797 A.D.). In this chapel, the principal image of Avalokiteśvara was marked as Khasarpana, a well-known form of Avalokiteśvara widely prevalent already from the dynastic period, murals were executed with illustrated scenes gleaned e.g. from the Kāṇḍavyūhasūtra, the mythological cult-text of Avalokita par excellence. No doubt, it was foremost through these forms that his cult permeated Tibet. A set of trustworthy texts even adduces that an effigy to question neither the antiquity of this chapel nor the genuinity of this piece of information.

In retrospect, Srong-btsan sgam-po, an able warrior-king and a ruler of a lovely knitted tribal and normadic state, was in essence hardly any devoted Buddhist, at least it was a religious tradition which he first came to know of, possibly only rudimentarily, towards the end of his life. His confession and beliefs, foremost demonstrated by Macdonald in her penetrating study from 1971 and further elucidated by R. Stein in a string of trenchant semantic analyses, were grounded in and around a complex cultic, most credibly institutionalized tradition based upon a set of magico-religious ideas (autochthonous as well as Tibetanized concepts of possible Chinese origin expressed via terms such as tsegig/gtsug lag, sku bla, 'phrul etc.), at the centre of which stood an elaborate emperor and ancestral cult having evident parallels with or bearings on the Chinese ditto. Moreover, as already alluded to and demonstrated elsewhere and further corroborated in this study, the Newari cultural and religious influence in Tibet during king Srong-btsan sgam-po can be richly documented. King Narendradeva, with his Licchavi-court in exile in Lhasa until 641 A.D., i.e. until the end of the king’s first term of rule, could in some seminal form arguably have transmitted the Lokeśvara and the Avalokiteśvara (later fused with the Mātayānandī) cult, enjoying extensive popularity in contemporary Nepal during the Licchavi period, to Tibet during these years of exile in Tibet. Or most evidently through his putative daughter, Khri-btsan, when or if we one day can provide irrefutable proofs of her historicity, the validity of which becomes, albeit still shadowy, increasingly evident in our historical reappraisal. Unfortunately, her name is utterly absent from the usual reliable contemporary sources and only indirectly verifiable through the artistic traces purportedly left behind by her in form of Ra-sa 'Phur-lung.75

From Chinese side, Beckwith has pointed out that king Srong-btsan sgam-po from the Tang-emperor Gao-zong (649-683 A.D.), in the wake of the emperor’s enthronement in 649 A.D. He was requested by the title Bao-wang, i.e. ‘Precious King’ or ‘King of Jewels’, a special imperial prerogative of the ‘King of the West’ and in Chinese culture often employed to refer to Amitābha. Transmitting this imperial appellation to a Buddhist one could rather early, already in the later part of the VIIIth or the beginning of the IXth century, have contributed to pave the way for the recognition of this king as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, the spiritual emanation of Amitābha. This post-festum titulization of Buddhist incarnation of king Srong-btsan sgam-po therefore coincided with the period when, once the Indian-oriented Buddhist tradition had become the established religion in Tibet, the king in retrospect become regarded as the founder of Buddhism in Tibet. But while the nexus between the king and the tutelary bodhisattva and its cult-building were soundly established already in the beginning of the phyi-dar period as shown above and henceforth both immensely and universally promoted, there are now sound reasons to assume that its imprint was already set in the later phase of the dynasty.

71 Later tradition as well as Tibetans themselves employ as the most authoritative and conclusive argument a ‘story about two monks’ from Li-yü or Khutan for the divine equation or incarnational nexus between the king and Avalokiteśvara, cf. note 920 infra.

72 The Kāṇḍavyūha was registered in the oldest Catalogue of 812 A.D., but another tradition claims tenaciously that the otherwise nebulous script-inventor Thon-mi translated a number of Avalokiteśvara-related texts incl. the above sūtra over a century before. Cf. note 490 and Appendix, note 92. In the light of the incontestable Nepalese presence during the king’s reign and deeming the general popularity of the Avalokiteśvara cult in the Licchavi period (ca. 300-879 A.D.) in Nepal and northern India, an earlier introduction to Tibet of his cult is altogether feasible. Cf. Slusser, 1972, pp. 272, 280-283.

73 Cf. note 1283 infra.

74 Vitali, 1990, pp. 70-74 and more generally on Newār artistic influence in Tibet, cf. Lo Bue, 1989, "The Newār Artists of the Nepāl Valley". OrientArt 31, pp. 252-277, 356-384. It should also not go unmentioned that the celebrated six-sylabic dhāranī of Avalokiteśvara has been traced in the Dunhuang material.

75 Cf. the discussion ad note 560 infra and Chap. XIV and XV.

76 Beckwith, 1987, op. cit. p. 24, n. 71. This point however deserves further scrutiny.
Before we focus on the rgyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long and the ideological milieu in which it originated, seen on the background of its literary presuppositions debated at some length above, the key questions as to its authorship and dating must naturally be addressed first.

We shall here abstain from reiterating in full the now seemingly overworked topic as to the authorship and date of GLR. For details on past research conducted on GLR or what may be called its Forschungsgeschichte, it may suffice therefore to refer to A. Vostrikov, 1970, pp. 67-78 and C. Vogel, 1981, pp. 3-9. The detailed solution to the relevant problems was made public by P.K. Sørensen, 1986, pp. 29-64 and independent thereof by Z. Yamaguchi, 1985(a), pp. 1043-1066 also.

However, since scholars still draw wrong and now outdated conclusions from the material, it is deemed worthwhile to recap in a piecemeal fashion the background for the ambiguous data that hitherto have blunted a proper identification of the authorship and the correlative question of its dating.

From the author's colophon (byang) we are informed that Sa-skya-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan successfully compiled (legs par byrgigs pa) his work at the mahāvidyāra of bSam-yas in an earth-male-dragon year (sa pho 'brag).

This year-indication has long remained a minor conundrum, while it can only refer to 1328 A.D. within the life-span of Sa-skya-pa Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan who lived from 1312 until 1375 A.D. This has on one side prompted some scholars to assume that the Bla-ma dam-pa started compiling his work in 1328 only to complete it towards the end of his life, in case of which it indeed could be considered a prolonged compilation of quite an uncommon length. As we shall see in the sequel this assumption is totally unfounded. Even aged sixty-six would most certainly not irritate the compilation of such a mature work at this early point of his career.

Alternatively, Vostrikov, supporting himself upon a number of strange scholia, has attempted to seek another solution to the chronological knot. He proposed that the real author

77 This is the most common title and the one we shall opt for while it is the title found referred to in numerous sources. In the author's colophon we also find Chos-byung gsal-ba'i me-long and rgyal-rabschos-byung gsal-ba'i me-long. The front-page of the sDe-dge edition even reads rgyal-rabs rnam kyi byung-tshul gsal-ba'i me-long, which clearly is a late enlargement of the title.

78 Vogel, 1981, p. 5 and most recently 1991, p. 407, n. 42, where Vogel again falsely argues that Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan started to compile GLR in 1328 A.D. Vogel has failed to understand the chronological figures and calculation given in GLR Chap. I (see below) even though it is the topic of his recent article.


was Jo-bo'i dKon-gnyer-dpon Legs-pa'i shes-rab.80 These scholia have already been rendered in full by Vostrikov, Vogel and Sørensen and need not be repeated here. They ultimately go back to the Vh Dalai Lama, the first to claim, for still unknown reason, that Legs-pa'i shes-rab was the author (trisem pa po) of GLR.81 This is absolutely unfounded and must be rejected from the very outset. As we can conclude from the printing colophon (par byang) of the IA-sa editio princeps of 1478 A.D., it is abundantly clear that the Jo-khang steward Legs-pa'i shes-rab was the printer or rather the editor of this xylographic print, ni plus ni minus. Legs-pa'i shes-rab in fact commences this colophon of his, a small metrical piece couched in elaborate medieval literary Tibetan quite unlike Bla-ma dam-pa's diction, by paying his respects to the actual author of GLR Bla-ma dam-pa probably by repeating aloud to his name and epithets in the sual eulogistic manner, a simple observation evidently or perhaps deliberately ignored by Vostrikov.

