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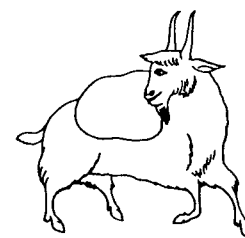
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Per K. Sørensen

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

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

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 Haarh. A preliminary study of the text, now superseded by the present book, was conducted by me in 1982 and was subsequently published in 1986.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 *rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long* compiled by Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams rgyal-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 *au 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 fundament 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. Haarh, 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 affluently equipped 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 advices 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-ldan Shes-rab Brag-g.yab Rin-po-che (L. S. Dagyab 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 me 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. Thingo), alias mNga'-ris Rin-po-che, went with me through a unique and recondite piece of rDzogs-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 Verhufen, 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 inconcinnities 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*.



short biographical
autobiographical account

Before we embark upon a discussion of the author and date of rGyal-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 main 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 Vita-narratives dedicated to the life and feats of king Srong-btsan sgam-po, and, for that matter, the Vita-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 (*bsgyur*) (i.e. guided and legitimized) by a living narrative, recitational or elocutional tradition, predominantly by way of sundry forms of story-telling (*sgrung*), riddle-telling (*lde'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 elocutional 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.

The art of public speaking, part. in which gestures, vocal production, + delivery are emphasized.

euhemerism: a theory attributing the origin of the gods to a deification of historical heroes.

1 The transmission of an oral narrative tradition, in forms such as the bardic *sgrung* and etiological *lde'u* but also rhetoric, gnomic 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; YLJBCHBY 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 ris*, *ldebs ris*) for edifying reasons, cf. e.g. KCHKKHM-2 5.15-6.18, 252.12-253.13, 254.11-256.8; CHBYMTNYP 269a5-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 chos* or 'popular (or mundane, i.e. non-divine) convention', in contrast to *lha chos* (i.e. *lha yi chos lugs*), 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 mastery 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, story-tellers 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 'Phrul-snang (i.e. Jo-khang) and later bSam-yas,⁵ it is adduced how not only the above mentioned themes *sgrung* and *lde'u* 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 key *sūtra*-s portrayed or being depicted for propaedeutic reasons. This was the work, the same sources tell us, of foreign artists and craftsmen, among 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

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 ba*), *tamba* (T. *gam pa, ston pa?*) and *pe* (T. *dpe*) still are found to persist, cf. Jackson, *The Mollas of Mustang*, pp. 83-86; B. Steinmann (1987) and S. S. Strickland (1983, *Kailash*, X (3-4); *JRAS*, 1987; further ref., A. W. Macdonald, 1989, *Kailash*, XV (3-4), pp. 175-177).

The central mythical domain of a(ny) 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 possibly not see 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*.

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 sgampo, 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 decidedly more literary conceived and artificial, at least in the versions which have come down to us, when not repetitive and stereotype in its concept and composition compared to the ditto narrative dedicated to the exploits and feats of king Srong-btsan sgampo, 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 *vihāra* (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

6 BZH (Stein ed. 53.5-8, Chin. ed. 62.8-12) = CHBYMTNYP 422a5-6 = MBNTH 120a6-b1 = YLJBCHBY 61.6-11 = HBCHBY (JA) 111b5-7, 112a4-5 all chronicle a similar-worded passage which informs us about the existence of a number of *mi chos* texts dealing foremost with genealogical matters during the reign of king Khri-srong lde-btsan (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-bzang yab-lhag) 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 chos kyi lo rgyus*, i.e. texts and accounts of the ruler's genealogy (*rje'i gdung rabs*), on social (or territorial) division (*sa bcad*) of the people and narratives on conventions, etiquette and protocol vis-à-vis the nobility (*ya rabs*), but also stories (*gam sgrung*), 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 Ral-pa-can (rl. ca. 817-836 A.D.), cf. BZH (Stein ed. 75.9-12) = CHBYMTNYP 460a4-6. Here it is related how this king, himself an ardent Buddhist, attempted, probably around 830 A.D., to systematize or regulate (*gtan la phab*) and thus distinguish the *mi chos* tradition, be it narrative (oral or scriptural) and otherwise from the now very dominant ditto *lha chos* = 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 359 and note 1488 *infra*.

records.⁷ Contemporary historical data and records are in fact conspicuously silent on his person, which rather than denying his historicity perhaps only shows that he was far from popular in leading court circles and that his person and creed must have been met with severe opposition, a fact also acknowledged in later literature. But whether his spectacular personality became down-played by contemporary official documents either for reasons of his advocacy of unusual teachings and apotropaic techniques alien to contemporary Tibetan creed and mentality (although later apologetic literature, again, tends to draw the opposite picture), for reasons of religious antagonism encountered by him and his followers or due, perhaps, to the fact that the role he played after all was a modest one indeed, there is no cogent reason to oppugn his historicity. On the contrary, it is likely that an immensely glorifying and legitimizing popularity did set in after he had left the scene in Tibet, when he became the subject of gross magnification and veneration particularly among his spiritual devotees and adherents, foremost the rNying-ma-pas. Leaving out here any assessment of the religious and scriptural heritage purportedly left behind by him in form of *bka'-ma* and *gter-ma* transmitted teachings, it makes sense to assume that the pre-hagiographical literature centered around his person and his more mundane activities arguably was first conceived in a metrical, oratory-song or similar oral form, but soon put to writing by his most ardent proselytes, some narratives glorifying his figure being retained in purely metrical or verse form, others in the mixed prose-metrical form and, for all we know, then transmitted or concealed in scroll-form (*thang yig*, *shog [d]ril*),⁸ before they were redactionally worked over and subjected to further hypertrophy and mythopoetic excrescences at the point of their (numerous) detection(s) or reformulation(s) in the *phyi-dar* period.

While on one side a number of parallel narrative elements and incidences between the Vita dedicated to Srong-btsan sgam-po and Padmasambhava may ultimately point to the fact that they have been through the same redactional hands,⁹ many narrative components of the Srong-btsan sgam-po biography on the other hand, despite occasional narrative repetitions,¹⁰ appear in language, diction as well as in narrative resourcefulness to be far more oral and popular in origin. This may be reflected e.g. in the witty portions depicting the exploits of the shrewd minister mGar (d. 667 A.D.) during his mission to the Tang court.¹¹ In the wake of this successful and spectacular mission and the ensuing bridal escort of the Chinese princess in 640-641 A.D., a rich oral story-telling doubtlessly grew forth, recapturing and colouring this historical event, to such an extent that e.g. an extraordinary tale about the

to grow or came to grow a naturally large.

7 Cf. also Bishoff, 1971. Aside from PT 44, a late dynastic work describing the practice of the *kilā*-ritual by Padmasambhava in Tibet, our best and most credible source is in fact *sBa-bzhed* (abbr. *BZH*) (Stein ed. 18.7ff., Chin. ed. 22.21ff.), a source and witness of considerable antiquity. But also therein his role is a modest one, at least compared against later hagiographical trappings, being restricted to the demesne of exorcism. In his time, no doubt, Tantrism was, when not unpopular, still accorded a rather insignificant role. The validity of this testimony in *BZH*, 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 Nyang-ral was in fact 'found' in bSam-yas. Cf. also note 24 *infra*.

9 For cases of parallelism, cf. 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*; confer also the parallel ode in Chap. X *ad* note 528 and Chap. XVIII *ad* note 1318.

11 Cf. the notes 608 and 626 *infra*. Chinese sources independently confirm the Tibetan minister's ingenuity and intelligence.

Chinese princess giving birth to the child of the minister mGar at some point even found its way into the biography.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 (*gtam sgrung*) 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-XIIth century, although we shall attempt to argue that a small part of the most ancient murals executed in Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang 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 historical narration treasured by the common people or by bards, rather than being conceived, at least in the beginning, as the literary outcome produced by some Buddhist gTer-ston-s, possibly composed and revised over a long period, 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. *KCHKHM*) and the *Ma-ni bKa'-bum* (abbr. *MNKB*). But an investigation yields in my eyes disappointingly little clarity, as the language in many

12 Cf. note 704 *infra*. A central plot extracted from the Vita even turned into a most cherished drama-play (*a lce lha mo*) named *rGya-bza' Bal-bza'*. 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 Ral-pa-can, during the construction of his spiritual bond (i.e. *thugs 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 'Phrul-snang with a number of artistic or architectural refinements. He ordered frescoes of one hundred and eight silk-painted *be'u bum* to be executed (dPa'-bo in his testimony of the same passage even 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 'Phrul-snang 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 names and a few cases of archaism 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 Vita-s. While the very mechanism of treasury-finding, the very *modus operandi* of recovery (*spyān '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 treasury-finders not infrequently was that of writing down, compiling and reshaping, as indicated above, already existing *Vorlage*, be it *bka'-ma* or *gter-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 papers¹⁵ and further documented here, the rDzogs-chen religious tinting or coating of parts of Srong-btsan sgampo's alleged writings and narratives as found embedded in MNKB, when not massively present, 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 *sūtra* literature, on the other side it shows a remarkable semblance to the language and diction known from historical sources from the XI-XIIth century, occasionally laced with contemporary vernacular and dialectical idioms. The linguistic testimony or language retained in KCHKKHM appears unrevised compared to the language of MNKB. It should be noted also that the language found in the first Tibetan *lo rgyus*, the *bKa'-mchid* of Khri-srong 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 Dunhuang records.

15 Blondeau, 1979, 1984, 1985 and Kapstein, 1992.

16 In the *Lo-rgyus chen-mo*, the initial part of the *Sūtra*-section of MNKB, the chapters XVII and XVIII introduce the legendary king Dza/Ja, a cherished figure and mythical king important in the mythical transmission of Tantra in India according to the rNying-ma and the rDzogs-chen tradition. Of significant importance, we can now add, this royal figure was assigned a key role in the legend antecedent the first introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, the story about 'the Rain of Books that fell upon the Palace-Roof of king lHa Tho-tho-ri gnyan-btsan', a legend conserved already in the even older *bKa'-chems Ka-khol-ma* (abbr. KCHKKHM), and thus inserted into the king's writings. Arguably, one suspects here the redactional hands of the rNying-ma/rDzogs-chen gTer-ston-s. The paradoxical point is only that this Testament cannot be ascribed to these Treasury-finders, but must, without any doubt, be associated with Atiśa 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 409 for details.

As adduced by Kapstein, 1992, *op. cit.* pp. 90-93, 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 viewpoints. Apparently incompatible doctrines nourished by different denominations are delineated or mixed: the nine successive stages (*theg pa rim pa dgu*), as propounded in the rNying-ma-pa

While the central role of the Avalokiteśvara-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 Atiśa in the promotion of this cult is initially somewhat more nubilous, 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.)¹⁷ is best epitomized by the triad-

tradition. The pan-Mahāyāna theory of the two truths (*bden gnyis*), Mahāmūdra (WAM (F) 144b6-145a1, 290a4-291b1) and rDzogs-pa chen-po (WAM (F) 144b2-3, 291b1-292b6), the stages on the path (*lam rim*); the triad: ground, path and result (*gzhi lam 'bras bu gsum*); the fourfold scheme: view, meditation, action and fruit[ion] (*lta sgom spyod 'bras bzhi*). In the exposition of Mahākāraṇika or Mahākāraṇa as Reality itself (*chos nyid don kyi thugs rje chen po*), cf. E (D) 1b3ff., the tenets are predominantly those of the yogic rNying-ma tradition. Cf. note 967.

KCHKKHM-2 202.19 furthermore employs the expression *thod [b]rgal ba* ('crossing over', for this untranslatable term, cf. most conveniently Ruegg, 1989, pp. 164-65; Ehrhard, 1990, pp. 66-70) as a qualifying epithet for a *bodhisattva*. It is normally a specific technical term in yogic meditation, a term (although originally of Indian origin: Skt. *vyukrānta* etc. and known from different religious contexts) which was foremost cherished by the adherents of rDzogs-chen.

Otherwise, we find in this *gter-ma* of Atiśa, traced some one hundred years before MNKB came into being, far fewer rDzogs-chen vestiges than in the MNKB compiled by gTer-ston-s.

The MNKB-section *Gab-pa mngon-phyung* (cf. note 961 *infra*) was e.g. written in a diction tinted by the rNying-ma and rDzogs-chen tradition, ultimately pointing to the sectarian denomination of its gTer-ston-s. In fact the section is an original piece of rDzogs-chen literature. The underlying anchoring and inspiration of these cycles are thus clearly discernible.

17 For the biography of Nyang-ral, cf. most conveniently Dargyay, 1977, pp. 97-119 translating the biographical excerpts from 'Jigs-bral Ye-shes rdo-rje's rNying-ma'i chos-'byung (cf. also Dorje & Kapstein, 1991, pp. 755-759), but see also the Nyang-ral biography in 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul's *gTer-brgya'i rnam-thar*, vol. KA of *Rin-chen gter-mdzod chen-mo* and vol. KA of *Nyang-gter bKa'-brgyad bDe-gshegs 'dus-pa'i chos-skor* entitled *sPrul-sku mNga'-bdag chen-po'i skyes-rabs rnam-thar Dri-ma med-pa* etc. His chronological data have long been disputed with vacillating dates between 1124-1192/1136-1204 A.D., cf. e.g. Meisezahl, 1985, Intro.

