

EARLY BKA' BRGYUD PA MASTERS
IN THE LANDS
ON THE "UPPER SIDE"
(1191-1344)

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cover image: Map of West Ngari and adjoining provinces of the Indian Himalaya
by H. Strachey 1853

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PREAMBLE

Gangs Ti se, mtsho Ma dros and the surrounding regions are associated with the bKa' brgyud pa more than any other school in the Tibetan tradition, an evidence revealed from the endeavour of its members and the documents of their literature. I focus here on the history of their presence on the "upper side" which traces the deeds of some great masters of the school in the religious and secular fields.

The participation of the early bKa' brgyud pa in mNga' ris stod smad gave the land a wide-ranging dimension in terms of the members whose contributions led to the school's upliftment in its various regions. The earlier period (1191-1277/80) had great personalities and *ri pa*-s from outside Upper West Tibet as foremost actors with, nonetheless, a not insignificant involvement of local masters and disciples. Those from outside came to stay in sTod especially from Central Tibet and also from Khams. The native members of the school extended their prominent role in the activities of the Ka' brgyud pa to the years 1290-1344, when those from elsewhere were not present in the regions of mNga' ris stod as much as during the earlier decades.

The common approach adopted for the presence of members of the bKa' brgyud pa in Upper West Tibet was that the heads of its various schools delegated to major disciples the duty to bring their members to settle in mNga' ris. They did not move west themselves unlike what happened in East Tibet, where founders of bKa' brgyud pa schools personally established their practitioners locally. The approach adopted in the west concerned the various bKa' brgyud schools indiscriminately since it was practised by the 'Bri gung pa, the Tshal pa after to bla ma Zhang's death, the 'Brug pa and the Karma pa too.

The other salient peculiarity of the bKa' brgyud pa presence in the west derives from the previous one. Whereas in East Tibet the seats of several bKa' brgyud schools—either major or minor—were established locally, only a few foundations of new *dgon pa*-s occurred in mNga' ris stod smad. bKa' brgyud members in the west took over preexisting religious institutions in most cases, often renovating or expanding them. Rare are the instances of new foundations.

Evidence of bKa' brgyud pa presence in regions beyond the borders of the Tibetan-speaking world in mNga' ris during the early period of the school's existence in sTod has led me to widen the spectrum of territories to which I devote my attention to those not exclusively Tibetan. Hence the focus of this monograph is not only internal to mNga' ris stod smad.

I mostly focus on *rnam thar*-s of some of the early bKa' brgyud pa masters in mNga' ris to find out historical elements in their lives useful to widen comprehension of the state of affairs in several territories of Upper West Tibet during the post *bstan pa phyi dar* period. In

these biographies, the lands of the “upper side” are part of a wider ranging bKa’ brgyud pa strategy aimed at the diffusion of the school in several other territories of the plateau.

I adopt a more marked Upper West Tibet-oriented perspective in the treatment of some bKa’ brgyud pa *bla ma*-s native to mNga’ ris stod and active during the late 13th and first half of the 14th century, derived from their biographies.

The Dwags po bKa' brgyud antecedent

The presence of the early bKa' brgyud pa at Gangs Ti se, the main holy place of mNga' ris skor gsum, and several other hermitages in the region, is considered by the sources the consequence of the retreatant practices of Mid la ras pa bZhad pa rdo rje (1040-1123) and the miracles he exhibited at the mountain.¹ It is from this obvious state of affairs that I wish to begin in order to appraise the issues I will focus on the present work.

The Tibetan tradition commonly dates to water bird 1093 the episode in Mid la's standard biography (that by Tsang smyon He ru ka) in which he went to Ti se, met Na ro Bon chung and defeated him in magical performances but with some noteworthy deviations in the earlier biography of him by g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa.² This biographer, like gTsang smyon,

1. See Stein ("Mythologie hindouiste au Tibet" p.1409-1410) for a text on the bDe mchog body written by Nā ro pa and kept in Peking *bsTan 'gyur* n.4628, whose title is not given by the Tibetologist. The text, which enumerates the *gnas*-s of this deity that include Preta puri and Gangs Ti se, was translated by Mar pa. This could be a literary antecedent to the bKa' brgyud pa interest for holy places on the Tibetan plateau (Gangs ri, Tsa ri, La phyi), whose inception is attributed commonly to rje btsun Mid la ras pa, which could go back to his teacher.