The author of GLR is thus unequivocally Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan.

Before continuing the genesis of GLR, we shall briefly sketch out our author's vita.82 bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan, one of the true luminaries of the XIVth century, being on a par with Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364) and Klong-chen Rab-byams-pa Tshul-khrims bIlogros (1308-1363), was known through a number of epithets and honorific appellations: Sa-skya dPal-'dan, 'Gro-ba'i bla-ma (or mgon-po, i.e. Jagadguru, nātha), Chos-rje (Dharmasvāmin),

80 Vostrikov, 1970, pp. 73-75. The chronological assessment by Vostrikov of the genealogical expositions of the post-dynastic ruling houses of Central Tibet is also wrong. Regrettably, the same line of argumentation is pursued by Chab-spel in a draft-paper (delivered at Fagerø, 1992, as yet unpublished) discussing the author and date of GLR and entitled Bod kyi lo-rgya deb-thar kha-cig dang 'brel yod gnad dzo bzig gling-ba. Cf. op. cit. p. 5. Chab-spel even claims that Legs-pa'i shes-rab was a contemporary of Bla-ma dam-pa and possibly one of his pupils. This is positively wrong.

81 The Vh Dalai Lama, if no deeper reason should be sought, has evidently confused (due to a cursory misreading?) the statement given in the author's colophon that the work had been successfully compiled (legs par byrgigs pa) (by Bla-ma dam-pa) with the statement in the colophon that the work inter alia had been successfully executed (legs par sgrub pa; i.e. successfully printed; legs par [Ibar du] sgrubs) (by Legs-pa'i shes-rab).

82 Sources consulted on his life include: YLJBSCHBY 163.9.170.11; Bu-ston's rNam-thar 19a3, 20b5, 22a7, 22b6, 27a5, 30a6 (ed. and tr. Ruogg); GBYTSH, II, 2084-27a4; Lam-bras slob-bhād (Vol. KHA 1b1-237a5); cf. 193b4-203b2 incl. the Bla-ma dam-pa biography written by Bla-ma dPal-'dan tshul-khrims; Sa-skya dge-dun-rabs-chos-men written by A-m'lyes-zhabs (1579-1659 A.D.) (of 1629 A.D.) (ed. Dolgaj 1975) 1b1-334a6; cf. 161a1-180b1, where A-m'yes-zhabs has based his biographical sketch upon partly extant (cf. note 87 infra) and partly non-extant rnam thar-sa and dge-dun rabs written by some of Bla-ma dam-pa's pupils such as söl-tsa-bl Ba-lag-chab mce-mo (1303-1580 A.D.). Chos-rje Nyi-ide, gTsang Byams-pa rdo-rje rgyal-mtshan, Shes-rab rdo-rje, Karma Byams Chos-pa Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan; DTHZHIG 100.11-16; rJe-bsun Thams-cad mkhyen-po dGang-skya Rol-pa'i rdo-rje'i khung-rabs by 'Jam-dyangs bhad-pa'i rdo-rje (1648-1722 A.D.), vol. KHA of gSang-lung, 15th section (yold 'dab) 31b3-45a3. Cf. also Tochi, 1949, II, p. 627; cf. also mKhas-bsam bsag pa, Biographical Dictionary of Tibet, X, pp. 294-322; K.H. Ewing, 1988, pp. 113-121; Sørensen, 1986, pp. 33-37; Jackson, 1989, pp. 89, 173, 258; Pettich, 1990, passim.

The reliquary or ossuary mchod rten containing the remains of Bla-ma dam-pa was until 1959 found in sNy-e-thang close to IA-sa. It did not survive the vandalism during the Cultural Revolution, cf. Dowman 1988, p. 136.
and often with the appellation dpal-bzang-po, like with other members of the 'Khon clan, affixed to his name.

The most commonly used epithet and one used throughout this work by us, was Bla-ma dam-pa (*Sadguru).

Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po was born in the water-male-rat year of the Vth prabhava, corresponding to 1312 A.D., on the eighth day of the fourth month (= 16.5.1312) in the Bla brang gong ma pertaining to the Rin-chen-sang branch of the Sa-skya principality as the third (out of nine brothers and half-brothers in all) and last son of bDag-nyid chen-po dpal-bzang-po (1262-1322/1323 A.D.)48 and one of his wives Zha-lu Ma-geg gZhon-nu-bum (b. 1285). He passed away at bSam-yas age sixty-three in the wood-female-hare year of the Vth prabhava, corresponding to 1375 A.D., on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month (= 23.7.1375).

The particulars of his religious training and career follow almost costumarity the tenor of the standard hagiographical writings of his days. Early in his religious training as infant at Rin-chen-sang, it is recorded that he listened to and received the initiations of Cakrasamvara ('Khor-lo bDe-mchog) according to the system of Ghanṭāpa (Dril-bu-pa). Age three, mKhas-grub chen-po Rong-pa Shes-rab seng-ge (1251-1315 A.D.) rendered him service while the infant boy received and listened to the initiation of Yamāntaka (gShin-rje'i gshed). He further received initiation, authorization and instructions from Bla-ma bSam-sdings Zhang and Bla-ma bzang-po of sGro Mon-can. In the presence of Bla-ma Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po (1239-1319 A.D.), he listened to the mūlākāra of Hevajra (brTag gnys). Aged eight, amidst a circle of learned ptikadakara-s at Rin-chen-sang he demonstrated the skill of elucidating and reciting by heart large portions of textual passages from the theoretical writings of the previous ancestral (ub mes) Sa-skya-pa Gong-ma-s.

At the age of eleven, in 1322, he requested for and received the samvarā of an Upāsaka in the presence of Bla-chen Khim-dga' blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1299-1327),85 and received consecutively various initiations in the cycles of Samvara, Hevajra and Tārā etc. along with their appropriate instruction (upadēśa), authorization (lung) and khrid.

At the age of seventeen, 1328 A.D., he formally renounced the world (pravrajya), i.e. became ordained, and as a śramaṇera he received his religious name bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan, his birth-name having until then been Nyi-ma bde-ba'i blo-gros.

At the age of twenty in 1331 A.D. he completed his upasampada in the vihāra of Bodong E (of) Bya-rgod (in) gShangs together with his elder brother Don-yod rgyal-mtshan (1310-1344 A.D.), thus becoming a fully ordained bhikṣu.

During the following years he pursued his adult religious career becoming well-versed in the curriculum of both Pāramiṭāyāna and Mantrayāṇa. Ultimately he proved full proficiency of the three intellectual endeavours of any monk-scholar: didactic exposition, doctrinal dispute and scriptural composition (chad rtson rtson gsum). To quote the Vth Dalai Lama: "The glorious Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan...distinguished himself by gaining eminence in all the vidyāsthāna-s, assumed the lofty position of Vajradhara and thus became a true cādālamkara among all the Sa-skya brTan-'dzin-s..."86 By the age of twenty-six in 1353 A.D. he had already made himself a name near and far.

He occupied the throne of the great see (abbbatial seat) (gdan sa chen po) of the Sa-skya hierarchy (go sa), i.e. Sa-skya gZhi-thog Gong-ma from 1343-1344 until 1347, as the XIVth Abbot of Sa-skya, leaving the throne rather abruptly for reasons still unknown to us. The ensuing years were characterized by his numerous journeys, making halts all over Central Tibet such as at bSam-yas where he conferred endless instructions and expositions upon various disciples. Worthy of note is that he over a span of years acted as the preceptor for the Gong-ma sDe-srid Phag-mo-gru-pa, alias Ta'i Sū-t'u Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan and at the end of his life, in 1373 A.D., he is even recorded to have acted as teacher for the young promising neophyte bTsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa (1357-1419 A.D.).