Here we shall follow the rNying-ma tradition. Considered an emanational embodiment of king Khri-srong lde-btsan (742-797 A.D.) and ranked as the first (out of five) noted gTer-ston kings in Tibet, he was born in gTam-shul of lHo-brag, Southern Tibet in a wood-dragon year (1124 A.D.). He there turned up in the prominent local clan-family of Myang/Nyang which since long adhered to the rNying-ma-pa denomination, and a family which could boast of having fostered an unbroken line of total eighteen earlier *grub-thob-s* incl. also Myang Ting-nge-'dzin (VIIIth cent.), who together with the contemporary Vimalamitra have been ascribed the paternity of the rDzogs-chen tradition.

His father was Myang-ston Chos kyi 'khor-lo (also called rDo-rje dBang-phyug-rtsal) and his mother Jo-mo Ye-shes sgron (also Padma bDe-chen-rtsal). His early life is depicted as being replete with wonders: At the age of eight he had visions of Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara and Guru Rin-po-che. His father bestowed upon him the empowerment of Hayagrīva. Padmasambhava manifested himself visionally to him and entrusted him with (i.e. gave him inspiration to compose/compile?) a list of *gter-ma-s* to reveal. Hence his many-sided activities as treasury-revealer: The most notable being the famous *bKa'-brgyad bDe-gshegs 'dus-pa*, a cycle of teachings focussing on the eight Heruka-*sādhana-s* and a biography of Padmasambhava (i.e. KTHZGM) etc. He passed away at an age of sixty-nine (= 1192 A.D.).

The now obsolete assumption advanced by Macdoanld, 1971, p. 203, n. 59, that Nyi-ma 'od-zer and mNga'-bdag Myang/Nyang-ral should be two distinct individuals cannot under any circumstance be endorsed. Assessing the biographical data of his and the written material from his

compound *bla rdzogs thugs gsum*, which alludes to *bla ma sgrub pa*, *sādhana*-instruction aiming at the meditative identification or consubstantiation of the adept's person with the Guru, i.e. Padmasambhava. The element *rdzogs* indicates the teachings of the rDzogs-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 Mahākārunika 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 *Trikāya*-based emanational or incarnational nexus listed prior to the transmission-line of the entire cycle:¹⁹

Dharmakāya: Amitābha
Sambhogakāya: Avalokiteśvara
Nirmāṇakāya: king Srong-btsan sgam-po/slob-dpon Padma 'byung-gnas

The role assigned to *ācārya* 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-btsun Shākya bzang-po, the original XIIth-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

brief entertainment b/w 2 acts of a play.

pen leaves us with no residual doubt on this point. Nyang-ral and Nyi-ma 'od-zer are one and the same person. Cf. also Kapstein, 1992, pp. 165-166.

18 Cf. Dargyay, 1977, pp. 67-70 and Ehrhard, 1990, pp. 3-4, 84-85. Cf. also MNKB E (dKar-chag) 9a1-3.

19 Cf. also the Vth Dalai Lama, gSan-yig, III, 150.6-151.3 (= 55b6-56a1), for the *abhiseka* transmission line (*dbang bryud pa*). Cf. also note 43 *infra*.

In the proemical salutation to his Padma-Vita, KTHZGM 1.1-3, Nyang-ral provides the same emanational nexus: Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, Padmasambhava, leaving out here naturally Srong-btsan sgam-po. This, more than anything, shows the direct religious and spiritual affiliation behind the composition/compilation of the two Vita-traditions. This is also confirmed by the lengthy exposition on Ārya Avalokita's famous Six-syllabic formula, so intimately associated with king Srong-btsan sgam-po, offered by Nyang-ral in his CHBYMTNYP and KTHZGM and in MNKB. The exposition is there delivered by Padmasambhava as a set of advices to the Tibetan king (here Mu-tig btsan-po) and his subjects, cf. Chap. IV, note 266ff. *infra*.

20 O-rgyan gling-pa, KTHDNG (KHA) *op. cit.* Chap. XVIII, 161.13-162.8, adds that aside from these instruction- and *sādhana*-cycles (as shown above with a strong rDzogs-chen propensity) etc., the *lha-sa'i lo-rgyus*, i.e. 'the story (about the erection) of lHa-sa (i.e. Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang)' was also found by Padmasambhava (in Jo-khang). This can only refer to proto-KCHKKHM which is repeatedly (KCHKKHM-2 3.15-19, 5.7, 316.2-3) called *lHa-sa bzhangs-pa'i lo-rgyus kyi yi-ge* etc. These writings were then shown to king Khri-srong lde-btsan and then again concealed in Jo-khang, later, as is known, to be found by Atiśa and the gTer-ston-s in the *phyi-dar* period. Cf. also HBCHBY (JA) 149a6-7.

tempting to speculate that some scroll (*thang 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 'Phrul-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 Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang, in other words the main bulk of the biography of king Srong-btsan sgam-po could be seen as a sort of pendant to the documented story anent the erection of bSam-yas (sBa-bzhed (abbr. BZH), Chin. ed. 82.16-17: *bSam-yas bzhangs-pa'i gtam-rgyud*), in case of which it is tempting to conjecture that both respective stories of the erection went through the same hands.

The Grand Histories of bSam-yas and lHa-sa

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-btsan (742-797 A.D.), during whose reign the Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang *gtsug lag khang* and the dPal bSam-yas *gtsug lag khang* were erected, two fundamental records grew forth:

lHa-sa [b]Ka[']-gtsigs chen-mo,²³

21 As stated by BZH (Stein ed. 53.5-8, Chin. ed. 62.8-12) and Nyang-ral, CHBYMTNYP 422a2-6, during Khri-srong lde-btsan's reign, many *bka'i thang yig*, *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'-mchid*, also termed a *lo drung* (i.e. *lo [rgyus dang] sgrung*) *gi yi ge* (cf. HBCHBY (JA) 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 tendered by Srong-btsan sgam-po and foreseeing the advent, in the fifth generation from himself, of king Khri-lde gtsug-btsan, alias Mes-Ag-tshom(s), (704-754 A.D.) as a Buddhist champion and doyen. This opening is doubtlessly a simple act of legitimization. This piece of *ex eventu* prophecy has moreover been conceived, at the earliest, during whose reign 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'-mchid*, a narrative collateral to his *bKa'-gtsigs* or edict (both dating from ca. 779-780 A.D.) and both conserved by dPa'-bo, HBCHBY (JA) 108b1-111b5, expresses not only this gratitude to the *mes po* Srong-btsan sgam-po, but 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 BZH.

Parallel testaments and predictions (forecasting the advent of religious figures up to and incl. Atiśa) 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 these predictions are the fabrication of the *phyi-dar* 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-tshigs chen-mo and bKa'-chems Ka-khol-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

bSam-yas [b]Ka[']-gtsigs chen-mo.²⁴

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*)²⁵ 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-bzhed*?), its genuinity as a document hailing from the dynastic period should be outside the realm of doubt. As to the *Great Chronicle of lHa-sa*, while we cannot conclusively accord it the same age as the *bSam-yas* ditto, it is noteworthy that e.g. Nyang-ral, the first historian to employ the king's *Vita* extensively, coins king Srong-btsan sgam-po's Testament found in Jo-khang by Atiśa: *bKa'-rtsis [= gtsigs] chen-mo*, i.e. the *lHa-sa* ditto. As shown, this was arguably either a commonly used epithet or rather a secondary title for (the oldest?) of the numerous versions of *KCHKKHM*. 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 Srong-btsan sgam-po's *Vita* unearthed by Jo-bo-rje: *bKa'-gtsig[s] chen-mo* and a brief passage cited by Nyang-ral indicates that this title refers to *KCHKKHM*, cf. note 38 *infra*, also corroborated by an entry in *DTHMP* 15b3-4, where a work titled *lHa-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 lHa-sa* and its affiliation or even identity with the king's *Vita*.

24 *BZH* (Chin. ed. 82.10-18); *CHBYMTNYP* 439b3-6, where Nyang-ral evidently cites a passage (or shares the passage in common) from the *BZH*-colophon also found in the Chin. ed. of *BZH*; Tucci, (*TPS*, I, p. 143 citing Rva Lo-tsa-ba's *rNam-thar: mNga'-bdag Khri-srong lde'u-btsan gyi zhal-chems bSam-yas Ka-brtsigs 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'i dgongs Rab-tu gsal-ba* and his *sKyes-bu dam-pa la sprin-pa'i yi-ge*, cf. Ruegg, 1989, p. 69) pre-XIVth century Tibetan historiographies, incl. the *GLR*, never use the title *sBa-bzhed*, but almost exclusively appellations such as *bSam-yas Ka-gtsigs chen-mo* or the like for what turns out to be *BZH*. See also the reflections on *sBa-bzhed* in the bibliographical section to the present work.

It is also worth paying attention to the information proffered by O-rgyan gling-pa, *KTHDNG* (*KHA*) Chap. 19, 227.18-21 (the colophon), how the noted *lo tsā ba* lDan-ma rtse-mang, upon the request of Padmasambhava, king Mu-tig btsan-po (here = Sad-na-legs?) and consort, wrote down the *rGyal-po'i dkar-chag Thang-yig chen-mo* (also called *sNang-srid gtan-'bebs thang-yig*) possibly at the beginning of the IXth century and which supposedly served as *Vorlage* for O-rgyan gling-pa's own homonymous *gter-ma*. The same text, *op. cit.*, 215.7-10, chronicles the burial of this text and other sources such as the *Slob-dpon rGyal-po'i rnam-thar chen-po* (serving as model or source for O-rgyan gling-pa's *PMKTH*?) and *rGyal-po'i thugs-dam bSam-yas dkar-chag*. It will be recalled that one of the (supplementary) titles of *BZH* is *bSam-yas kyi dkar-chag chen-mo*, cf. e.g. *HBCHBY* (JA) 89b6. Although O-rgyan gling-pa's pentad is classified as a *gter-ma* text, it is brimming with material culled from very old sources. The relationship, 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 lde-btsan bka'-chems*, 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 'Phrul-snang 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.²⁶ 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 *lHa-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 lHa-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 moot questions than clarifying answers are found.

But as it shall be seen from the discussion of *KCHKKHM* 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 *bsdus*) and, moreover, in three versions. They were both, it appears, centered around an Indian master and his sojourn in the respective sanctuaries: Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita/Padmasambhava and *bSam-yas* and Jo-bo-rje Atiśa and the Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang temple. Both temples were patterned respective 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 mdzad*) 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 (*bzhengs 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 the period in the dynastic history covering these two rulers as found in almost any extant historical treatise of any note produced in Tibet such as Nyang-ral's monumental *Chos-'byung chen-mo* (abbr. *CHBYMTNYP*), the two *lDe'u Chos-'byung-s* (abbr. resp. *GBCHBY* and *DCHBY*), *Bla-ma dam-pa's rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long* (abbr. *GLR*), *dPa'-bo gTsub-lag's lHo-brag chos-'byung* (abbr. *HBCHBY*), the Vth Dalai Lama's *Bod kyi rgyal-rabs deb-ther rdzogs-ldan gzhon-nu-ma* (abbr. *DTHZHG*), etc. we shall find the textual correspondence and dependency striking. True, other works such as the one by Nyang-ral and the works by the *lDe'u-s* are basically *chos 'byung-s* which have a fairly well-defined topos focussing on the dissemination of Buddhism in India and Tibet and, in addition, by doing so present us with *new* dynastic 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) *lHa-sa [b]Ka[']-tshigs chen-mo*, contrary to *KCHKKHM*, 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 (*bstan rtsis*)) are a unique trait of the *phyi-dar* period. This suggests that the *lHa-sa [b]Ka[']-gtsigs chen-mo* is the product of the early *phyi-dar* period, say the XIth century. That numerous versions or copies of the *Ka-khol-ma* moreover were in circulation is attested e.g. by *dPa'-bo, HBCHBY* (JA) 6a7, where we are informed that the original *Mss (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 gnyer ba*). 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 lDe'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 lDe'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 diverging intensity. We of course also find exceptions to the above trend, to mention a few: Nel-pa's Me-tog phreng-ba (abbr. NGTMTPH), Yar-lung Jo-bo chos-'byung (abbr. YLJBCHBY, to a large extent a calque on DTHMP and GLR in the dynastic section) and dPal-'byor bzang-po's rGya-Bod yig-tshang (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 Srong-btsan sgam-po and recognizing the paramount import of these traditions and teachings focussing on Avalokiteśvara 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 Gu-ru Chos [kyi] dbang[phyug] (1212-1270/73 A.D.)²⁹ recorded to have rendered great service to Jo-khang, the central temple in Lhasa raised by Srong-btsan sgam-po 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-nu-dpal. This approach was followed, taking his pursuit as a model, by numerous Tibetan sect-historians. Any careful reader of *Deb-ther sngon-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 MNKB. 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 mdzad-pa bcu-gcig-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 far from easy to attempt to sketch out the history of the mutual relationship between the numerous Padma-Vitas. Some good, 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 MNKB, could be identified with a Bon sage named bZhod-ston *grub-thob* dNgos-grub.³²

It nevertheless remains a high-priority *desideratum* 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 MNKB 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 chen-mo, a key source for the Avalokiteśvara cult in the *Sūtra*-section of this *gter-ma*, originally forty-four, then forty-one and in more recent redactions of MNKB

30 Cf. TSLKHKCH 14a5, 18a3. MNKB E dKar-chag 11b4-5 adds how rJe-btsun Shākya bzang-po, who is recorded to be responsible for the detection of the Gab-pa mngon-phyung-cycle (= WAM (G), cf. note 961 *infra*) and the important *Sūtra*-cycle (= E (A + C)), merited himself by restoring the embarkments and by securing that Jo-khang underwent restoration work (*ra sa'i chu rags dang zhi gsos*); cf. also Aris, 1979, p. 9. For the importance of constructing embarkments 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 its importance, it can be noted that Atiśa 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. 256).