An opposite view is expressed (see below n.3) in a statement that lHo brag Mar pa did not issue prophecies/orders to his disciples about Gangs Ti se but this assertion smack of misinformation. On its part, gTsang smyon He ru ka in his *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* says that rje btsun Mid la's expedition to Gangs Ti se was prophesied by lHo brag Mar pa (see below n.7).

In the line of writing that survived across the centuries, the late '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*, provides a perfect application of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud lineage in the school's works. In its opening pages (lHa sa ed. p.30 line 4-p.32 line 9) it attributes the transmission of the duty to be at Gangs Ti se and mtsho Ma dros to Ti lo pa who passed the concern to Nā ro pa and this one to Mar pa who entrusted it to rje btsun Mid la.

2. After the episode of the eviction of Na ro Bon chung from Ti se, g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa continues with a rare account concerning Ri bo Gan dho la in Gar sha, the well known holy place of the bKa' brgyud pa in the Western Himalayas, the further destination to which Mid la's group proceeded. One needs to wonder what was rje btsun Mid la's scope of involvement at this locality better known in the literature and the tradition for the presence of 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud and rGod tshang pa in particular. g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa, *Mid la'i rnam thar* (p.22 line 25) reads: "Gangs Ti se la Bon po Na ro ming sring btul ba dang Ri bo Ga dha li na brag btsan dam la btags//"; "He subdued Na ro *ming sring* at Gangs Ti se and bound the *btsan*-s of the rocks to a vow at Ri bo Ga dha li (spelled so)".

In the continuation of the same passage g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa (ibid. p.22 lines 25-26) reiterates that he travelled to India after his sojourn at Ti se and Ri bo Gan dho la: "rGya gar lho phyogs dPa gyi ri la/ 'gro ba'i mgon po 'Phags pa Klu sgrub kyi sku la mjal ba la byon dus na Ku mud sbra ma'i jag pa me tog du sgyur//"; "When he went to see the image of 'gro ba'i mgon po 'Phags pa Klu sgrub at rGya gar lHo phyogs dPal gyi ri, he transformed into flowers the Ku mud sbra ma bandits ("black tent dwellers, [acting at night] like water lilies", which blossom with the moonlight)".

g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa (ibid. p.23 lines 34-36) also reports a rje btsun Mid la's most unpredictable adventure after Gangs Ti se: "De nas Ri bo Ga dha lar ras chung rnams bzhag nas

rje btsun chen pos rGya gar lho phyogs du dPal gy ri la 'gro mgon 'Phags pa Klu sgrub kyi sku la mjal du byon nas/ zhag bcu bzhi la tshur phebs//"; "Then, having left the minor *ras* [*pa*-s] at Ri bo Ga dha la, the great *rje btsun* went to rGya gar lho phyogs dPal gy ri to see the image of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa Klu sgrub. He returned after fourteen days".