Among his writings (rtson pa), he is recorded to have left behind numerous commentaries, such as on Pramāṇavārttika, Abhisamayālakāra, Bodhi[sattva]-cāryāvātāra as well as commentaries on all the main treatises ascribed to Nāgārjuna. He is also registered to have writtenchos-'byung-s. In the hagiographical literature and in the extant catalogues, it should be noted, there is no direct registration found alluding to his compilation of Gyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long.87

86 Bla-ma dam-pa adhered to the lineage upholding the esoteric Maṇḍara-tradition of the Sa-skya-pa (sa skya'yi gnyan bskyed kyi bstan 'dzin) in contrast to the holders of the Śūtra-tradition (sa skya'yi mdo phigys bstan 'dzin), cf. e.g. Grub-mtha' shel gyi me-long 7a6, 91a9f. (ed. Ngawang Gelek Demo).

87 Sa-skya gdong-rabs chen-mo, 172b4 (= 344.4). This may allude to GLR, but more obviously to Lam-'bras chos-'byung ngo-mtshan snang-ba: Bla-ma brgyud-pa'i raamapar shad-pa ngo-mtshan snang-ba (cf. Lam-'bras slob-bshad, Rajpur 1983; PoKG Vol. 17 (MA)) written by Bla-ma dam-pa. Jackson, 1989, p. 258 mentions Lam-'bras khog-phub indited by our author. Bla-ma dam-pa is also registered to be the main sponsor for the first Sa-skya bka'-bum compilation, cf. Jackson, ibid, p. 89.

The relevant extant biographical material on Bla-ma dam-pa is silent on GLR. As it shall be discussed by L. W. van der Kuijip (Berlinische Indolinguistische Studien, 7 & 8, forthcoming), who surveys some of the earlier biographies of Bla-ma dam-pa (cf. note 82 above), written by his foremost disciples as well as an incomplete collection of Bla-ma dam-pa's own miscellaneous writings kept in Berlin (Library of Minza wewa na gong), this silence has prompted van der Kuijip to question the ascription of the authorship or compilership of GLR to Bla-ma dam-pa.

True, it is significantly conspicuous that none of the currently extant biographies dedicated the life of Bla-ma dam-pa mentions GLR among his surviving writings. An obvious, albeit not conclusive, reason for this absence in the catalogues compiled by his disciples listing Bla-ma dam-pa's oeuvres and its absence in these biographies may in fact be that any recording of GLR, which may be classified as a piece of secular historical writing, possibly was deemed insignificant or unfit (albeit, admittedly, this is nor always the case in other catalogues of the writings of holy saints) to be included or to be listed in a hagiographical Vīta, however complete, devoted almost exclusively to the religious life of a high-ranking saint like bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan. This assumption of ours is also vouched by the fact that, to my knowledge, the selfsame biographies are, in accordance with the nature of such writings, blissfully silent about the more 'political' activities of Bla-ma dam-pa, such as, inter alia, his recorded role and function as peace-keeping arbitrator in the on-going military clashes in Central Tibet.

However, without some groundbreaking or conclusive new information, the ascription to Bla-ma dam-pa is otherwise completely water tight: As it is documented by us, the colophon unerringly records the name of the compiler of the work, the Bla-ma editor unequivocally ascribes the work...
Prosecuting our discussion of GLR's date after this biographical digression, it is evident that another reason for the odd and inaccurate indication sa pho 'brag therefore must be sought. Acknowledging the inadmissibility of 1328 A.D. and equally rejecting the assumption that it refers to 1388 A.D., i.e., thirteen years after the author's passing, an equally untenable theory much cherished among contemporary Chinese scholars, a closer scrutiny of GLR itself offers both irrefutable and conclusive information to solve the question of the dating.

The key to the solution is found in the final part of the first Chapter of GLR which deals with the fixing of the dates of nirvāṇa of Buddha, a compulsory theme in almost any historiographical treatise. The particulars of the calculation and details on the favourite chronological system employed have already been amply discussed elsewhere and here we shall only draw the conclusions. Having quoted the well-known chronological systems of Aṭiśa and of the Sa-kyā-ma masters, Bla-ma dam-pa actually computes, combining this 5000-years duration theory with the Sa-kyā-ma calculation of Buddha's nirvāṇa and pursuing Bu-ston's own computation and procedure, the precise number of years elapsed from Buddha's nirvāṇa up to the current year of writing.

As can be noted from our translation of GLR, Bla-ma dam-pa first reckoned, citing here Bu-ston minutely, that until the year water-male-dog year (i.e. 1322 A.D., quoting Bu-ston), which marked the arrival of Bla-ma Ti-shri Kun-dga' blo-gros rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1299-1327 A.D.) in dbu-slig for his final ordination (upsem-palld), 3455 years had expired since Buddha's nirvāṇa and our author states, faithful to Bu-ston's text, that one was now in the 3456th year (i.e. 1323 A.D. when Bu-ston wrote his treatise). In the next step Bla-ma dam-pa calculates, taking as point of departure his own year of writing, the number of years that already had passed, i.e. 3502 years of the decuple 5000-years system and how many years that still remain of Sādharmā to last, i.e. 998 and 500 years, in all 1498 years that yet were to come. Thereby we can deduce the actual date of GLR's compilation in two ways: 3502 years minus 2134 (the Sa-kyā-ma nirvāṇa year) = 1368 or 1369 (both years included). Or indirectly by computing via Bla-ston's data, 3502 minus 3455 = 47 years; 1322 (Bu-ston's date) + 47 = 1369 (both years included) or 1368.

Both procedures irresistibly establish that GLR was compiled in 1368 A.D.

to Bla-ma dam-pa in the printer's colophon; the work was undeniably and incontestably compiled at bSām-yas in 1368 A.D. Bla-ma dam-pa had, as the leading authority there no doubt, over a span of years, and precisely in these years, been active at this holy site. In addition, the circumstances leading to its compilation finally bear out the conclusion reached by us. Speculating therefore that someone else could have compiled the work in the name (posthumously or as a ghostwriter) of Bla-ma dam-pa is preposterous and at best utterly conjectural. In sum, devoid of substantial counterproof, the irrefutable facts proffered by us therefore compel us to conclude that Bla-ma dam-pa doubtlessly was the compiler of GLR.

88 Our author follows Bu-ston's exposition and the latter's preference for the 5000-years theory of the duration (gnas pa, avasthāna) of the Law before its disappearance (nāma ṛvapalopa) in recurring series of rises and declines), while this theory by this polyhistior is considered the only system which hermeneutically conveys the direct meaning (gnet don, nāṭhāra). The 5000-year theory in fact originated from Buddhaguhosha and his school in Ceylon, being formulated in the 7th century of our era and adopted by Pāli-chronicles. The source for the Tibetans was the commentary on the Three Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras, a book written by Dadulriṣṭha (or Mṣa-ha'li'side) in the 6th century. Cf. also now Vogel, 1992.

90 Sorensen, 1986, pp. 51-34.
91 Si-tul'i bka'-'dams of 'a-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan records inter alia a number of the prolonged stays at bSām-yas by Bla-ma dam-pa, especially in the period between 1350-1362 A.D. Cf. e.g. Sorensen, 1986, pp. 61-62.
93 Cf. note 172 infra. Bla-ma dam-pa's use of this local lord's religious name Rin-chen-dpal in lieu of his secular name may either be explained by the fact that Nam-mkha' bstan-pa's rgyal-mtshan in 1368 had retired in religious pursuits. Or, if still holding the office at Sa-skya and from this can be accounted for. In the new light, it appears that deplorable lapsus calami (bris nor) or lapsus xylographic (bris kor) committed by some

90 Sorensen, 1986, pp. 51-34.
91 Si-tul'i bka'-'dams of 'a-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan records inter alia a number of the prolonged stays at bSām-yas by Bla-ma dam-pa, especially in the period between 1350-1362 A.D. Cf. e.g. Sorensen, 1986, pp. 61-62.
93 Cf. note 172 infra. Bla-ma dam-pa's use of this local lord's religious name Rin-chen-dpal in lieu of his secular name may either be explained by the fact that Nam-mkha' bstan-pa's rgyal-mtshan in 1368 had retired in religious pursuits. Or, if still holding the office at Sa-skya (which is likely) cf. Petch, 1990, p. 136), it may simply reflect Bla-ma dam-pa's preference to address this personification by his religious name. This was also the case when Bla-ma dam-pa mentions the author of DTHMP, where he addresses him with his religious name dGe-ha' blo-gros and not Kun-dga' ro-'dri. Although occasionally acting as mediator and arbiter between the conflicting parties during the military maneuvers and political clashes in the mid-XIVth century, Bla-ma dam-pa, one of the greatest religious personalities of his century, was exclusively occupied with religious matters.
Motivation and Concept