31 The mention of Bon and Bon-elements are found meagerly scattered in MNKB, and there mostly reduced to themes also found in KCHKHM, 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 laced with rDzogs-chen diction, relied heavily upon this text-tradition. In KCHKHM, representing as such the biographical narrative of the king *par excellence* and as a *gter-ma* of Atiśa originating in a different religious milieu than the one surrounding the gTer-ston-s, the Bon presence is equally paltry, but, stray mention of the term *g.yung drung Bon* and *bon* in combination with the pregnant key concepts *sgrung*, *lde'u* 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 btsan-po, cf. e.g. KCKKKHM-2 6.3-7.3, 78.14-82.16, 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-sprul, himself with a Bon-background as suggested by Blondeau, or 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 rDzogs-chen tradition albeit with different denominations?

only thirty-six chapters.³³ The **bKa'-chems Ka-khol-ma** is maintained once to be (or was intended to have been?) part of **MNKB**,³⁴ but all along it was simultaneously (? or perhaps exclusively) handed down separately in order, it appears, to avoid cases of literary or thematic tautology. Its transmission line is different and should be treated as an *Atiṣa gter-ma*, being fairly older than **MNKB**. While **Lo-rgyus chen-mo** and the **Kāraṇāvyaūha-sūtra**, the latter until approximately three hundred years ago part of all **MNKB**-redactions and both part of the *Sūtra* or 'Canonical' part of **MNKB**, thus are dedicated to the Avalokiteśvara-cult and contain all the myths and devotional narratives expounding the legends, feats and exploits of this pivotal *Bodhisattva*,³⁵ the text-tradition of immediate concern to us here is another part of the *Sūtra*-section, i.e. the Vita-cycle of king Srong-btsan sgam-po which constitutes another part of **MNKB**.

The Mythographical-Biographical Tradition of King Srong-btsan sgam-po

The chapters 2, 4-7, 9-17 of **rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long (GLR)**,³⁶ in other words the lion share of our text, are devoted to a lengthy biographical narrative of king Srong-btsan sgam-po (569-649 A.D.). In this sense, **GLR** is a Srong-btsan sgam-po Vita itself or rather represents a continuation of this biographical literature. Under this king the Tibetan royal Dynasty rose to pre-eminence as a mighty power in Central Asia and this king is by the posterity of Tibetan historians not only unanimously reckoned as the decisive unifier of the Tibetan state, but he is also ascribed the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, a role which, to be true, was to be singularly promoted and furthered by the present cycles, albeit there set in a predominantly mythological and literary ambience.

33 Cf. **MNKB E** dKar-chag 6a1-3; **YLJBCHBY** 53.17-54.12; Vth Dalai Lama's **gSan-yig III**, 66b5-6 (= 132.5-6). Macdonald, 1967, p. 481; 1968/69, p. 528; Aris, 1979, p. 10; Blondeau, 1984, pp. 78-107; Kapstein, 1992. Prior to 1376 A.D., the year Yar-lung Jo-bo compiled his chronicle, **Lo-rgyus chen-mo** had at least forty-four chapters (not twenty-four as maintained by Macdonald, 1967, p. 481), a number which was systematically reduced in the ensuing centuries, possibly for reasons of avoiding voluminosity and thematic tautology, parts of the content already being found in **KCHKKHM**. It is to be lamented that the larger text-witness of **Lo-rgyus chen-mo** has not (yet) come down to us.

Although we shall generally assume a date for this text around the beginning of the *phyi-dar* period, a tentative *terminus a quo* for the **Lo-rgyus chen-mo** may be had, while the text in a mythological narrative mentions the Indian Pāla Dynasty and king Dharmapāla (ca. 770-810 A.D.). Cf. note 122 *infra*. The same piece of narrative is also shared by the **KCHKKHM** versions, and assuming that it is not a later interpolation inserted into the Vita-tradition in general in the *phyi-dar* period, it give us a lower limit for the compilation or composition of (at least parts of) the *Vitas*. Large sections or chapters of **Lo-rgyus chen-mo** are similarly found in the **KCHKKHM**.

34 **MNKB E** dKar-chag 6a2 (interlinear gloss). What is meant by this gloss, is that **KCHKKHM** ought to have been included into the *mDo*-section of **MNKB** from the point of content.

35 Cf. *formost*, Appendix, notes 84, 92, 121 and 329 for text-segments from these traditions.

36 Not only these chapters in **GLR** refer directly to the Srong-btsan sgam-po Vita, but also parts of Chaps. 1 and 8 contain narrative segments and passage sharing elements with the Vita-tradition of the king.

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 Vita 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-d'appui* and the central *gter-ma* dedicated to the Vita of this king is **bKa'-chems Ka-khol-ma**,³⁷ the formal discovery of which is attributed to Jo-bo-rje Atiṣa, alias *Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna*, 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 'Phrul-snang in accordance with a *jñānadākinī's lung bstan* or revelatory prophecy.³⁸

37 Rather than seeing in the etymology of Ka-khol-ma a meaning in the sense a 'boiling (*khol ma*) pillar (*ka ba*)' or the 'pillar with [an outlet for smoke (lit. window (*khol ma* = *skar khung*) in] the roof' or even a sensible distortion of **bKa' bskul ma*, the '(king's) behest' (i.e. Testament), we should rather see in the contracted form Ka-khol-ma, in full *ka ba khol ma*, an allusion to a certain architectural feature akin to the term *gdung [ma] khol*, cf. e.g. **MNKB E** (dKar-chag) 11a5 and **HBCHBY** (JA) 149a6, where *khol ma* designates a corner or the side (*zur, logs*) at the base of a pillar.

As in almost all other fields, the Bon tradition can similarly boast of a Ka-khol-ma *gter-ma*, in full **bSam-yas Ka-khol-ma**, allegedly found in **bSam-yas** by one Yon-sgom thar-mo in 962 A.D. (which arguably may be altered to 1022/1082 A.D.?, in the light of the tendency of prochronism found in some Bon chronological works, cf. Kvaerne 1990). Its content, however, is mainly *sādhana-s*, cf. Karmay, 1972, pp. 122-123, 215-216. The crucial question is, if we here shall allow for a case of 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 an almost similar-worded account (*lo rgyus*), albeit of different length, of the text's *Entstehungsgeschichte* (*byung khungs*) and its transmission-line: **KCHKKHM-1** 615.2-619.4; **KCHKKHM-2** 1.11-5.10, 265.5-10, 315.1-321.19; **KCHKKHM-3** 366.3-367.5.

Cf. also **CHBYMTNYP** Tafel 363.2.2-5; **bKa'-rtsi[gs] chen-mo**; **YLJBCHBY** 53.8-10; **HBCHBY** (JA) 154b6; **gZhon-nu-dpal**, **DTHNGP** (I. 316.9-15, Roerich, p. 258); Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung gSal-ba'i sgron-me**, 54b6-55b2; **TSLKHKCH** 4a1, 13a2, 14b5-6; **bTsong-kha-pa's rNam-thar IV**, 10a5 (ed. and tr. Kaschewsky); **PSJZ** 138.4, 138.22; **gSang-sngags rnying-ma'i chos-'byung legs-bshad** by Gu-ru bKra-shis (pp. 490-93 of the mod. Chin. ed., 1990); further Savitskij, 1967; Chattopadhyaya, 1967, App. A, sect. 2; Eimer, **rNam-thar rgyas-pa**, sect. 328, 337 (pp. 261ff.); Eimer, 1983 (mainly translating the relevant testimony in **KCHKKHM-1** above); Vostrikov, 1970, pp. 28-32.

As foremost recorded in the king's Testament, it was on directions given to Atiṣa by an old woman that the Indian master was able to find the texts two-and-a-half fathoms down below the *ka ba bum pa can* pillar. This sybilline lady is by contemporary literature depicted to assume protean garbs and identities while she was variously called Mu-'gram Se'o [*sic*], but also the mad female-beggar or 'Mad Woman of lHa-sa' (*lHa sa'i smyon ma*) (who, **gZhon-nu-dpal** informs us, **DTHNGP** (II, 1143.12-14, Roerich, pp. 984-985) was a *gCod*-practitioner and an elder contemporary of the XIth century Ma-gcig Lab-sgron-ma (1055-?1149 A.D.), famed *inter alia* for settling religious disputes in her time). In reality, as the Vita tells us, she turned out not only to be Atiṣa's *yoginī* and a disguised *jñānadākinī*, but also a reincarnation of the king's Chinese queen Kong-jo.

At the place in question inside Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang/Jo-khang, Atiṣa allegedly extracted as 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 provenience, the work altogether nevertheless appears homogenous. Turning to the **Ma-ni bka'-'bum**, the picture is, as already noted by Aris, *op. cit.*, 1979, p. 10, a muddle, a state of affair 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 *Sūtra*-section of MNKB E (C) denoted *Chos-skyong-ba'i rgyal-po Srong-btsan sgam-po'i mdzad-pa nram-thar*, also coined *mDzad-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 briefer biographical narratives, respectively:

- (Ca) *Sangs-rgyas Śākya thub-pa'i bstan-pa la mdzad-pa'i lo-rgyus* (16 skabs) and
(Cd) *rGyal-po'i mdzad-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 it 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 congruity 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 stemma is lacking or while, as

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

The first two writings are deplorably no more extant, but probably still existed in the XII-XIIIth cent. (they were at least, it appears, used by or known to Nyang-ral), whereafter 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 dPa'-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 **CHBYMTNYP** as indicated in Appendix, note 770. The final section of **KCHKKHM-2** 315.7-14 describes briefly the topic of these two now-lost testaments of the ministers and queens, maintaining that the *Zla-ba'i 'dod-'jo* and *Dar-dkar gsal-ba* *inter alia* 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*s (i.e. the king's successors in the royal line?) in the presence 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 hastaken place. No doubt, the gTer-ston-s responsible³⁹ for the purely biographical part of MNKB must have taken recourse to the original **KCHKKHM** (= **IHa-sa [b]Ka[']-tshigs chen-mo?**) discovered or compiled during Atiśa's time for the compilation of these sections of their *gter-ma* rather than we shall assume that they both draw from a common proto-version. Where 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 1055-1060 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'-rtsi[g]s chen-mo**, that the work in reality is nothing but the **KCHKKHM**.⁴⁰

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-chag, 6al-12a1; Ratna giing-pa, gTer-'byung chen-mo, KA, 54.5-56.5 (= 27b5-28b5); 'Gos gZhon-nu-dpal DTHINGP (II 1073.1-1175.5, Roerich, II, pp. 1006-08); dPa'-bo's HBCHBY (JA) 149a4-b1; The Vth Dalai Lama, gSan-yig, III, 130.5-151.3 (= 65b5-76a3); cf. Aris, 1979, pp. 8-12, but also Blondeau, 1984 and Kapstein, 1992 *passim*.

The earliest testimonies or references to (parts of) the MNKB being transmitted are e.g. chronicled in DTHINGP (II, 1095.12-13, Roerich, pp. 941-42), where Shes-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 'Brug-sgom Zhig-po (1184-1251 A.D.), in whose youth (around 1190-95 A.D.), according to Aris, 1979, *op. cit.*, p. 11, the existence of MNKB can be adduced. Another part of MNKB, the section **Gab-pa mngon-phyung** (cf. note 961) was, as recorded by dPa'-bo and gZhon-nu-dpal (cf. HBCHBY (JA) 148b6-149a1; DTHINGP (I, 165.17-166.12, 170.13-180.1, 180.13-188.10, Roerich, pp. 129-30, 133-141, 142-148)), transmitted from the noted rDzogs-chen saint Zhig-po bDud-rtsi (1149-1199 A.D.), a famous pupil of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma 'od-zer and a colleague of lHa-rje dGe-ba-'bum, himself a prominent MNKB text-transmitter, and a key figure in the dissemination of rDzogs-chen precepts in Tibet. We can observe that the latter text along with collateral precepts, an exposition on its meditative procedure (*man ngag sgom sdebs su bshad pa*) were conferred upon one rTa-ston Jo-yes (1163-1230 A.D.) by Zhig-po bDud-rtsi, between the years 1190-1199 A.D. Zhig-po bDud-rtsi, on his side, had listened to and received teachings from this text, along with other rDzogs-chen precepts, from dBus-pa sTon-shāk, alias Dam-pa Se-Brag-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-shāk with the MNKB gTer-ston rJe-btsun [= dBu-ru/dBus sTon-pa?] 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-klung kings and thus ultimately boasting descent from king Srong-btsan sgam-po and, on the other side, spiritual text-holders transmitting the Vita-tradition of this king are reported to have met could possibly be cited at greater length. Suffice it to refer to one such incidence, where the above-mentioned Shes-rab 'od, to whom parts of the MNKB were transmitted, in 1195-96 A.D. is reported to have attended teachings proffered by two text-holders of **KCHKKHM**, the Dharmasvāmin 'Bri-gung-pa (1143-1217 A.D.) and rGya-ma Rin-chen sgang-pa, alias dBon-ston (1138-1210 A.D.) at the Yar-klung court of Jo-bo rNal-'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 CHBYMTNYP Tafel 363.2.2-5: *de yang rgyal po bka' chems kyi yi ge 'di yang | mthong ba dang | thos pa dang | rnyed pa dka' bas ste | ji | [tar dka' na | sngon bsod nams bsags pa'i gang [za]*

The extant versions of **bKa'-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 dril*) extracted by Atiśa in Jo-khang. In the largest (*rgyas shos*) 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 Atiśa (982-1054 A.D.) the (set of three?) Vita-copy(ies) was/were transmitted to Bang-ston, then to sTod-lungs-pa, to sPyan-snga-pa, to sNe'u-zur-pa, to 'Bri-gung-pa, then to rGya-ma-pa, to Rva-sgreng-pa, to dKon-bzang, from whom it was given to rDo-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 bKa'-gdams-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 Atiśa, who, it is stipulated,⁴³ was regarded as the very epitome of Ārya Avalokiteśvara Mahākāruṇika

m[a] [yin] [pa]s mi thos | dad pa yang mi[s]kye | skal pa dman pas mi go.