Without engaging ourselves here in any discussion as to the nature of the apparently strained relationship or even animosity which reigned between the local Byang-chub chief alias Rinchen-dpal, registered to have requested our author to compile his historical treatise and the real ruler of Tibet (Dbus-gTsang) Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-1364 A.D.), 96 there can be only little doubt that the original, or at least, ideological primus motor behind the conception to write rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long originated with the brilliant Phag-mo-grupa ruler. It must be recalled that Bia-ma dam-pa was the principal preceptor and guru (yongs 'dzam, mchog gi bla ma) of Ta'i Si-tu, 97 and that Bia-ma dam-pa was the only figure in the Sa-skya camp who could boast of commanding Ta'i Si-tu's undivided respect. The rapport between these two figures, despite Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan's open political antagonism against the prevailing Sa-skya supremacy and even after his political and military foray had eventually spell ruin to Sa-skya rulership in Central Tibet, remained amicable and hearty down to the latter's death in 1364. It is beyond the compass of this study to dilate on this sovereign ruler's patriotic policy of political and national renaissance with his outspoken ambition to restore and emulate the glorious heydays of the old dynasty. His realistic and pragmatic approach in his dealings with the Yuan court secured his own survival and in the long run his triumph, yet through his actions and writings the contour of a nationally and independently minded politician emerges. The testimonies of this are legion and his own and his clan's written records abound in allusions to this national quest. 98 His own provenance

with roots back to the milieu around Padmasambhava in the dyanic period, his active patronage to bolster the restoration of gier-ma-s glorifying the most illustrious figures from these days, and as a unifier of Central Tibet his codification of a set of laws resembling the ditto code executed by king Srong-btsan sgam-po as well as the execution of a written testament, a literary pastiche or pendant resembling outwardly the same king's alleged k'CHIKHIM and MNKR, all speak their own clear language.

The compilation of GLR dovetailed perfectly with these patriotic tones and sentiments. In 1353 A.D. the bSam-yas v'hara suffered one of its numerous devastating destructions and demolitions, a lot which was to haunt this monastery and symbol of national independence and pride down through the ensuing centuries. This time it happened in the wake of a final consorted (but as it should turn abortive) attempt from the side of Sa-skya and 'Bri-gung to wrest from the hands of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan the full power over Central Tibet. 99 It was to be the task, and obviously a gratifying and meritorious one, of Bia-ma dam-pa, by now already one of the most illustrious and celebrated scholars of the XIVth century, within a few years to engage himself in extensive restoration works at bSam-yas under the patronage and approval, no doubt, of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan. What would be more natural, being active at this edifice, a vivid symbol of Tibetan dynastic history, to conceive and execute the compilation of a royal genealogy written along ideological lines and focussing on the national tutelary divinity of the Tibetan state? This work, albeit first materializing after the passing of the reviver Ta'i Si-tu, was clearly produced in deference to the national quest of his.

The ideological and proselyting aspects are repeatedly expressed by our author, both at the inception of the work as well as in the colophon where the author details on his prerogatives to write (sbrang ma bar ba) and enumerates the sources employed. His selection and use of the original reveals moreover the compulsory and compositional nature of his work. It is in no way an original work, but exactly what it is meant to be: A successfully accomplished compilation (legs par bsgrigs pd). His own words in the short summary given in the colophon as to his objectives and sources hardly require any comment. Bia-ma dam-pa's work is in fact a well-balanced compilation of sources used by the author, passages and themes being carefully chosen, quoted and again patched together by him so as to form a new consecutive unity. The author is telling a continuous story. In this respect dpal-bo, albeit occasionally being more detailed and using another diction altogether, has in his royal genealogy (vol. 1A) chosen a narrative sequence and procedure directly patterned upon Bia-ma dam-pa. Our author fulfils two objectives: By presenting and combining genuine historical data with popular and legendary material, his work secured a fair measure of respect among his fellow historians and simultaneously an overwhelming popularity among the general audience. This has doubtless been conducive to accomplish what has been the author's main goal, to spread and propagate the message of Buddha. The success of GLR as an historical chronicle and as an instrument in the service of Buddhist proselytism is best attested by its popularity in Mongolia into which language it was repeatedly translated. 100

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94 According to Jackson, 1989, I, p. 89, in those days (XII-XIVth century) hand-written book-copies were hard to get by anyway. Having moreover been hand-copied several times, they were, once acquired, almost costumarily vitiated by scribal errors (skyon chags).

95 As may be deduced from the notes 242-243 infra, we cannot conclusively reject the possibility that Bia-ma dam-pa first finished his work in 1372-1373, but the main work incl. the colophon was finished in 1368.


97 Sørensen, ibid., pp. 59-64; Petech, ibid., pp. 116-120.

98 Such as the R£a£a£s-clan's etiological and ancestral chronicle Po-ti bSe-ru and his bulky Si-tu'i bKu'r-chems. Cf. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, I, pp. 110-115; Stein, 1962, paffsm; Sørensen, 1986, pp. 61-64; Petech, 1990, p. 130. This most important theme on Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan's intended reforms in fact commands the closest study.


100 For the two Mongolian versions Gegen tol (Clear Mirror) from 1610-1630 A.D. and the western Oirat or Kalmyk version Gegen tol or (erroneously) Bodhi-mör of 1648, cf. Heissig, 1959, pp. 34-40; Sørensen, 1986, II. At least two modern Chinese translations are known to exist. In Japanese scholarship, finally, it should be noted that GLR usually is known as Otokyo.
The Printed Editions

A brief note on the two printed editions of GLR.

A second volume, to be seen as a companion to the present translation, is envisaged to be published in order to provide the reader and fellow scholar with a new reliable critical edition of the text. This will include a more detailed assessment of the textual constitution of the two extant editions.

Neither the edition issued 1966 by Kuznetsov in Scripta Tibetan (Leiden), nor the recent and slightly more reliable Chinese edition published in Beijing can constitute an adequate basis for serious research.

Almost one hundred and ten years elapsed after the completion in 1368 A.D. before the manuscript version of 5xulgags bsal-ba'i mng-long was found mature to be printed or the financial basis for its printing was provided:

GLR A: The iHa-sa 'Phur-lsnang edition, 1bl-101a
Printed (lbpar du brchos) in an earth-male-dog year (1478 A.D.) on the fourth day of the sixth month (= 3.7.1478) by the editor Jo-bo'i dKon-gnyer Legs-pa'i shes-rab. The iHa-sa edition was mainly sponsored by Chos-rgyal dPal-'byor rgyal-po (of sNel-pa). The only extant version of this xylograph: Formerly St. Petersburg inventory no. 25181 (569); subsequently, Institut Narodov Azii (Old Coll.) 438a, now in possession of the Library of East Asian Faculty of St. Petersburg University inventory no. 1931/173. DBu-can xyl. print claimed to be in an almost illegible state.

GLR B: sDe-dge edition, 1bl-104a6

The present translation has been constituted on the basis of the sDe-dge edition with running reference to the iHa-sa edition. Although the former edition is characterized by a thorough standardization of the orthography, the archaic and occasionally corrupt spellings of the iHa-sa edition not to talk about its illegible constitution has been deemed incoherent to form the sound basis for a translation, albeit from a philological and stylistic point of view an earlier witness in general must be accorded pride of place.

Interlinear Annotation

The glosses (mchon) or secunda manus found distributed throughout GLR cannot be ascribed to Bla-ma dam-pa himself. It could be the work of a single person or, altogether more sensible, two (or more) glossarists who have been at work successively. One interlinear note (cf. note 243 infra) may have been added around 1372 A.D., judged from the nature of its content. It would be tempting and altogether feasible, at least for this single entry, to assume Bla-ma dam-pa's own pen behind this gloss. But generally it must be recognized that a running interlinear annotation most likely took place, being inserted into the Ms version of GLR while this was in circulation from 1369 A.D. to 1478 A.D. when the editio princeps of the xylographic iHa-sa 'Phur-lsnang version was executed and at this point all the glosses were then duly incorporated into the printed version. Two glosses in particular lend credence to this contention. In one gloss (cf. note 1177 infra) there is most likely reference to Yar-lung Jo-bo's yLgylchby written 1376 A.D. and in another gloss (cf. note 820 infra) there is a direct reference to rTogs-ladan sNgo-nyal-ma Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan, who was a disciple of Bo-dong Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal. This would all in all suggest that the majority (?) of glosses and scholia were intercalated into the Ms version in the early years after the passing of Bla-ma dam-pa in 1375 A.D. and most likely by some anonymous glossarist independent of the author.

101 Tadested Mitsuwashima has published an English translation of GLR, but it is rather an incomplete paraphrase of our text, superficial, unannotated and hardly one sentence reflects the Tibetan original truthfully or even remotely adequate.

102 Kuznetsov's edition in transliteration is a collation of GLR A with GLR B. The result was devastatingly poor. It is an anthology of errors. Kuznetsov failed to read his Tibetan original properly. As indicated in the long list of corrections and emendations published by J. Kolmas ("In the Margin of B.I. Kuznetsov's edition of the Clear Mirror of Royal Genealogies", Archiv Orientalni, 1967 (XXXV), pp. 467-476), this edition abounds in errors due to the editor's poor reading of the Tibetan texts; but even Kolmas has overlooked a large number of Kuznetsov's misreadings. They surpass over a thousand in number and make his depreciated edition quite useless and unreliable. In addition, Kuznetsov has repeatedly failed to identify metrical passages and text-sections and shows a very weak command and understanding of Tibetan, a fact also attested in his Russian rendition of large portions of the last chapter of GLR.


104 His floruit is unknown, but must be situated in the second half of the XVth century. The key role played by the stewards of Jo-khang in the dissemination of the king's Vita has already been discussed above.

105 The nobleman dPal-'byor rgyal-po and his consort Bu-khris dpal-'dzom of the sNel or sNge's family were powerful local figures in the period 1460-1480 A.D. who rendered great service to Dharma, inter alia by sponsoring the printing of books. Cf. DTHMPSM 8065, 101a-102b2 (Tucci, 1971, pp. 223, 241-242); PSZJ II, 162-164; Tucci, 775, II, p. 645; D. Jackson, 1989, SCHAR (Vol. 2), pp. 9-10.

106 Cf. Kuznetsov, 1966, XIX-XX.


108 This has possibly prompted Macdonald, 1967, p. 479 and 1971 passim to date GLR to 1373 A.D.
Translation

Initially not planned in that way, the present book has, by way of its detailed, even verbose annotations, developed into a sort of source-book and albeit being selective in that respect it is my hope that it may be useful beyond the point of offering handy cross-references for the reader and fellow researcher. Within traditional Tibetan historiographical writings, sources that were written or compiled before GLR have duly been consulted and, while here hopefully proving exhaustive, all textual data and passages which parallel or prove themselves relevant for GLR have been registered. Yet more than a brief scrutiny of numerous biographical, sectarian and doctrinal histories, not consulted in this study, shall no doubt cast much new or supplementary light on a number of historical figures and incidences, especially in the last part of the book dealing with the post-dynastic history and its ramifications in West and Central Tibet.¹⁰⁹

Historical sources written or compiled after GLR have on the other hand only arbitrarily been consulted, and if so then quite unsystematically, partly to avoid that the present book grew out of proportions (this may admittedly already have taken place), partly because these sources only to a very limited degree shed new light on the points relevant for an understanding of Bia-ma dam-pa and his use of sources. In cases where a decidedly later source has been deemed of importance or offers a unique witness in the Buddhist historiographical tradition, an attempt has duly been made to incorporate the particular textual evidence. Nevertheless, in this study, which mainly filters historical material from the phyidur period, the Tibetan sources speak their own language. Needless to say, all the topics introduced by our text cannot here be addressed exhaustively and the few discussions in this study have been selected haphazardly.

Any experienced reader in Tibetan historiography may, possibly with some justification, claim that the material and themes covered by rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long have long been known to scholars and students alike. It covers well-trodden ground. This is partly true. All the same, numerous cases of citation and its use in many historical studies have long testified not only to GLR's popularity and its normative importance as a model of Tibetan Buddhist historiographical writings as aptly characterized by Petech and Tuucci long ago,¹¹⁰ but equally to the fact that it verily contains material and data of unique value and witness. This shall hopefully be documented in this present translation. It wielded no small influence as a source internally in Tibet in the wake of its appearance in the latter part of the XIVth century, where Me-long-ma was profusely cited and occasionally became an object of polemics, but clearly also in Mongolia, where its popularity paved the way for its repeated translation and where its Mongolian renditions became a cherished and oft-quoted source for Mongolian Buddhist historiography.

In my translation, being rather literal than literary, an attempt has been made to remain as faithful as possible to the original. In the metrical segments, for instance, the line-order of the Tibetan text is followed slavishly, albeit the rhythm and sequence of our English rendition to the reader may appear somewhat unusual.

¹⁰⁹ In particular, when of if apparently lost genealogical sources (gthang rabs, rgyal rabs) that delineate the history and genealogy of the noble and royal houses of Western and Central Tibet in medieval times should surface, texts such as those written by Rin-chen rdo-rje, Byang-ji ston-pa and Tshul-khrims bzoang-po, but also sources composed by Gang-ston dPal-mdzes, Gung-thang mNgags-bdag Nor-bu lskyi, Blo-bdan Shes-rab-grubs, Nam-mikha' chos-dbang and Dus-khor-ba Mang-thos rdo-rje, the latter ones used by Kah-thog Rig-'dzin in his important works, cf. especially the notes 435, 1651, 1731-32 and 1836-38 infra. But also an utmost rare and long-lost text such as the Lo-rgya wschen-mo by dGe-bshes Khun-ston bCion-rnam g-yung-drang (1011-1075 A.D.) which was extensively employed e.g. by the IDeu histories.

¹¹⁰ In the words of Petech, 1939, p. 89, GLR constitutes 'the history of Tibet par excellence'; Tuucci, TPS, 1, p. 142, 'the model of future historiography'.
A prophecy (vyākaranā) [by Amitābha] stated accordingly:281

"[By] OM [one is] endowed with the Five [kinds of] Gnosis (ye shes lnga, pañcajñāna),
[By] MA Compassion ( thugs rje, karuṇā) pervades everything,
By NI the six forms of existence are guided,
By PAD all sufferings are allayed,
By ME [all] sinful defilements are consumed,
By HŪM all qualities are unified:
Qua the blessing of the six-syllabic [formula]
The sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet]
May [they] be brought onto the Path of Liberation!
Blessed by all Victors (Jīna)
This [maxim] quintessence uniting [in one] the innermost nature (yang spying) [of all teachings],
Is the Origin (akara) of all benefit and happiness,
Is the Root (māla) of all siddhi-s
Is the Ladder (niśren) leading to heaven,
Is the Portal (dhāra) blocking [the way] to the lower stages of existence (durgati),
Is the Vessel (nāva) rescuing [the worldlings] from samsāra,
Is the Lamp (ldpa) eliminating [all] obscurations,
Is the Hero (vīra) overcoming the five poisons (pañcavīra) [of passions]282
Is the Heat of Fire consuming [all] sin-defilements,
Is the Hammer (tho ba, mudgara) beating asunder [all] sufferings,
Is the Adjuvant (mitra) taming the barbarous borderland and
Is the Religious Lot (chos skal) of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet].
Of the numerous sātra-s, tantra-s and lātra-s,
Of all [the stages of realization qua] studying, reflection and meditation,
the three,
The Essence (kṣud) unifying in one [its] nature,
The all-sufficient (gcig chog) Precious King,
Pray, recite this six-syllabic [magical formula]!
Qua the [benevolent] blessing of this dhārant
In that barbarous borderland, the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet]
The sentient beings shall be brought onto the path of Maturity and Liberation
And The True Law (Saddharma) will spread and diffuse."