The almost similar passage in **KCHKKHM-2** 320.1-5: *bka' chems kyi yi ge 'di yang mthong bar dka' | thos par dka' ba | rnyed par dka' ba yin te | de ji lar dka' zhe na | ye shes mkha' 'gro mas lung bstan las | gghan gyis rnyed pa dang bstan par nus par dka' bas so*; cf. also **KCHKKHM-1** 619.2-3; **KCHKKHM-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. **KCHKKHM-2**, *op. cit.* 319.14-320.6, 321.10-19, informs us that three sizes (*rgyas 'bring bsdus*) of the matrix, the original Ms-scrolls (*phyi mo shog dril gsum po*) of the testament(s) were properly executed. This possibly refers to the three testaments found by Atiśa, 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 mo*-s were collected, then revised linguistically, and how *dge-bshes* 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 **KCHKKHM-1** 618.5-619.3; **KCHKKHM-2** 320.6-11, 321.9-19; cf. also **KCHKKHM-3** 367.4-5.

43 **KCHKKHM-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 *ad* note 19 above.

On the importance of Avalokiteśvara for Atiśa and on *gdams ngag*, *sādhana*-s and related teachings on his cult within the bKa'-gdams-pa school transmitted to Atiśa from his contemporary Rāhulaguptavajra and then again from Atiśa to Nag-tsho and Lag-sor-pa etc., cf. Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, *bKa'-gdams chos-'byung gsal-ba'i sgron-me*, 338b1-340b1. Cf. also Atiśa's biographical tradition, Eimer, *rNam-thar rgyas-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 this *bodhisattva's buddhakṣetra* and how his Six-syllabic *mantra* was destined to become the country's *lha skal* etc., the scriptural authority of which was *sūtra*-s like *Kāraṇḍavyūha*. As already noted by Kapstein, it is most revealing indeed to observe the missionary and appealing diction (retained aplenty in **MNKB** also) with which these literary pieces was couched in order to bolster this tradition. This proselytizing and devotional-apologetic tone found its way into **MNKB** (but reminiscences can also be traced in **KCHKKHM**), where these views were fully endorsed. The role of Atiśa in this formative phase, being the first great figure in promoting the practice in Tibet of meditational techniques focussing on Avalokiteśvara, should therefore not be underestimated. Kapstein draws in this respect our attention to three major systems of *khrid* on the

and an incarnation of king Srong-btsan sgam-po, the text-tradition then went to his disciple Bang-ston Shes-rab Rin-chen,⁴⁴ and from him in succession to *kalyānamitra* (*dge bshes*) sTod-lungs-pa [chen-po], alias Rin-chen snying-po (1032-1116 A.D.),⁴⁵ sPyan-snga[-pa], alias Tshul-khrims-'bar (birth name sTag-tshab/tshag-'bar) (1038-1103 A.D.),⁴⁶ *kalyānamitra* sNe'u-zur-pa, alias Rin-po-che Ye-shes-'bar (1042-1118/19 A.D.),⁴⁷ 'Bri-gung-pa, alias Chos-rje 'Jig-rten mgon-po (1143-1217 A.D.),⁴⁸

Avalokiteśvara-*sādhana*-s originating from this Bengali master: *bKa' gdams lha bzhi'i spyan ras gzigs, sKyer sgang* (i.e. sKyer-gang-pa Dharma seng-ge) *lugs kyi spyan ras gzigs and dPal mo* (or Laksmī) *lugs kyi spyan ras gzigs*. In fact, in the XIth-XIIth century the picture of the teachings pertaining to the Avalokiteśvara cycle had already become fairly complex. Ba-ri Lo-tsā-ba (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 **KCHKKHM-2** 278.7, where he is prophesied once to have been an embodiment of a *sngags 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 Bla-ma Zhang and Dvags-po sGom-tshul, the latter was a disciple of lHa-rje sGam-po-pa (1079-1153 A.D.).

Noteworthy finally is, as also pointed out by Kapstein, the popularity and special approbation accorded **MNKB** and the Avalokiteśvara and Srong-btsan sgam-po cult in the bKa'-gdams-pa and later dGe-lugs-pa circles. Where in the first post-dynastic centuries Avalokiteśvara, 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-lugs-pa-s, and in particular the Vth Dalai Lama, seem to have stressed the religious aspects. While the latter is recorded to have studied these teachings with enthusiasm and approval, with all its concomitant 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 Atiśa, who e.g. invited him to sNye-thang, cf. Eimer, *rNam-thar rgyas-pa*, s.v. index; **DTHNGP** (I, 315.16-18, Roerich, p. 256); **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung**, 79a3-b6. He established the temple of 'Or (the district in which sNye-thang is located) after Atiśa's death. No chronology of him has survived.

45 Cf. **YLJBCHBY** 119.7-10; **DTHNGP** (I, 348.16-349.5, Roerich, p. 286); **HBCHBY** (Chin. ed. I, 718.19-20); see also among numerous bKa'-gdams-pa histories, Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan, *bKa'-gdams chos-'byung*, 166b2, 168b3-170b3; Eimer, *ib.*, s.v. index.

46 Cf. **DTHMP** 26a1; **YLJBCHBY** 99.5-6, 118.15-119.6; **DTHNGP** (I, 322.5-9, 347.1-348.16, Roerich, pp. 263, 284-286); **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung**, 164b1-168b3; **HBCHBY** (Chin. ed. I, 710.11-12); Eimer, *ib.*, s.v. index. Famous pupil of Atiśa, in 1195 A.D. he built the temple of Lo.

47 Cf. **DTHNGP** (I, 377.2-380.15, Roerich, pp. 311-314); **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung**, 120a6ff., 155a2-b5; **HBCHBY** (Chin. ed. I, 707.16-17); Eimer, *ib.*, s.v. index. The lineage of sPyan-snga and sNe'u-zur-pa within bKa'-gdams-pa is known as the so-called line of Precept-holders (*gdams ngag pa*).

48 Cf. e.g. **DTHNGP** (II, 702.1-708.3, Roerich, pp. 596-601). It is tempting to assume here a corruption for lHa 'Bri-sgang-pa (?ca. 1100/10-1190), cf. Eimer, 1991, pp. 164-165 and **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung**, 227a6-b3. The royal house of lHa 'Bri-sgang could in fact boast descent from the ancient kings of Yar-lung and thereby to king Srong-btsan sgam-po, cf. the 1597 and 1811

rGya-ma-pa, alias dBon-ston Rin-po-che (1138-1210 A.D.),⁴⁹ then to Rva-sgreng-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 list⁵³ 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

kalyāṇamitra rNal-'byor chen-po, alias A-mes [chen-po] Byang-chub 'byung-gnas or Byang-chub rin-chen (1015-1078 A.D.)⁵⁴ to

kalyāṇamitra sPyan-snga[-pa], alias Tshul-khrims-'bar (1038-1103 A.D.), who then gave it to his pupil

kalyāṇamitra 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'-gdams-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 abbatial see of Ra-sgreng.

51 Currently unidentified.

52 This is most probably the 1st hierarch or the holder of the abbatial see (*gdan sa*) of 'Bri-gung, cf. **DTHNGP** (II, 715.17-716.2, 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", *Tōyō Gakuhō* 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-sgreng, cf. e.g. **HBCHBY** (Chin. ed. I, 683.22-23); **DTHNGP** (I, 321.2-3, 324.10-11, Roerich, pp. 262, 265); **bKa'-gdams 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 sNye-thang.

55 Cf. e.g. **YLJBCHBY** 119.10-121.5; **DTHNGP** (I, 349.5-356.7, Roerich, pp. 286-292); **bKa'-gdams chos-'byung**, 155a4, 171b2-177b3; **HBCHBY** (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-sgom, who eventually handed it over to the custodian(s) of Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang/Jo-khang, who, we may presume, from then on continued to be text-holders and guardians of the Vita, cf. ref. to dPa'-bo *ad* note 26 *supra*.

This is an important observation to make. 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 lHa-sa in 1478 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.

confusion leaps to the fore while **KCHKKHM-2**⁵⁶ apparently enumerates additional titles of testaments ascribable to the king:

bKa'-chems mTho-mthong-ma,⁵⁷
rNam-thar bKa'-chems gSer gyi phreng-ba,
rNam-thar phyi-ma bKa'-chems gSer gyi yang-zhun,
bKa'-chems Me-tog 'phreng-ba.

56 *Op. cit.* 309.14-16, 313.17-314.5, 315.1-2.

57 This testament and the **Ka-khol-ma** are said to have been depicted (later?) (by way of mural-illustrations, obviously) on the walls of the tomb of the king in the Valley of Yar-klungs 'Phyong-rgyas. Cf. note 1088 *infra*. This text is already mentioned in an interlinear scholium in the dKa-rcag of **MNKB** (6a2), where it, here titled **bKa'-chems mThon-mthong-ma**, together with text-cycles such as **Me-tog rgyan-pa'i zhing-bkod** and the present **bKa'-chems Ka-khol-ma** were declared with certainty to pertain to the writings (*bka'*) of the king and suitable therefore to be included in the *mDo* section of **MNKB**, an inclusion which however never happened.

Assuming the alliterative **mTho-mthong** to be a simple corruption for **mTho-mthing**, the most curious note in this matter is offered by Ratna gling-pa (1403-78 A.D.), **gTer-'byung chen-mo**, (KA) 54.4-5 (= 27b4-5), who presents us, while briefly delineating the Vita-traditions attributed to king Srong-btsan sgam-po, with the statement *Pan chen Shākya Shri la sogs kyi bka' chems mTho lding ma*. With the proviso that the text referred to is identical (which is far from certain), we can observe that it is here written **mTho-lding-ma** (? to be understood as a sort of **mTho-lding Ms** from the famous monastery in Guge, passed by Kha-che Pan-chen on his way from Kashmir to Central Tibet?) in lieu of **mTho[n]-mthong-ma**. We can moreover observe that **mTho[n]-mthing-ma eo ipso** is a good reading while, akin to **Ka-khol-ma**, this form similarly alludes to an architectural or ornamental feature (associated with azure-blue or (*indra*)*mīla*-coloured pillars) as indicated e.g. by Nyang-ral, **CHBYMTNYP** 323b3 (*muhon muhing gser gyi ka ba ka gzhu*, describing in *casu* bSam-yas). The equation between **mTho-ling** and **mThon-mthing** is nevertheless warranted, while **GLR** has retained the latter form as name for this famous temple, cf. note 1668 *infra*.

Now, the fact that a text known as **bKa'-chems Tho-ling-ma** is recorded to have existed containing a famous prophecy (allegedly ascribed to the king) and forecasting that Chos-rje g.Yam/g.Ya'-bzang (alias Chos sMon-lam, 1169-1233 A.D., who considered himself to be an incarnation of king Srong-btsan sgam-po), would turn up four hundred and twenty-five years after the passing of the king, would suggest that this text very well may be associated with Kha-che Pan-chen (1127/?1140'es-1225 A.D.), cf. **DTHNGP** (II, 767.10-771.14, Roerich, pp. 653-56), Kahtog's **DSYML** 58.4-59.13. The Chos-rje acted as *yon bdag* or patron for the Kashmirian master when the latter came to Tibet in 1204 A.D. and Chos-rje g.Yam-bzang is recorded to have propounded narratives of the erection of Khra-'brug, the *thugs dam* or personal tutelary chapel of the king and other stories related to the king. No doubt, the **bKa'-chems [m]Tho-[d]jing-ma** originated in this milieu. The fact moreover that the **bKa'-chems mTho-mthong-ma** is mentioned in the part of **KCHKKHM-2** dealing with the passing and the tomb of the king would suggest that either material from this text or reference to it was briefly made by one of the last text-holders of **KCHKKHM**. Beyond that, it is impossible to verify or reject altogether whether the renowned Kha-che Pan-chen did have an active hand in the compilation of a biography of the king in the sense perhaps, analogous to the rapport between **Ka-khol-ma** itself and Atiśa and a local benefactor in lHa-sa, that a testament was 'found' by yet another noted Indian master, an attempt then possibly contrived in order to tinge a tradition with scriptural or spiritual authenticity and possibly made in deference to the expressed wish of Chos-rje g.Yam-bzang. In default of more substantial material or until new material surfaces, this interesting point cannot be pursued further.