The Birth of the Noble [Avalokiteśvara] from a Lotus and a Demonstration of the Benefit of the Six-syllabic [Formula].

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281 The following metrical segment is untraceable from Bla-ma dam-pa's assumed prime sources.

282 On the five poisons of affliction (nyon mong dag lingga), different texts hold different numbers, but usually: pride (nga rgyal, abhimāna), envy (phrag dog, trṣṇa) and the three usual root vices desire ('dod chaus, rōga), hatred (the sdang, dveṣa) and folly (ge mug, moha).
Thereupon Ārya-Avalokita, 283 concerned with the welfare of the sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet], 284 and having generated his mind [towards] Enlightenment in the presence of Buddha Amiśāhaka kneeled down on the earth with his right knee, joined together the palm of his hands (ājalam kṛtyā) and uttered the [following] aspiration-vow (pranidhāna): "May all the sentient beings pertaining to the six classes of beings (rīgas drug) and the three spheres (kham gsum, śridhāta) be brought to Bliss by me! In particular, may the entire number of sentient beings [living] in the Snow-clad [Country of] Tibet be put on the road to Bliss!" Pray, may I refrain from producing any thoughts of tranquillity and comfort (chi bde'i bscam pa) 285 even for a moment (skad cig) or remain at ease until all the sentient beings, so difficult to convert, have been brought [safely] onto the Path of Enlightenment and Liberation by me! In case [such a thought] should be produced [by me], then may my head split into ten pieces just like a capsule (dog pa, stambhaka) of cotton (arjaka) and may [my] body even disintegrate into thousand fragments like the leaves of a lotus! 287

Thereafter [he] went to the place of hell (bnyal ba, noraka), 288 where [he] preached the teaching of the Six-syllabic [formula], [thus] establishing the hell-inhabitants firmly in prosperity and happiness having annulled the cold and warm sufferings (tsha grang gi sngug bngal, ysha-stadubhā) of hell. 289

Thereupon he went to the abode of the hungry ghosts (yi dags, preu), where [he] [likewise] preached the message of the Six-syllabic [formula], establishing them in prosperity and happiness, having allayed their suffering of hunger and thirst (bka'ris skom gyi sngug bngal, mgbah-a-pi-ma-ndubkha). 290

Thereupon, he went to place of the animals (dud 'gro, tiriak), where [he] preached the message of the Six-syllabic [formula], [thus] securing these creatures prosperity and

283 In Chap. V Bla-ma dam-pa prosecutes the theme on the myth and legendary vita of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, already introduced in the previous chapter. His source is also here in part MNKB, partly reminiscences of a mythographical and biographical narrative dedicated the Avalokiteśvara-cult found in other sources. Cf. Appendix note 283 for a fuller discussion.

284 Cf. MNKB E (A) Lo-gros sgren-mo, Chap. 4: Stor sens bo khyed bstan-par mchad-pa 16a1-17b2. Again, the mentioning of Tibet here is Bla-ma dam-pa’s addition, as it is lacking in MNKB.

285 Cf. MNKB 16a2-3, differing slightly in wording, again the mentioning of Tibet is lacking from MNKB.

286 MNKB has rang chi 'dod pa'i blo.

287 The mention of the disintegration of the body into thousand pieces is lacking from MNKB. This legend is found in numerous sources and is a common theme, cf. Wayman, 1983, p. 625.

288 In the description of the six gati-s, MNKB E (A) 16a4-17a2 differs again from GLR, as it is not Avalokita who visits these places, but six rays of light emitted ('od zer drug spros) from his body that bring about an elimination of suffering; further, there is no mention of any teaching of the Six-syllabic [formula] and finally MNKB has the order reversed, by starting with the abode of the gods. Finally, the bulky Zhag-gsal-gsams skor (F) of MNKB WAM contains numerous textual parallels to the present section. In the slightly lengthier exposition of the same topics offered by Nyang-ral, the exposition deals with the story as to how Mahākāruṇika beheld the six gati-s by way of three modes of karung (i.e. sens can la dmigs pa'i snying rje, chos la dmigs pa'i snying rje, dmigs pa med pa'i snying rje), cf. more detailed and parallel CHBYMTNYP 407a-410b3 = KTHZGM Chap. 38, 174a9-178a9.

289 MNKB E (A) 16b6-17a2. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 409b1-410b3 = KTHZGM 177.15-178.9.

290 MNKB E (A) 16b7-4. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 409a5-b1 = KTHZGM 177.5-15.
was [nothing but] the lowest, i.e. hottest] place of Hell, i.e. Avīci (mNar-med), inhabited by many myriads (kho phrag du ma) of living beings, who were [there] being subjected to unbearable (bsod glags med po) sufferings of hunger and thirst and of being cooked and burned, thereby uttering various cries of agony and despair, [a sight so tragic] that he could not help] shedding tears.

And so, from his right eye a tear fell on the plain (adjacent to the lake of 'O-thang), which [immediately] turned into the Lady Tārā Bhikṣu (Jo-mo sGrol-ma Khro-gnyer-can-las), who uttered: “O Son of good family! Make sure not to inflict sufferings in [your] promotion of the welfare of the sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet]! I, too, will assist [you] in working for the welfare of the sentient beings”, [and immediately thereafter she] was [again] absorbed into his right eye. This [goddess] was [to become] the future Nepalese Princess (bul mo bza) Khi-thotsun.

Again, from the left eye a tear fell on the ground, [this time] transforming [itself] into the Lady Tārā (Jo-mo sGrol-ma), who [similarly] declared: “O Son of good family! Make sure that no suffering is inflicted when you are working for the welfare of the sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet]! I, too, shall assist [you] in promoting the welfare of the sentient beings”, after which she [likewise] was [immediately] absorbed into his left eye. This [goddess] was [to become] the future Chinese Princess (rgya mo bza) Kong-jo.

Thereupon the Aryan-Avalokitesvara arrived at the bank of this lake, where he taught the law of the Six-syllabic [formula], whereupon he uttered the [following] points of truth (born out of [his] boundless compassion.

Due to [their] accumulation of bad karman from beginningless time (anadikala), [living in] this great Hell of fathomless depth
Those [beings], who are inflicted (bius) with [sundry] kinds of sufferings so difficult to endure
May [they] be brought unto the island [securing the] full and complete Liberation (mokṣa)!

Being cooked in [this] lake [full of] boiling poison,
Being perpetually burned by the fire of Hell
Those beings without shelter wailing and lamenting in despair,
May [they] always be cooled by a shower of prosperity and happiness!

Tormented (gchir) by various [kinds of sufferings] such as heat, cold, hunger and thirst [etc.]
The many myriads of beings living in this lake of 'O-thang,
After they have departed from this [miserable] body [of theirs], in my paradise
May they be born [there] as pious beings of good family!

**OM MA NI PADME HÜM**

So the Hell-inhabitants, the sentient beings, were [firmly] established on the Path to Enlightenment and Freedom, after [they] had [their] sufferings of cold[ness] and hot[ness] allayed and had attained a prosperous body, being disassociated with mental frustration [of any kind].

Having thus by various means established the sentient beings [pertaining to] the six classes and the three spheres and the sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet], so difficult to tame, in happiness, [Arya Avalokiteśvara] was very exhausted and he set his mind in the mental equanimity (sāmpadā) of restful contemplation (ngal gso’i ting nge ’dzin).302

Then again he [later] looked around from the summit of Mt. Potala and [he could] not [even] think that [up till now] only about a hundredth part of [all] sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet] had been established [firmly] in happiness, [so] he felt very dispirited and in an instant he generated a thought of personal tranquillity and ease (zhi bde’i bsam pa) and, perfuse of his previous aspiration-vow his head split into ten pieces and his body decomposed into thousand fragments.303

Then Buddha Amitābha was addressed [by him] with a prayer and in a trice Buddha Amitābha turned up. Taking hold of a bundle [consisting of] [the various] fragmented pieces of the Noble One’s head and body, he proclaimed as follows:305

“All norms of existence are conditioned,
And at the base of [it]306 is the act of craving (’dun pa);
Whatever aspiration you [may] swear
It will come true just like that.

Since the power of your [previous] aspiration-vow proved efficient,
[You shall be] lauded highly by all Buddhas [alike],
It is the truth and this in a trice assuredly
Makes it come into existence.”

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903 Cf. also HBCBHY (JA) 2a7.
905 MNKB E (A) 17a3-6, not Mt. Potala, but Mt. Mera: thugs tse chen po ri rab kyi rtser phyin te ye shes kyi spyin gi’ysz stigs pa dang l yang ngag ma de tsam du ’dug nas l lan gsum du thabs dang stying tse lho pa kyung sams can gi kyam la skye ’bris mi ’dug nas thugs mug yi chad nas l kye ma bhe bar ghes pa’i dzongs pas ’dud ba’i zhes kham gsum gi’ys mika’ bzhin nam mkha’i khams gsum gi’yi khyab l sem can gi kyam gsum gi’ys mika’ bzhin par ’dug l ngag de tsam pa’i sams can bhar yang nyung du ma song bas ’khor ba’i ma stongs pa’i ’dug l sams can gi don mi’ ’grab par ’dug l rang zhi bhe thob par byas nas nga nun las ’das pa sngags rgyas kyi so la gea par bya’o snyan pa dang l sngags gi’ys sems bskyed dam bca’i nyams nas l dbu thal pa bhar gas so.

904 Cf. HBCBHY (JA) 2a7-2b2 and note 287 supra.
905 The following two stanzas are also conserved in HBCBHY (JA) 2b3-4 and thus suggests that they both draw from a common source, rather than assuming that dp’o-bo quotes GLR, which is often the case.

906 I.e. fundamentally; GLR rtse la, but HBCBHY reads rtse la, i.e. ‘on top of [it]’, i.e. in addition, which perhaps is a better reading altogether.
[Endowed with] one thousand eyes [representing] the thousand Buddhas of the Prosperous Aeon (bhadrakalpa),
[He] has demonstrated [himself] [here and] there [in protean forms] converting each individual according to personal disposition,
To [that] reverend Avalokita [we] pay homage.

[Unanimously and] highly lauded by a thousand Buddhas,
Having been prophesized by the Victor (Jina) to convert the barbarous borderland [of Tibet],
[He] promoted the welfare of the sentient beings [by] converting each according to individual disposition,
To [him] the reverend Avalokita [we] pay homage."

Having [thus] demonstrated many bodily emanational forms for the sake of converting the sentient beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet], he brought all sentient beings to Maturation and Liberation.


¹ btsun pa sphyun ras gtsig la phyag 'tshal lo
Thereupon, Aññā Avalokiteśvara worked for the sake of sentient beings of the world by various means and in order to give a [suitable, edifying] parable of how the wholesome [should] be accepted and [how] the unwholesome [should] be rejected (dge sdi g gi blang[ bya dang] dor[ bya] gyi dpe, *kadala-pāpa-heyopādya-upama), it is told in the Sūtra [of the Array] of The Basket (mdo Za-ma-tog [bkod-pa], Karanda[yiilha]-sūtra) how Aññā Avalokiteśvara worked for the sake of the sentient beings after [he once] transformed himself into the King of Horses (ra'i rgyal po, aśvarāja), the noble (cang (: dpyang) shes, aśvarāja) Balaha (i.e. Balaha[kṣa]):

In this [story it is told how] merchants (chosṅ po) from South India, [all] with low merits, [once] set out on the outer [great] ocean in order to acquire [precious] jewels. Having embarked upon a great vessel equipped with plenty of provisions necessary for themselves, [they departed, but only] after seven days had passed, [sailing] was [to be fatally] hampered by a [most] adverse wind (mi 'dod pa'i rlung), to wit:

[At] noon black clouds gathered like thick mist, Obscuring the rays of the sun, [causing] darkness to prevail, A terrifying gale [raged] as if the earth trembled, The forest and all the trees fell about; The waves of the ocean resembled a leaping lion; Whirlpool of waves almost made earth and heaven meet; The merchants embraced one another, Weeping, each [and everyone] cried out the names of their kindred (he du), Taken by fear and terrified, they cried for help ('o dod 'bdod byed), Leaderless, despondent, tears poured forth as blood, In that very moment too the vessel wrecked.

Next, the merchants clunging as best [they could] to the [drift]wood from the wrecked ship, and again an adverse tempest led [them] all in one direction, until it brought [them] to the shore of the Island of Singgala [i.e. Singgala-dvīpa = Tārmatrīpā; Ceylon or Sri Lanka] inhabited by ogres (rākṣast-s), where the merchants calling upon one another by name gained dry land.

They were observed by the rākṣast-ogres, who [immediately] transformed themselves into very beautiful yeung women and carrying along ample food and drink they arrived at the place where the merchants rested. They deluded them by giving consolation inquiring them: “Are [you possibly] exhausted?” or “Are [you possibly] suffering?” and they satisfied [them] with food and drink. The merchants rejoiced greatly at the sight of the extraordinarily beautiful women without recognizing that they were [in fact] rākṣast-ogres and they

310 This chapter offers the celebrated legend of how the mythological King of Horses, Balaha[kṣa] (known, e.g. from Mahāvastu, III, 67-90), an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, rescues a group of merchants from rākṣast-captivity on the Ceylon island. For further discussion, cf. Appendix note 310.

311 KV 248a5-251a3. It is part of the section entitled Aśvarāja-varṇana, the Description of the King of Horses.

312 KV has here an unseasonable wind (dus ma yin pa'i rlung, akāladvyu).

313 This following verifiable passage is lacking altogether from KV and MNKB.
conversed one another in an amicable way.

The rāksast-ogresses [however] declared unanimously (kha 'cham par): "Ye merchants must not approach the upper part of the valley!"

Each woman then took along one of the merchants and went to her own home, where they married (bsa' mi byas), cohabited and lived an enjoyable life.

A voice from above appeared:

"MERCHANTS suffering from ill-fated karman,
When they were carried along by an adverse and unwelcome storm,
Like [an animal] when going astray is caught in a hunting-net (ri davags rgyog),
[They] fell into the hands of the Lord of Death (Yama)
with no means of escape.

Those [merchants], infatuated by the idea (bsam brlag tsho) of taking a spouse (chung mar 'dzin; marrying)
imbed [moreover] with the erring view holding these rāksast-ogresses as goddesses (devit-s)
[Thus] are deluded and while greatly satiated with food,
They forget [all] previous sufferings like [in] a dream
And even their minds were satisfied with joy." 315

Then the great caravan-leader (ded apo chen po, mahāsthāvāthā) recognized [the place] to be the Island of the Ogresses (rāksast-drigpo) and [immediately] he became unhappy and disparaged, pondering that [if] the present [situation] promised happiness, what kind of future would [then] be in store for them, [as they] thought which made him extremely uneasy. Pondering [moreover] what could be meant by the order that forbid them to approach the upper part of the valley, the caravan-leader in the evening set out, when his own spouse had fallen asleep, and went in order to inspect [for himself] the upper part of the valley. [There he] found an iron house 316 without any door, within which murmuring (ri ri) clamours (skad log) [were to be heard]. Wondering what it was [he heard] he listened [carefully] and [soon] recognized [it as] the language of [other] merchants coming from India. He [then] climbed a tree that stood next to that [house] and inquired: "Who is inside that [house]?" The people inside that [house] answered: "We inside here are merchants who have lost our way." Asking: "For how long have you been locked up in there?", they answered: "Like you we landed here when our ship got carried away by an unwelcome storm. We were [then] led away by these women and without recognizing them as rāksast-ogresses, we married, begot children and lived happily, but when you [fellow merchants] arrived at this island we were locked up here in this iron house [without even exit]. Now we shall gradually be devoured."