Another lead may point to the **Kho-thing gi gter-ma**, a text similarly containing prophecies also about the king and his temple, cf. **HBCHBY** (JA) 150a1ff. and note 1023 *infra*.

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-khol-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 by then, the decisive initiative conceivably coming from a local ruler or *dānapati* in lHa-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 *Entstehungsgeschichte* may have materialized in connection with a belated or reconfirmatory 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 states⁶⁰ that until Atiśa's time, the earlier attempts to consecrate lHa-sa and bSam-yas respectively, performed in the wake of their erection⁶¹ 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.

58 Cf. e.g. *op. cit.* 313.17-314.4: *Bod kyi rgyal po chen po srong btsan sgam po'i nram thar bka' chems gser gyi 'phreng ba zhes kyang bya l jo bo thugs rje chen po 'phags pa spyen ras gzigs dbang phyug gi lo rgyus dang l nram thar phyi ma bka' chems gser gyi yang zhun zhes kyang bya l rgyal po chen po srong btsan sgam po bod yul dbus su dam pa chos kyi srol gzhung btod nas l chos 'khor lha sa bzhegs pa'i lo rgyus rgyal po'i bka' chems kha khol ma zhes bya ba.*

59 A good parallel would be the role played by lHa-btsun sNgon-mo reigning in bSam-yas and who lived in the beginning and middle part of the XIIIth century (cf. note 1595 *infra*). He was a scion of Yum-brtan and himself recognized as a gTer-ston by being regarded as a key disseminator in the transmission or lineage of a number of biographical treasures pertaining to the tradition of Padmasambhava.

60 *Op. cit.*, HBCHBY (JA) 53a6-b2.

61 Cf. the notes 897 and 1319 *infra*.

King Srong-btsan sgam-po's Role Reappraised: Historical Tailoring, Posthumous Apparel and Mythographical Trappings

Neither contemporary data and records nor more recent Western research have always, and not without cogent reasons, supported the view massively endorsed by this autochthonous literature and its often stereotype historiographical tradition such as the one found in GLR, that king Khri Srong-b[r]tsan alias Srong-btsan sgam-po (569-649 A.D.)⁶² was the ruler who set Buddhism on a firm footing in Tibet, at least on a larger scale.⁶³

62 Throughout the later part of the dynastic period his name is recorded as 'Phrul gyi lha (i.e. sage-king; for this metonym, cf. note 642 *infra*) Khri (= *khri pa*, i.e. throne-holder, king) Srong-btsan/btsan. While the later soubriquet or hypocoristic 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 predicate arguably reflecting Skt. *gambhīra* and qualifying the king's (regarded on a par with Buddha) thought and intent (*dgongs pa, thugs, sandhi*), cf. e.g. note 961ff. *infra*) was prevalent from the *phyi-dar* period, the full form Srong-btsan sgam-po is also attested from the last part of the dynastic period, cf. e.g. the Dunhuang *Chronicle* (date uncertain, possibly Xth century; Bacot *et al.*, pp. 118.23-24, 161) and sBa-bzhed. Incidentally, the *Chronicle* has also retained the original form Khri Srong-btsan, suggesting that this dossier is an uneven and concocted *cento* 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 (*dbu brnyes*) of Buddhism in Tibet, invariably ascribed to lHa Tho-tho-ri snyan-shal (cf. note 356 *infra*). This ascription appears to be post-dynastic, while no pre-Xth cent. material seems to warrant this depiction. Another (or parallel) tradition, this time connected with king Srong-btsan sgam-po, speaks about the introduction or opening of the tradition of Saddharma (in Tibet) (*dam pa'i chos srol phye ba*), its (subsequent) anchoring (*srol btod pa*) or establishment (rather than taking this phase to stand for the formative part) and its (final) full mastering (*srol 'dzin pa*). Cases of a combination (at least succession) of the phases i.e. *dbu brnyes srol btod* is e.g. found in Nyang-ral's CHBYMTNYP 175a6, 292a3. Albeit this phasic division in its final form was formulated in the XIIth century at the earliest (and parallels a well-known similar division describing the *phyi-dar* period, cf. e.g. Vitali, 1990, pp. 37, 62), the ascription to the king appears nevertheless to have originated in the dynastic period itself, while Khri-stong lde-btsan in his *bKa'-mchid* (composed ca. 779-780 A.D.) ascribes the phase *sangs rgyas kyi chos thog mar mdzad* to Khri Srong-btsan [sgam-po], cf. HBCHBY (JA) 110a5.

The king's Vita itself (mid-XIth century) repeatedly stipulates this glorifying aspect of king Srong-btsan sgam-po, cf. KCKHKHM-2 314.2-3, 315.6-7 and 318.3-4. There the king is merited for *bod yul dbus su dam pa chos kyi srol gzhung btod pa*. Signally, this phrase is similarly vouched for by the Xth cent. *Chronicle* (Bacot, p. 118.21-23). Nyang-ral, CHBYMTNYP 188b6, 297a2, 405a1 and 452a6, and the Sa-skye masters such as Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's BGR 199b2 and 'Phags-pa Bla-ma in his *Shes-hya rah-gsal*, *op. cit.* 19a2-3 and later O-rgyan gling-pa, KTHDNG (NGA) 402.5, among many others adopt this ascription and thus credit Srong-btsan sgam-po and his epoch with the phase of the anchoring or tethering (*srol btod pa*) of the Buddhist tradition in Tibet rather than perhaps being considered its original initiator. To note also is that lDe'u Jo-sras, DCHBY 115.12-13 in contrast speaks about the king's *chos khriims kyi srol btod* (= *bl[ro]tod*).

Tibetan historical and literary sources that may be accorded some validity, while not entirely silent on this point either restrict themselves to confirm a modicum of Buddhist activity during the reign of this king, religious activity mainly practised by non-Tibetan persons and possibly restricted to the court, or these works tend to focus on the king's legislative and civilizing feats altogether.⁶⁴ But the majority of Tibetan historiographies, including not seldom a number of fairly reliable sources, instead have taken recourse to peddle (parts or) entire sections of the above legendary and mythologized biographical narrative of this king and his religious and national feats ascribed to him by posterity.

In the light of the present study, although predominantly dealing with this bulk of mythographical material, this opinion may possibly be altered slightly. Browsing through the narratives of his Vita-s leaves us with the indelible impression of a king recast or redressed in an outfit manufactured by his posterity in order to create a mythic figure endowed with supernatural endowments as it becomes for an august monarch of national stature. In respect to the picture of the king's politico-mythical creed that has been gleaned foremost from the Dunhuang material and which has been demonstrated in recent research, the mythological and legendary material filtered here in this study has only little or nothing to tell. Still, in these legend-tinted Vita traditions we have nevertheless traced new information and data that either were unknown to earlier research or were written off altogether as purely legendary and ahistorical. True, large parts when not entire accounts are steeped in narrative ornamentations and his person has by posterity always been clothed or shrouded in an abundance of speculation throughout all the strange permutations of his biography. Sifting fact from myths in this literature is a problematic and painstaking enterprise, occasionally a forlorn hope. Thanks to a systematic scrutiny of this material, some findings may nevertheless now equip us with supplementary verifiable information or the data found are themselves verified and paralleled by historically reliable sources.

One such thing, in my eyes, yielded by this far too long ignored literature, is the information that the first temple or rather chapel in Tibet, being more or less vaguely associated with Buddhist vestige, was neither Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang nor Ra-mo-che, indubitably two of the very oldest temples in Tibet raised in the mid-VIIth century,⁶⁵ but arguably that of Khra-'brug situated in the heart of the Yar-klung[s] Valley, a sanctuary which was till now

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 king (Khri) Srong-b[ri]tsan. Khri-srong lde-btsan, both in his *bKa'-gtsigs* and his *bKa'-mchid* (of 779-780 A.D.), as well as the *sKar-c[h]jung rdo-ring[s]* dating, no doubt, from the inception of the IXth century (i.e. ca. 800-815 A.D.) and the *bKa'-gtsigs* or reconfirmatory edict by Sad-na-legs, all record that the temples such as the Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang or, as it was also known, Ra-sa Bi-har/ha-ra (= *vihāra*) and the rGya-btags (= rGya-stag, cf. note 831 *infra*) Ra-mo-che etc. (*la stsogs pa* = *la sogs pa*) were erected during his reign. Cf. HBCHBY (JA) 109a1-2, 110a4-5, 128b4-5 and Richardson, 1985, pp. 74-75. Cf. also the previous note and the opening passage in sBa-bzhed, 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 sgam-po's *bka' chems*. Naturally, this *ex eventu* prophecy itself originated at the earliest from 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 *passim* and note 831.

barely more than customarily ascribed to this king.⁶⁶ All sources which unanimously claim Khra-'brug the first chapel or temple erected in Tibet may ultimately go back to a common, single textual authority, a testimony, to be true, which we currently cannot trace beyond the threshold of the XIth century, yet a set of circumstances, in my eyes, underpins the assumption that this information reflects reality and that this pivotal spiritual bond (*thugs dam*) chapel of the king soon after his passing sunk into semi-oblivion, a fact which in part accounts for its relative anonymity in contemporary dynastic annals and records.

Another significant information to be gleaned from the present material is the description of the presence of Nepalese/Newari artists, craftsmen and religious teachers etc. in the earlier years of this king's court,⁶⁷ circumstances, of course, which have been known to scholars for long, but the overall picture now to be painted suggests that not only the Ra-sa 'Phrul-snang *gtsug lag khang* was Nepalese in artistic expression, concept and origin, but that the Nepalese cultural presence in other earlier constructions can be both assumed and documented too. This, more than anything else, adds further circumstantial arguments to the well-nigh endless discussion concerning the historicity and possible existence of the Nepalese princess Khri-btsun.⁶⁸

Already Tucci,⁶⁹ in order to disprove the existence of Khri-btsun or in order perhaps to account for her overwhelming presence in later Tibetan historical works, has drawn attention to a possible symmetrical parallel and triad, which was allegedly contrived by later Tibetan historians in order to provide a link or analogy to the two wives of Padmasambhava. Rather than attempting to supply further justification for this analogy, and with the intention to expand this scheme, without however clarifying to what extend it is a later fabrication, we might as well add the two Tibetan ministers whose feats during his reign were equally oriented towards cementing this alleged triad, as indirectly suggested in KCHKHM-2.⁷⁰

It has generally been argued that among those figures placed circumjacent around the king, the ones given in the left column, i.e. queen Khri-btsun but also minister Thon-mi lack a historical foundation or rather indisputable proofs of their historicity are still largely absent, whereas the figures in the right column are well-founded historically:

66 Cf. note 836 *infra*.

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

68 Cf. note 560 *infra*.

69 Tucci, 1962 and Sørensen, 1986, pp. 84-85.

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 bsgyur pa'i lo tsisha pa blon po chen po gnyis ni l' thon mi sam bho ta dang l' gar stong btsan yul bzung gnyis yin cing rgyal po srong btsan sgam po'i spyen sngar bsgyur pa'i lo tsisha chen por grags so.*

Information that the famous VIIth century minister and general mGar, a popular protagonist in the Vita 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.

INDIA/NEPAL (<i>nub/lho</i>)	TIBET (<i>dbus</i>)	CHINA (<i>shar</i>)
Khri-btsun (Bhr̥kufī) (queen)	Srong-btsan sgam-po (king)	Kong-jo (Wenzheng) (queen)
[Śyāmā Tārā]	[Ārya Avalokiteśvara]	[Sita Tārā]
Thon-mi Sambhota (minister)		mGar sTong-btsan yul-bzung (minister)

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,⁷¹ other clues are not entirely absent.

Albeit scriptural evidence of the Avalokiteśvara cult and teachings connected with this divinity therefore may appear signally sparse in the earliest period,⁷² 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. Lokeśvara, (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**,⁷³ 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 lde-btsan (742-797 A.D.). In this chapel, the principal image of which was Khasarpaṇa, a well-known form of Avalokiteśvara widely prevalent already from the dynastic period, murals were executed with illustrative scenes gleaned e.g. from the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*, the

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

72 The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* 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*.

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 of the king, i.e. Srong-btsan sgam-po, was installed in the chapel. There is no cogent reason 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 loosely knitted tribal and nomadic 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 *gtsug/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 elsewhere⁷⁴ 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 introduced or transplanted the Lokeśvara and the Avalokiteśvara (later fused with the Matsyendranāth) 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-btsun, 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 'Phrul-snang.⁷⁵

From Chinese side, Beckwith⁷⁶ 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. was honoured with 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. Transmuting this imperial appellation to a Buddhist one could rather early, already perhaps 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 titularization or Buddhist incarnational deification 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 became 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.

74 Vitali, 1990, pp. 70-74 and more generally on Newār artistic influence in Tibet, cf. Lo Bue, 1989, "The Newār Artists of the Nepal Valley", *Oriental Art* 31, pp. 262-277, 356-384. It should also not go unmentioned that the celebrated six-syllabic *dhāraṇī* of Avalokita 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.

~~rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long~~
~~Provenance and Description~~

Before we focus on rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long⁷⁷ 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.

~~Author and Date~~

We shall here abstain from reiterating in full the now seemingly overdebated 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,⁷⁸ it is deemed worthwhile to recap in a piecemeal fashion the background for the ambiguous data that hitherto have blurred 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 bsgrigs pa*) his work at the *mahāvihāra* of bSam-yas in an earth-male-dragon year (*sa pho 'brug*).