314 In KV 248h8 it is not a voice sounding from above, but a laughing lamp (rad mo snyan par dgeg pa, hazana-rakjara) which here is at play; cf. also Régamey, "Le pseudo-bapax rakjara et le lamp qui rit", Asiatische Studien, vol. 18/19, pp. 175-205, who incidentally points out that the Tibetan translators did not comprehend this meaning of the 'laughing lamp'. It functioned as an adjutant playing a role akin to Aladdin's lamp in Arabian Nights. Cf. also S. Lienhard, 1993.

315 Lacking from KV and MNKB.

316 KV 249a2 has an iron town (lcags kyi grong khyer, auras-nagara).
coloured] green sprouts, in order to await [the arrival of] the King of Horses Balāhā. And within long the King of Horses made its arrival from out of the sky, being attached onto a moon-beam accompanied by a light of rainbow. There the Best of Horses drank from the turquoise-coloured fountain, partook of the lapis-[green] sprouts, made three turns in the golden sand, shook off [the dust] from its body and uttered the following in human language: “All [you] merchants who have been caught up on the Island of the Ogresses, ride on my back! Keep your eyes [completely] shut and remain completely unattached to the youthful appearance of the rāksast-s, your offspring and [all] enjoyable pleasures! I shall bring you to your native country!”

The caravan-leader [then] spoke:

“O emanational embodiment (nimādnakbya), Supreme Horse, guiding mankind
We, [these] merchants,
Sailed onto the ocean in order to acquire jewels
But as our merit was exhausted, our vessel wrecked.

By an adverse storm we were driven towards the Island of the Ogresses,
Being caught up on the Island of the Ogresses, [like] the ill-fated ones are [caught by] the Lord of the Death,
We have no [other] means of escaping from there,
[We] [therefore] beg [you] to protect us], O compassionate Best of Horses.”324

The caravan-leader [then] mounted the horse’s neck (’jing pa) taking a [good] hold on its ear, while the junior-merchants rode on the horse’s back. He admonished [them]: “Do not in any way cling to the home of [your respective] ogress, [your] offspring or to enjoyable pleasures [of life]! Do not show even the slightest vacillation in your mind! Keep your eyes closed until you have reached the extreme end [i.e. opposite side] of the ocean!”325

When the Best of Horses carried them through the sky, it was [finally] perceived by the rāksast-ogresses, who [now all] turned up bringing [with them] their children. They spoke accordingly:

“Are you [really] able to renounce [your] castle (sa mkhar) piled up high?
Are you [really] able to forsake your wife (bza’ mi) to whom you are harmoniously wedded?
Are you [really] able to reject your [own] offspring procured from [your own] flesh (sha nas chad pa)?
Are you [really] able to give up [our] food and drink tasting palatably?”326

[If so.] you are [all] truly shameless wicked men!” Some rāksast-s lifted their children up in the air and some beckoned by waving with their clothes. [All this] did not go unnoticed by the junior-merchants striking them as if hit by an arrow in the middle of the heart, and thinking it was quite true [what the disguised rāksast-ogresses said], they [consequently] opened their eyes. Everyone except the caravan-leader became attached and looking back (phyi mig bitas pa) they all fell down. When they fell down they were seized by the ogresses, but [now] the ogresses had assumed their own form without their previous beautiful bodily forms, their faces were rugged (gzing), their breasts were placed upon their shoulders (nu ma phrag pa la bkle), their teeth protruded (mche ba gsigs) and without being able to wait even for a moment (dar cig) they devoured [the poor merchants].327

When thereafter the Best of Horses (na mcChog, ’asvārāna) arrived at the shore of the ocean, it spoke: “Goddess-leader (shong dpon, ’bresshin) open your eyes and dismount!” When he opened [his] eyes he found that his assistants were [all] lacking. Grieved, he weeping asked: “O King, Best of Horses, where are my junior-merchants?”

The Best of Horses too threw its feet to the ground and weeping [bitterly], it spoke accordingly:328

“These junior-merchants lacking [all] the merits [which] you possess, Instead of thinking about their native country [in] Jambudvipa, Being [karmically] ill-fated, they got attached to the Island Ogresses, so lost (phung) [they are]; Instead of thinking of their parents, their beloved friends, They got attached to the countenance of a youthful rāksast-ogress, so lost [they are]; Instead of thinking of [begetting] children benefit one’s relatives, They got attached to the offspring of a deceitful rāksast-ogress, so lost [they are]; Aha! Aha! Indeed the sentient beings are to be pitied (shing ’rgyal) The disciple (slob ma, sikṣya) who has killed [his] Tantric teacher (vajrāchārya)
When he [becomes] imprisoned in the hellish place of Avīci, Even though the guru’s compassion is great [then] what can he do [to help]?
Having developed false views about procuring children And being carried away by an unwelcome adverse wind, Even though the parents’ affection is great, what can they do [to help]?
When the junior-merchants fell back because they looked back, Ignoring [altogether] the instruction of benevolent words, Then what can the Best of Horses do, although highly skillful in flying? Guild-leader don’t weep, listen more to me!
The happiness and sorrow of this life is like a dream (svapna) and an illusion (māyā),
Like the water [falling] from a precipitous mountain (ri gzur chu) and the thunder-cloud of space,

Lacking from KV and MNKB.

324 KV 248b8 merely has: ma’i rgyal po ba la ha des khyed las sus kyang sning ga la’i gling la mi blta bar bya’ ll sus kyang mig gi’i mi blta bar bya’u ll thei de skad smras; MNKB 196b3: srim mo naams la ma chags shig phyi mig ma la zhi g ces smras so.

325 This part of the speech by the siren women is lacking from KV and MNKB.

326 Analogously KV 251a1-2; MNKB 196a-4.

327 The following metrical piece is lacking from KV and MNKB.
Therefore do never get attached to the [fleeting] happiness [offered] by the [ephemeral] cycle of transmigration (samsāra)!

The Best of Horses [then] gave a religious discourse (chos bshad) on the Four [Noble] Truths (cavavy (dbyar)/sātyānti). The guild-leader wiped away his tears and was brought to a place in sight of his own home. Again the Best of Horses departed into space like a vanishing rainbow.

Thereupon the guild-leader went to his own home, and all [his] relatives and [his] parents [soon] gathered there, [where they] grabbed hold of the guild-leader and wept. He then gave [them] a joyous account [of his experiences]. Later again, the parents and close relatives of the junior-merchants turned up, and weeping, [they] cried out the names of each man, "Where is my father? Where is my elder brother? Where is my uncle? Where is my grandchild?"

The guild-leader then gathered the parents and the close relatives of the junior-merchants and explained in great detail [to them] [how they] in the beginning set out on the [great] ocean, [how] the vessel wrecked due to a devastating storm and moved by an adverse wind they were carried to the Island of the Ogresses; [how they], without identifying them as ogresses, married [these creatures], begot children and [how they,] upon recognizing them as ogresses, sought for a means to escape and being shown a means to flee by the people [imprisoned] in the iron-house [he further explained how] the [poor] junior-merchants fell [from the horse-back] because they looked back failing [thus] to observe the instruction given by the King of Horses, etc. Everybody [listening to this explanation] developed a dégout (skyos ba, udvega) against the circle of transmigration (khor ba, samsāra), gained confidence in the cause and effect of karmic causation (las rgya 'bras) and [thus] became [well] established in the True Law.

Analogously to this parable (dpes), [all] those who have perpetrated a sin after having become addicted to this [ephemeral] life will, similar to the junior-merchants who fell [to the ground] because they looked back [and got attached], find no time for escaping from the damned states (ngon song, durgrit) [of existence] after they have roamed around in the cycle of transmigration.

[Alternatively,] those who take [serious] practice in the True Law, without getting addicted to this [ephemeral] life, will, similar to the caravan-leader, become enlightened (sangs rgyas pa byed, i.e. become a Buddha) after having attained the bliss of heaven (mtho-ris, svarga) [and] liberation (phar pa, moksha).


VII

The Descent of the Tibetan Race from the Union of a Monka and a Female Relic-ogress