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 Bla-ma dam-pa started compiling his work in 1328 only to complete it towards the end of his life,⁷⁹ 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 allowing for a certain mental precocity among Tibetan monk-scholars, a young monk-novice aged sixteen would most certainly not initiate 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-rabs chos-'byung gsal-ba'i me-long. The front-page of the sDe-dge edition even reads rGyal-rabs rnam kyī 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. 1 (see below) even though it is the topic of his recent article.

79 Cf. e.g. Kuznetsov, 1966, Introduction and Vogel, 1981, p. 5; 1991, p. 407. The reflections of Kuznetsov on the proper understanding of *legs par bsgrigs pa* are totally unfounded.

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 Vth Dalai Lama, the first to claim, for still unknown reason, that Legs-pa'i shes-rab was the author (*rtsom 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 IHa-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 moins*. 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 by repeatedly alluding to his name and epithets in the usual 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-khri-ma blo-gros (1308-1363), was known through a number of epithets and honorific appellations:

Sa-skya dPal-ldan,

'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 Fagernes, 1992, as yet unpublished) discussing the author and date of GLR and entitled *Bod kyī lo-rgyus deb-ther kha-cig dang 'brel-yod gnad-don zhig gleng-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 Vth Dalai Lama, if no deeper reason should be sought, has evidently confounded (due to a cursory misreading?) the statement given in the author's colophon that the work had been successfully compiled (*legs par bsgrigs pa*) (by Bla-ma dam-pa) with the statement in the editor's colophon that the work *inter alia* had been successfully executed (*legs par sgrubs pa*; i.e. successfully printed; *legs par [[s]par du] sgrubs*) (by Legs-pa'i shes-rab).

82 Sources consulted on his life include: YLJBCHBY 163.9-170.11; Bu-ston's rNam-thar 19a3, 20b5, 22a7, 22b6, 27a5, 30a6 (ed. and tr. Ruegg); GBYTSH, II, 26b4-27a4; Lam-'bras slob-bshad (Vol. KHA 1b1-237a6); cf. 193b4-203b2 incl. the Bla-ma dam-pa biography written by Bla-ma dPal-ldan tshul-khri-ma; Sa-skya gdung-rabs chen-mo written by A-m[y]es-zhabs (1597-1659 A.D.) (of 1629 A.D.) (ed. Dolanji 1975) 1b1-334a6; cf. 161a1-180b1, where A-myes-zhabs has based his biographical sketch upon partly extant (cf. note 87 *infra*) and partly non-extant *rnam thar-s* and *gdung rabs* written by some of Bla-ma dam-pa's pupils such as lo-tsa-ba Byang-chub rtse-mo (1303-1380 A.D.), Chos-rje Nyi-lde, gTsang Byams-pa rDo-rje rgyal-mtshan, Shes-rab rdo-rje, Karma Byams Chos-pa Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan; DTHZHG 100.11-16; rJe-btsun Thams-cad mkhyen-po ICang-skyā Rol-pa'i rdo-rje'i 'khrung-rabs by 'Jam-dbyangs bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje (1648-1722 A.D.), vol. KHA of *gSung-'bum*, IXth section (*vol-'dab*) 33b3-45a3. Cf. also Tucci, 1949, II, p. 627; cf. 1988, pp. 113-121; Sørensen, 1986, pp. 33-37; Jackson, 1989, pp. 89, 173, 258; Petech, 1990, *passim*.

The reliquary or ossuary *mchod rten* containing the remnants of Bla-ma dam-pa was until 1959 found in sNye-thang close to IHa-sa. It did not survive the vandalism during the Cultural Revolution, cf. Dowman, 1988, p. 136.

an explanatory note of commentary; a ruk explanation proof

rDo-rje 'dzin(-pa) (Vajradhara) 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-sgang branch⁸³ 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.)⁸⁴ and one of his wives Zhalu Ma-gcig gZhon-nu-'bum (b. 1285). He passed away at bSam-yas age sixty-three in the wood-female-hare year of the VIth *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 costumarily the tenor of the standard hagiographical writings of his days. Early in his religious training as infant at Rin-chen-sgang, it is recorded that he listened to and received the initiations of Cakrasamvara ('Khor-lo bDe-mchog) according to the system of Ghantāpā (Dril-bu-pā). 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 *mūlatantra* of Hevajra (brTag gnyis). Aged eight, amidst a circle of learned *piṭakadhara*-s at Rin-chen-sgang he demonstrated the skill of elucidating and reciting by heart large portions of textual passages from the theoretical writings of the previous ancestral (*yab mes*) Sa-skya-pa Gong-ma-s.

At the age of eleven, in 1322, he requested for and received the *samvara* of an Upāsaka in the presence of Bla-chen Kun-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 (*upadeśa*), authorization (*lung*) and *khrid*.

At the age of seventeen, 1328 A.D., he formally renounced (the world) (*pravrajyā*), i.e. became ordained, and as a *śrāmanera* 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 *upasampadā* 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 Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna. Ultimately he proved full proficiency of the three intellectual endeavours of any monk-scholar: didactic exposition, doctrinal disputation and scriptural reposition ('*chad rtsod rtsom 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 *cūḍālamkara* among all the Sa-skya bTan-'dzin-s...."⁸⁶ By the age of twenty-six in 1338 A.D. he had already made himself a name near and far.

He occupied the throne of the great see (abbatial 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 preceptor for the Gong-ma sDe-srid Phag-mo-gru-pa, alias Ta'i Si-tu 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 (*rtsom pa*), he is recorded to have left behind numerous commentaries, such as on *Pramānavārttika*, *Abhisamayālamkāra*, *Bodhi[sattva]-caryāvatāra* as well as commentaries on all the main treatises ascribed to Nāgārjuna. He is also registered to have written *chos-'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 *rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*.⁸⁷

86 Bla-ma dam-pa adhered to the lineage upholding the esoteric Mantra-tradition of the Sa-skya-pas (*sa skya'i gsang sngags kyi bstan 'dzin*) in contrast to the holders of the Sūtra-tradition (*sa skya'i mdo phyogs bstan 'dzin*), cf. e.g. Grub-mtha' shel gyi me-long 7a6, 9a1ff. (ed. Ngawang Gelek Demo).

87 Sa-skya gdung-rabs chen-mo, 172b4 (= 344.4). This may allude to GLR, but more obviously to Lam-'bras chos-'byung ngo-mtshar snang-ba = Bla-ma brgyud-pa'i rnam-par thar-pa ngo-mtshar snang-ba (cf. Lam-'bras slob-bshad, Rajpur, 1983; Pod nag 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 Kuijp (*Berliner Indologische 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 Beijing (Library of Minzu wenhua gong), this silence has prompted van der Kuijp to question the ascription of the authorship or compilership of GLR to Bla-ma dam-pa.

True, it is signally 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 its 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 *not* always the case in other catalogues of the writings of holy saints) to be included or to be listed in a hagiographical Vita, however complete, devoted almost exclusively to the *religious life* of a highranking 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 watertight: As it is documented by us, the colophon unerringly records the name of the compiler of the work; the IHa-sa editor unequivocally ascribes the work

83 Sources such as YLJBCHBY and Sa-skya gdung-rabs chen-mo etc. claim that he was born at Zhalu khang gsar.

84 On the colourful career and changing fortunes of this figure, cf. Petech, 1990, pp. 71-78 (also for further ref.).

85 He himself had arrived back in dBus for a short stint in 1322 in order to take his final ordination (cf. below), arriving from China where he held the position of imperial preceptor (1314-1327).

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 'brug* 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 *nirvāna* of Buddha, a compulsory theme in almost any historiographical treatise. The particulars of the calculation and details on the favourite chronological system employed⁸⁸ have already been amply discussed elsewhere⁸⁹ and here we shall only draw the conclusions. After having quoted the well-known chronological systems of Atiśa and of the Sa-skya-pa masters, Bla-ma dam-pa actually computes, combining this 5000-years duration theory with the Sa-skya-pa calculation of Buddha's *nirvāna* and pursuing Bu-ston's own computation and procedure, the precise number of years elapsed from Buddha's *nirvāna* 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 dBus for his final ordination (*upasampadā*), 3455 years had expired since Buddha's *nirvāna* 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 Saddharma to last, i.e. 998 and 500 years, in all 1498 years that yet were to come. Thereby we can adduce the actual date of GLR's compilation in two ways: 3502 years minus 2134 (the Sa-skya-pa *nirvāna* year) = 1368 or 1369 (both years included). Or indirectly by computing via Bu-ston's data, 3502 minus 3455 = 47 years; 1322 (Bu-ston's date) + 47 = 1368 (both years included) or 1369.

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

to Bla-ma dam-pa in the printer's colophon; the work was undebatably and incontestably compiled at bSam-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* (posthumous or as a sort of 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 (*rnam 'jig, vipratōpa*) (in recurring series of rises and declines), while this theory by this polyhistor is considered the only system which hermeneutically conveys the direct meaning (*nges don, nītārtha*). The 5000-year theory in fact originated from Buddhaghosa and his school in Ceylon, being formulated in the Vth century of our era and adopted by Pāli-chronicles. The source for the Tibetans was the commentary on the Three Prajñāpāramitā-s, alias Ārya-Śatasāhasrikā-pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāstādaśa-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-Bṛhatṭikā in short Yum-gsum gnod-'joms written by Damstrāsena (or mChe-ba'i sde) in the VIIth cent. Cf. also now Vogel, 1992.

89 Macdonald, 1963, p. 118 sq.; Yamaguchi, 1985; Sørensen, 1986, pp. 39-51.

That the date is correct may be corroborated by other data. As we have demonstrated elsewhere,⁹⁰ Bla-ma dam-pa is *inter alia* recorded to have been enthusiastically engaged (*legs par lhur bzhes mdzad pa*) in rendering religious service and in paying tribute to bSam-yas in form of large-scale renewals (*gsar bskrun*), restoration-work and repair (*zhig gso, nyams gso, bgegs bsos*) at the bSam-yas *vihāra* and the date for the completion and the collateral *praitsthā* are recorded to have been 1368 A.D. Our author in fact spent, over the last twenty years of his life, longer sojourns at bSam-yas⁹¹ to fulfill not only the completion of these merit-accumulating activities but also, it can be assumed, to carry through the compilation of GLR, where he doubtlessly had the rare opportunity to avail himself of rare records and writings kept in the archives and library of bSam-yas. Our author even passed away there.

Another solid clue is offered in Bla-ma dam-pa's own colophon where we see that he compiled his work in compliance with the behest (*bskul ba'i ngor*), or rather summons, of one lHa-btsun Rin-chen-dpal. We have argued that this prince-monk (*lha btsun*) is none other than Nam-mkha' bstan-pa'i (or brtan-pa'i) rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po, alias (religious name) Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po. He apparently functioned in two terms as Sa-skya dPon-chen (from 1357 and until 1364 A.D., but most likely beyond this date also), at a point when, incidentally, the authority or mandatory fiat of this institution was more nominal than real. He adhered to the Byang-pa principality and myriarchy (situated in La-stod Byang in the western part of gTsang), whose ancestors claimed descent from the sixth emperor rGyal-rgod of Xi-xia or Mi-nyag.⁹² Petech, 1990, *op. cit.* p. 132, n. 186, questions the identification of lHa-btsun Rin-chen-dpal with this Byang-pa ruler, maintaining that the title *lha btsun* normally was reserved to the monks descending from the old Tibetan kings and not, as here, from other or alien royal families. But this argument is not tenable. To quote one example employed in GLR and numerous parallel sources: The figure known in Tibet as sMan-rtse lHa-btsun, i.e. the last emperor of Nan Song (1127-1279 A.D.), imperial name Bing-di (rl. 1278-1279 A.D) who was sent to Sa-skya for religious training and where he became universally known as the 'Prince-Monk of South China'.⁹³

Closing the ring, the puzzle with the enigmatic *sa pho 'brug*, which initially sparked off the whole misery, requires to be accounted for. In the new light, it appears to be a deplorable *lapsus calami (bris nor)* or *lapsus xylographi (brkos nor)* committed by some

90 Sørensen, 1986, pp. 51-54.

91 Si-tu'i bKa'-chems of Ta'i Si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan records *inter alia* a number of the prolonged stays at bSam-yas by Bla-ma dam-pa, especially in the period between 1350-1362 A.D. Cf. e.g. Sørensen, 1986, pp. 61-62.

92 Cf. e.g. Bu-ston's rNam-thar (ed. and tr. Ruegg) 28b4-5, 35b1, 40a5-6; DTHMPSM 54b5, 57b3-58b3, 73a4-b4; PSJZ 159.7, 160.10-13. Cf. Sørensen, 1986, pp. 63-64; further details on him, cf. Petech, 1990, pp. 120-121, 132-136. For the Mi-nyag emperor, cf. also note 181.

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'i rgyal-mtshan in 1368 had retired from the office as Sa-skya dpon-chen and withdrawn from temporal life and at this point was engaged in religious pursuits. Or, if still holding the office at Sa-skya (which is likely cf. Petech, 1990, p. 136), it may simply reflect Bla-ma dam-pa's preference to address this personality 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-ba'i blo-gros and not Kun-dga' rdo-rje. Although occasionally acting as mediator and arbiter between the conflicting parties during the numerous military 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.

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,¹⁰¹ 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 Tibetana* (Leiden),¹⁰² nor the recent and slightly more reliable Chinese edition published in Beijing¹⁰³ 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 **rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long** was found mature to be printed or the financial basis for its printing was provided:

GLR A: The lHa-sa 'Phrul-snang edition, 1b1-101a

Printed (*[s]par du brkos*) 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.¹⁰⁴ The lHa-sa edition was mainly sponsored by Chos-rgyal dPal-'byor rgyal-po (of sNel-pa).¹⁰⁵

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.¹⁰⁶

101 Tadesu Mitsushima 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 encyclopedia of errors. Kuznetsov failed to read his Tibetan original properly. As indicated in the long list of corrections and emendations published by J. Kolmaš ("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 Kolmaš has overlooked a large number of Kuznetsov's misreadings. They surpass over one thousand in number and makes his depreciated edition quite useless and unreliable. In addition, Kuznetsov has repeatedly failed to identify metrical passages and text-segments 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**.

103 Modern book edition based upon the sDe-dge xyl. print published by Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1981.

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-khrid dpal-'dzom of the sNel or sNe'u 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** 86b5, 101a1-102b2 (Tucci, 1971, pp. 223, 241-242); **PSJZ** II, 162.1-4; Tucci, *TPS*, II, p. 646; D. Jackson, 1989, *SCEAR* (Vol. 2), pp. 9-10.

106 Cf. Kuznetsov, 1966, XIX-XX.

GLR B: sDe-dge edition, 1b1-104a6

Printed (*par du bsgrubs*) in the XVIIIth century (ca. 1750-1760 A.D.). Editor Bla-ma chen-po Kun-dga' 'phrin-las rgya-mtsho.¹⁰⁷

Numerous versions of the pre-modern sDe-dge edition may be consulted. F.ex. 1. British Museum 19999b.9 formerly belonging to H.A. Jäschke. 2. India Office Library, Teichmann Inv. I.

dBu-can xyl. print.

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

Interlinear Annotation

The glosses (*mchan*) 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 and 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.¹⁰⁸ 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 lHa-sa 'Phrul-snang 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 **YLJBCHBY** written 1376 A.D. and in another gloss (cf. note 820 *infra*) there is a direct reference to rTogs-ldan sNgo-nyal-ma Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan, who was a disciple of Bo-dong Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1306-1386 A.D.). 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.

107 The sDe-dge edition was executed on behest of Khams-gsum Chos kyi rgyal-po, E-wam-pa'i *mkhan-po* dPal-ldan chos-skyong (1702-1758/59 A.D.). Cf. Ngor mkhan-chen dPal-ldan chos-skyong zhabs kyi rnam-thar sna-tshogs ljon-pa stug-po'i 'khri-shing, the autobiography of the 33th Abbot of Ngor dPal-ldan Chos-skyong, comp. and ed. by Zhu-chen Tshul-khrims rin-chen of sDe-dge. The editor of the sDe-dge ed. of **GLR** is mentioned repeatedly in the autobiography. Cf. also Kolmaš, *sDe-dge'i rgyal-rabs*, p. 40.

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 Bla-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 *phyi-dar* 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 Tucci 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 later 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

109 In particular, when of if apparently lost genealogical sources (*gdung 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-khriims bzang-po, but also sources composed by Gung-ston dPal-mdzes, Gung-thang mNga'-bdag Nor-bu-Ida, Blo-ldan Shes-rab-grub, Nam-mkha' 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-rgyus chen-mo** by dGe-bshes Khu-ston brTson-'grus g.yung-drung (1011-1075 A.D.) which was extensively employed e.g. by the lDe'u histories.

110 In the words of Petech, 1939, p. 89, GLR constitutes 'the history of Tibet *par excellence*'; Tucci, *TPS*, I, p. 142, 'the model of future historiography'.

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.

A prophecy (*vyākaraṇa*) [by Amitābha] stated accordingly:²⁸¹

“[By] OM [one is] endowed with the Five [kinds of] Gnosis (*ye shes lnga, pañcājñāna*),
 [By] MA Compassion (*thugs rje, karuṇā*) pervades everything,
 By NI the six forms of existence are guided,
 By PĀD all sufferings are allayed,
 By ME [all] sinful defilements are consumed,
 By HŪM all qualities are united:
 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 (*Jina*)
 This [maxim-]quintessence uniting [in one] the innermost nature (*yang snying*) [of all teachings],
 Is the Origin (*akara*) of all benefit and happiness,
 Is the Root (*mūla*) of all *siddhi*-s
 Is the Ladder (*niśrenṭ*) 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 (*dīpa*) eliminating [all] obscurations,
 Is the Hero (*vīra*) overcoming the five poisons (*pañcaviṣa*) [of passions]²⁸²
 Is the Heap of Fire consuming [all] sin-defilements,
 Is the Hammer (*tho ba, mudgara*) beating asunder [all] sufferings,
 Is the Adjuvant (*mītra*) taming the barbarous borderland and
 Is the Religious Lot (*chos skal*) of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet].
 Of the numerous *sūtra*-s, *tantra*-s and *śāstra*-s,
 Of all [the stages of realization qua] studying, reflection and meditation,
 the three,
 The Essence (*bcud*) uniting in one [its] nature,
 The all-sufficient (*gcig chog*) Precious King,
 Pray, recite this six-syllabic [magical formula]!
 Qua the [benevolent] blessing of this *dhāraṇṭ*
 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].*

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

282 On the five poisons of affliction (*nyon mongs dug lnga*), different texts hold different numbers, but usually: pride (*nga rgyal, abhimāna*), envy (*phrag dog, irsyā*) and the three usual root vices desire (*'dod chags, rāga*), hatred (*zhe sdang, dveṣa*) and folly (*gti mug, moha*).

V

[How] Ārya-Avalokiteśvara for the First Time Brought the Sentient
 Beings of the Snow-Clad Country [of Tibet] unto the Path of Maturation
 and Salvation

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 Amitābha kneeled down on the earth with his right knee, joined together the palm of his hands (*añjalim kṛtvā*) and uttered the [following] aspiration-vow (*pranidhāna*): "May all the sentient beings pertaining to the six classes of beings (*rigs drug*) and the three spheres (*kham s gum, tri dhātu*) 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!²⁸⁵ Pray, may I refrain from producing any thoughts of tranquillity and comfort (*zhi bde'i bsam pa*)²⁸⁶ 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 (*dmyal ba, naraka*),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 sdug bsngal, us̄ṇa-s̄taduh̄kha*) of hell.²⁸⁹

Thereupon he went to the abode of the hungry ghosts (*yi dvags, preta*), where he [likewise] preached the message of the Six-syllabic [formula], establishing them in prosperity and happiness, having allayed the [ir] suffering of hunger and thirst (*bkres skom gyi sdug bsngal, jighatsā-pipāsāduh̄kha*).²⁹⁰

Thereupon, he went to place of the animals (*dud 'gro, tiryak*), 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-rgyus chen-mo, Chap. 4: *Star sems bskyed brtan-par mdzad-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 zhi '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 reverted, by starting with the abode of the gods. Finally, the bulky *Zhal-gdams skor* (F) of MNKB WAM contains numerous textual parallels to the present section. In the slightly lengthier exposition of the same topos offered by Nyang-ral, the exposition deals with the story as to how Mahākārunika beheld the six *gati*-s by way of three modes of *karuṇā* (i.e. *sems 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 407a5-410b3 = KTHZGM Chap. 38, 174.9-178.9.

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

290 MNKB E (A) 16b7-8. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 409a5-b1 = KTHZGM 177.5-15.

happiness, having annulled [for them] the suffering of exploitation (*bkol spyod kyi sdug bsngal*).²⁹¹

Thereupon he reached the realm of man (*mi, manusya*), where [he likewise] preached the message of the Six-syllabic [formula] establishing them in prosperity and happiness, having appeased the[ir] sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death (*skye rgas na 'chi' i sdug bsngal, jāti-jarā-vyādhi-maranadukha*).²⁹²

Next, he arrived at the region of the demi-gods (*lha ma yin, asura*), preaching the message of the Six-syllabic [formula] and [thus] established them in prosperity and happiness, after he had appeased [for them] the sufferings [accruing] from disputes and fightings (*'thab rtsod kyi sdug bsngal*).²⁹³

[He] then [finally] arrived at the abode of the gods (*lha, deva*), where [he likewise] preached the message of the Six-syllabic [formula] establishing [them] in prosperity and happiness [too] after [he] had quenched [for them] the god's sufferings [consisting in acquiring any pre-knowledge] of falling [from their abode] and dying (*lha 'chi lung gi sdug bsngal*).²⁹⁴

He next arrived in the Snow-capped Realm [of Tibet],²⁹⁵ the barbarous borderland, and looking [around], he [realized] the Upper (*stod*) [Tibet], i.e. the three regions (*skor gsum*) of Upper (*stod*) mNga'-ris (i.e. West Tibet) to be [like] [a/the] Continent of the Antelope (*ri d[iv]ags gling, *mrgadv[ī]pa*),²⁹⁶ resembling [in shape] a vessel (*rdzing*) and to those [living there] he taught the teachings of the Six-syllabic [formula], [firmly] bringing [them] prosperity and happiness.

The Lower (*smad*) [Tibet], i.e. the three [districts] of mDo-Khams-sGang (i.e. East Tibet) [he recognized] to be [like] [a/the] Continent of the Birds (*bya'i gling*),²⁹⁷ resembling [in shape] a field (*zhing*) and to those [living there] he demonstrated the teachings of the Six-syllabic [formula], establishing [them too] in prosperity and happiness.

The Four Horns (*ru bzhi*) of the Central (*bar*) [part of Tibet, i.e. the provinces] dBus [and] gTsang, [he recognized] to be [like a] Continent of the beast of prey (*gcan gzan gyi gling*),²⁹⁸ resembling [in shape] an irrigation-canal (*zur ba*), and to those [living there] he taught the teachings of the Six-syllabic [formula] which thereby secured [for them] prosperity and happiness.

Then [he] went to the summit of the Red Hill (*dMar-po-ri*) [in] Lhasa and looking upwards, [he] [immediately] observed that the lake of 'O-thang [located there]²⁹⁹ [in fact]

291 MNKB E (A) 16b4-5. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 409a1-5 = KTHZGM 176.14-177.5.

292 MNKB E (A) 16b2-3. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 408a1-409a1 = KTHZGM 175.6-176.14.

293 MNKB E (A) 16b1-2. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 407b3-408a1 = KTHZGM 174.17-176.6.

294 MNKB E (A) 16a8-16b1. Cf. also CHBYMTNYP 407a5-b3 = KTHZGM 174.9-17.

295 The following passages remain untraced.

296 Cf. also HBCHBY (JA) 2a5-6: *mnga' ris skor gsum sha rkyang ri dvags gling*; Tibet is usually divided into *stod* or West[ern] Tibet, *smad* or East[ern] Tibet and *dbus* or Central Tibet.

297 Cf. similarly HBCHBY (JA) 2a6; mDo-Khams sGang-drug, i.e. A-mdo, Khams and sGang-drug, the six ridges: Zal-mo-sgang, Tsha-ba-sgang, sMar-khams-sgang, sPo-'bor-sgang, dMar-rtsa-sgang, and Mi-nyag Rab-sgang.

298 Cf. similarly, HBCHBY (JA) 2a6; cf. foremost G. Uray. "The Four Horns according to the Royal Annals", *AOH*, vol. X, no. 1, pp. 31-57.

299 'O-thang, i.e. the lake 'Plain of Milk' ('O-ma'i thang), cf. Chap. XIV *infra* and esp. note 726 and for the Red Hill, cf. note 455.

was [nothing but] the [lowest, i.e. hottest] place of Hell, [i.e.] Avīci (mNar-med), [inhabited] by many myriads (*khri phrag du ma*) of living beings, who were [there] being subjected to unbearable (*bzod glags med pa*) 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 Brhkuṭī (Jo-mo sGrol-ma Khro-gnyer-can[ma]), 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 (*bal mo bza'*) Khri-btsun.

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.³⁰⁰

Thereupon the Ārya[-Avalokiteśvara] 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:³⁰¹

Due to [their] accumulation of bad *karman* from beginningless time (*anadikala*),

[Living in] this great Hell of fathomless depth

Those [beings], who are inflicted (*btses*) 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 (*gzir*) 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

300 Cf. analogously, MNKB E (A) 14b2-4: *de la spyan chab g.yas pa las lha mo sgrol ma dang l spyan chab g.yon pa las lha mo khro gnyer can byon no ll sgrol ma'i zhal nas rigs kyi bu sems can gyi don byed pa la byang chub kyi sems sbyongs shig gsung ngo ll lha mo khro gnyer ma'i zhal nas rigs kyi bu sems can gyi don byed pa la thugs g.yel bar ma mdzad cig l kho mo cag gnyis kyi kyang rigs kyi bu khyod kyi grogs bya'o sung nas l star spyan g.yas g.yon du thim par gyur ro.*

301 The following versified paragraph is verbatim reproduced in HBCHBY (JA) 2a1-4.

May [they] be born [there] as pious beings of good family!

OM MA NI PADME HŪM”

So the Hell-inhabitants, the sentient beings, were [firmly] established on the Path to Enlightenment and Freedom, after [they] had the[ir] 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, [Ārya Avalokiteśvara] was very exhausted and he set his mind in the mental equanimity (*samāpatti*) of restful contemplation (*ngal gso'i ting nge 'dzin*).³⁰²

Then again he [later] looked around from the summit of Mt. Pota[la]³⁰³ 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 despaired and in an instant he generated a thought of personal tranquility and ease (*zhi bde'i bsam pa*) and, perforce of his previous aspiration-vow his head split into ten pieces and his body decomposed into thousand fragments.³⁰⁴

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.”

302 Cf. also HBCHBY (JA) 2a7.

303 MNKB E (A) 17a3-6, not Mt. Potala, but Mt. Meru: *thugs rje chen pos ri rab kyi rtser phyin te ye shes kyi spyān gyis gzigs pa dang l yang snga ma de tsam du 'dug nas l lan gsum du thabs dang snying rjes bton pas kyang sems can gyi khams la skye 'bri mi 'dug nas thugs mug yi chad nas l kye ma bde bar gshes pa'i dgongs pas 'dul ba'i zhing khams bsam gyis mi khyab l nam mkha'i khams bsam gyis mi khyab l sems can gyi khams bsam gyis mi khyab bya ba bden par 'dug l ngas de tsam pa'i sems can bton yang nyung du ma song bas 'khor ba 'di mi stongs par 'dug l sems can gyi don mi 'grub par 'dug l rang zhi bde thob par byas nas mya ngan las 'das pa sangs rgyas kyi sa la gnas par bya'o snyam pa dang l ngar gyi sems bskyed dam bca' nyams nas l dbu tshal pa bcur gas so.*

304 Cf. HBCHBY (JA) 2a7-2b2 and note 287 *supra*.

305 The following two stanzas are also conserved in HBCHBY (JA) 2b3-4 and thus suggests that they both draw from a common source, rather than assuming that dPa'-bo quotes GLR, which often is the case.

306 I.e. fundamentally; GLR *rtsa la*, but HBCHBY reads *rtse la*, i.e. 'on top [of it]', i.e. in addition, which perhaps is a better reading altogether.

“O Son of good family! Do not inflict sorrow! This splitting of your head into ten pieces shall be blessed as ten heads.³⁰⁷

The ten countenances are the ten transcendences (*daśapāramitā*)

On top of them, it is having [the face of] A-mi de-ba (i.e. Amitābha) so [the statue shall] be blessed as the Eleven-headed One (*zhal bcu gcig pa, ekādaśamukha*).³⁰⁸

[Having the countenance of] Amitābha seated as the eleventh head, [You, the Eleven-headed One] practicing the [four] kind of [ritual] acts: appeasing, expanding, dominating and violence;
Homage to the reverend (*btsun pa, bhadanta*) Avalokita.

This body of yours being divided into thousand [fragments] like the leaves of a lotus-flower [shall] be blessed as [i.e. become] thousand hands and the thousand hands [shall] be thousand Wheel-revolving Kings (*Cakravartinrāja*); the palm of these thousand hands [shall be] blessed with a thousand eyes [of wisdom] ([*ye shes kyi*] *spyān, [jñāna]nidra*).³⁰⁹

307 Cf. HBCHBY (JA) 2b4-5 also.

308 For these prose-intervowen stanzas in GLR, compare HBCHBY (JA) 2b4-6:

| rigs kyi bu khyod sdug bsgal ma byed cig

| khyod kyi dbu ni tshal pa bcur gas pa l

| 'di ni zhal ras bcu ru byin gyis brlab l

| khyod lus rnam pa stong du bye ba ni l

| phyag stong spyān stong ldan par byin gyis brlab l

| slar yang 'gro don snying stobs skyed cig gsung l

| de tshe phyogs bcu'i rgyal sras kun 'dus nas l

| zhal ras bcu po pha rol phyin pa bcu l

| bcu gcig dbu la 'od dpag med pa bzhugs l

| zhi rgyas dbang rgyas las rnam kun mdzad pa l

| btsun pa spyān ras gzigs la phyag 'tshal lo l

309 As corroborated by dPa'-bo the entire passage dealt with here may originally have been composed metrically. In the light of his text, it may be assumed that the following seven-lined ten-syllabic metrical passage in GLR is somewhat faulty preserved. dPa'-bo has two nine-syllabic stanzas, 2b6-3a1:

| phyag stong 'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po stong l

| spyān stong bskal pa bzang po'i sangs rgyas stong l

| gang la gang 'dul de la der ston pa'i l

| btsun pa spyān ras gzigs la phyag 'tshal lo l

| dus gsum sangs rgyas kun gyis rab tu bsnags l

| [mi]tha[] 'jkhob 'dul bar rgyal bas lung bstan nas l

| gang la gang 'dul 'gro ba'i don mdzad pa l

[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.

[How] Ārya-Avalokiteśvara for the First [Time] Brought the Sentient Beings of the Snow-clad [Country of Tibet] onto [the Path of] Maturation and Liberation.

VI

[How Ārya-Avalokiteśvara,] having Transformed [Himself] into the King of Horses, Worked for the Welfare of the Sentient Beings

Thereupon,³¹⁰ Ārya-Avalokiteśvara worked for the sake of sentient beings of the world by various means and in order to give a[n edifying] parable of [how] the wholesome [should] be accepted and [how] the unwholesome [should] be rejected (*dge sdig gi blang[bya dang] dor[bya] gyi dpe*, **kuśala-pāpa-heyopādeya-upamā*), it is told in the Sūtra [of the Array] of The Basket (mDo Za-ma-tog [bkod-pa], Kāraṇḍa[vyūha]-sūtra)³¹¹ [how Ārya-Avalokiteśvara] worked for the sake of the sentient beings after [he once] had transformed himself into the King of Horses (*ra'i rgyal po, aśvarāja*), the noble (*cang (: spyang) shes, ājāneya*) Balaha (i.e. Balāha[ka]):

In this [story it is told how] merchants (*tshong pa*) 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*),³¹² to wit:³¹³

[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 (*ñe du*),
Taken by fear and terrified, they cried for help ('*o dod 'bod byed*),
Leaderless, despondent, tears poured forth as blood,
In that very moment too the vessel wrecked.

Next, the merchants clinged 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. Singhala-dvīpa = Tāmradvīpa; Ceylon or Sri Lanka] inhabited by ogresses (*rākṣasī-s*), where the merchants calling upon one another by name gained dry land.

They were observed by the *rākṣasī*-ogresses, who [immediately] transformed themselves into very beautiful young 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] *rākṣasī*-ogresses and they

310 This chapter offers the celebrated legend of how the mythological King of Horses, Balāha[ka] (known, e.g. from Mahāvastu, III, 67-90), an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, rescues a group of merchants from *rākṣasī*-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, akālavāyu*).

313 This following versified passage is lacking altogether from KV and MNKB.

conversed one another in an amicable way.

The *rākṣasī*-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 (*bza' mi byas*), cohabited and lived an enjoyable life.

A voice³¹⁴ [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 dvags rgya*),
[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)
Imbued [moreover] with the erring view holding these *rākṣasī*-ogresses as goddesses (*devī*-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 dpon chen po, mahāsārvabhāva*) recognized [the place] to be the Island of the Ogresses (*rākṣasīdvīpa*) 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, [a 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 house³¹⁶ without any door, within which murmuring (*di 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] responded: "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 *rākṣasī*-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 [any] exit. Now we shall gradually be devoured.

314 In KV 248b8 it is not a voice sounding from above, but a laughing lamp (*gad mo snyan par dgod pa, hasana-ratikara*) which here is at play; cf. also Régamey, "Le pseudo-hapax ratikara 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 adjuvant 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, ayas-nagara*).

Please consider our sufferings in this terrifying and appalling [situation] which [eventually] shall deprive [us our] life and escape right now! Now is the time for fleeing. Once you are locked up in this iron house, there is neither any room for fleeing nor any means of liberation."

Again, the caravan-leader (*sārvabhāva*) spoke: "Well, certainly we shall escape, only we have no means of doing it." They³¹⁷ said: "There is a means for escape. We too gave thoughts to the need of escaping, but [this present fate of ours] is the retaliation (*lan*) for being attached to sensual pleasures (*'dod yon, kāmaguna*), but you should escape without getting [too] attached to anything or anyone at all! As to the method of escape, [you will] find a turquoise[-coloured] fountain (*chu mig*)³¹⁸ standing in the middle of a plain of golden sand [situated] on the northern side after you from this [place] have crossed a little pass. At the outskirts of this [well] you will find it surrounded by lapis (*baidūrya*)[-coloured] green sprouts. On the evening of the fifteenth [day of the month, at fullmoon]³¹⁹ from out of space the King of Horses called *Balāha*, capable of carrying (*zhon chog pa*) on its back (*sgal pa*) about one hundred persons, being outmost beautiful and hanging on to a moon-beam (*zla ba'i zer la 'grogs*),³²⁰ is going to make its appearance at that place. It will drink from this turquoise[-coloured] well, partake of the lapis[-coloured] green sprouts³²¹ and roll itself trice (*'gre ldog gsum byas*) in the golden sand, whereafter it will shake itself off [its dusty sand] and its horse-language will sound in human language: "All [ye] Indian merchants imprisoned on the Island of the Ogresses, who[ever] you are, where[ever] you are, ride on my back and I shall bring you [all] back to your native country!"³²² It is said that a miraculously transformed Supreme Horse will come saying thus. Having mounted it, keep your eyes closed without feeling attached whatsoever to enjoyable pleasures or towards your [own] begotten children. If you escape [accordingly], you will be free."

The caravan-leader thought that he had to act accordingly and went back. When he went to bed beside his sleeping *rākṣasī*-spouse, it was perceived by his wife, who spoke as follows: "An inquisitive (*blo nyes*) merchant might risk his own life; if one ponders differently, one may be at a loss (*phung*). Whither has the merchant-leader gone, since his body is so cold?". The merchant-leader answered untruthfully: "I [only] went to let the water!"

Next, the caravan-leader clandestinely (*lkog tu*) gathered [all] his junior-merchants (*tshong phrug*) and related in details to them [all] the events [which had taken place] and all agreed to flee.

Then on the evening of the fifteenth day, they gave the *rākṣasī*-ogresses a soporiferous drug (*smyo byed kyi rdzas*)³²³ which made them fall asleep. Leading his junior-merchants, the caravan-leader crossed the little pass on the northern side, onto the plain of golden sand, where they went near to the turquoise[-coloured] well, close to [the meadow of] lapis[-

317 In KV it is the laughing lamp that speaks.

318 Lacking in KV and MNKB.

319 Lacking in KV and MNKB.

320 Lacking from KV and MNKB.

321 KV 249b2 has the herb (*sman, ośadhi*) called 'all white' (*shed thams cad, *sarvaśveta*); MNKB E (A) 19a8-19b1 has similarly *shed ta'i rtsva*.

322 In KV 249b3 the horse merely says: "Who are passing over? Who are passing over?" (*pha rol du su 'gro ll pha rol du su 'gro zhes smra'o*).

323 Lacking in KV and MNKB.

coloured] green sprouts, in order to await [the arrival of] the King of Horses Balāha. 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 [ye] 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 *rākṣasī*-s, your offspring and [all] enjoyable pleasures! I shall bring you to your native country!"

The caravan-leader [then] spoke:

"O emanational embodiment (*nirmāṇakāya*), 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 *rākṣasī*-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

324 Lacking from KV and MNKB.

325 KV 248b8 merely has: *rita'i rgyal po ba la ha des khyed las sus kyang sing ga la'i gling la mi blta bar bya ll sus kyang mig gis mi blta bar bya'o ll zhes de skad smras*; MNKB 19b3: *srin mo rnams la ma chags shig phyi mig ma ta zhis ces smras so*.

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

[If so,] you are [all] [truly] shameless wicked men!" Some [*rākṣasī*-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 *rākṣasī*-ogresses said], they [consequently] opened their eyes. Everyone except the caravan-leader became attached and looking back (*phyi mig bltas 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 bkal*), their teeth protuded (*mche ba gtsigs*) and without being able to wait even for a moment (*dar cig*) they devoured [the poor merchants].³²⁷

When thereafter the Best of Horses (*rita mchog, aśvaratna*) arrived at the shore of the ocean, it spoke: "Guild-leader (*tshong dpon, sresthin*) open your eyes and dismount!" When he opened [his] eyes he found that his assistants were [all] lacking. Grieved, he weepingly 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] Jāmbudvīpa,
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 *rākṣasī*-ogress, so lost [they are];
Instead of thinking of [begetting] children beneficent to one's relatives,
They got attached to the offspring of a deceitful *rākṣasī*-ogress, so lost [they are];
Alas! Alas! Indeed the sentient beings are to be pitied (*sñing re rje*)!
The disciple (*slob ma, śikṣya*) who has killed [his]
Tantric teacher (*vajrācārya*)
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 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 gzar chu*) and the thunder-cloud of space,

327 Analogously KV 251a1-2; MNKB 19b4-5.

328 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 (*catvāry (ārya)satyāni*). 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 weepingly, [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 dégoût (*skyo ba, udvega*) against the circle of transmigration (*'khor ba, samsāra*), gained confidence in the cause and effect of karmic causation (*las rgyu 'bras*) and [thus] became [well] established in the True Law.

Analogously to this parable (*dpe*), [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 (*ngan song, durgati*) [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 par byed*, i.e. become a Buddha) after having attained the bliss of heaven (*mtho ris, svarga*) [and] liberation (*thar pa, mokṣa*).

[How Ārya-Avalokiteśvara] having Transformed [Himself] into the King of Horses, Worked for the Welfare of the Sentient Beings.

VII

~~The Descent of the Tibetan Race from the Union of a Monkey and a Female Rock-ogress~~