The passage creates a historical complication. The expression *ras chung rnam*s poses a problem of interpretation since it can be both read that he junior *ras* [*pa*]-s or else Ras chung pa and the others stayed on at Ri bo Gandhola, which does not elucidate whether Ras chung pa rDo rje grags was among the disciples at Gangs Ti se. Another passage in the same work (ibid. p.23 lines 31-33) rules out the presence of Ras chung pa rDo rje grags from the Gangs Ti se expedition: "Gangs Ti se na Bon po bton pa la byon dus rje btsun la sku 'khor ni/ bShen sgom ras pa dang/ Li khor Phya ru ba dang/ Cung pa'i Kre phyag gi mDzangs mo ras ma cig dang/ Gung thang Gyen lang gi dge bshes Za ras ma bzhi dang/ dpon slobbrgyad byon//"; "When the *rje btsun* went to evict the Bon po from Gangs Ti se, his retinue were bShen sgom ras, Li khor Phya ru ba, one mDzangs mo ras ma, the wise woman from Cung pa'i Kre phyag and dge bshes Za ras ma from Gung thang Gyen lang". The name of Li khor Phya ru ba is often spelled Bya ru ba, which implies that he wore the Garūda crown, perhaps similar to the one worn by the *bya ru can* kings of ancient Zhang zhung.

According to the same biography (ibid. p.27 lines 17-19), unspecified people doubted that he actually went to India, a view refuted by others who have validated this journey, for they recognised him to be the incarnation of 'Phags pa Klu sgrub.

Again, in the same *rnam thar*, rje btsun Mid la said that he went to India six times in reply to a question of Ras chung pa who asked him whether he had travelled miraculously. The biography (ibid. p.31 lines 3-10) says: "Ras chung pas rje btsun gyis rGya gar du lan du byed zhus pas/ thebs drug phyin gsungs/ de'i dus na Sangs rgyas sam grub thob ci 'dra dang mjal zhus pas/ dang po re la slob dpon 'Phags pa Klu sgrub dang dag snang gis mjal/ dBu ma la sogs chos mang po thon gsung/ lan gnyis pa'i dus su/ rGya gar Seng ga la na 'Phags pa A rya de ba dang mjal nas Phar phyin gnang gsung/ lan gsum pa'i dus na/ rGya gar Gang gā'i 'gram na slob dpon chen po La ba pa dang mjal nas/ sgyu ma lta bu'i chos gnang gsung/ lan bzhi pa'i dus na/ Zla ba grags pa dang mjal nas/ lha mo 'Od zer can gyi sgrub thabs gsungs/ lan lnga pa'i dus na Ma tang gi dang mjal nas Don zhags gnang gsung/ lan drug pa la/ Dōm bhi pa dang mjal nas/ rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dpal ldan Bir wa pa'i Lam 'bras kyi gdams ngag rnam gnang gsungs/ der Ras chung pas rje btsun chen pos rdzu 'phrul gyis byon pa lags sam/ dngos su byon la lags zhus pas/ Mi la'i zhal nas de ci yin 'o na yang khyod gang dga' ba byas pas chog mi 'dug gam gsungs//"; "Ras chung pa asked the *rje btsun* how many times he went to rGya gar. He said he went [there] six times. [Ras chung pa] asked who were the Sangs rgyas-s or *grub thob*-s he saw. He said that, the first time, he saw slob dpon 'Phags pa Klu sgrub by means of a pure vision, who preached [him] many teachings such as *dBu ma*. He said that, the second time, he saw 'Phags pa A rya de ba in rGya gar Seng ga la and received *Phar phyin*. He said that, the third time, he saw slob dpon chen po La ba pa at the bank of the rGya gar Gang gā and received teachings like a mirage. He said that, the fourth time, he saw Zla ba grags pa and [received] the *sgrub thabs* of lha mo 'Od zer can. He said that, the fifth time, he saw Ma tang and received *Don zhags*. He said that, the sixth time, having seen Dōm bhi pa, he received the *Lam 'bras gdams ngag* of the lord of the *yogin*-s, dpal ldan Bir wa pa. At that point, Ras chung pa asked the great *rje btsun* whether he went [to India] in his miracles or in reality. Mi la said: "In whichever way it was, will not this, in any case, be sufficient to make you happy?".

The words pronounced by rje btsun Mid la himself are proof that his six journeys to India were in the course of his miraculous activities. He said his meeting 'Phags pa klu sgrub occurred by means of a pure vision. The other journeys to India were equally in the course of his visions.

underlines that he left locally an everlasting sign of himself.³ He, therefore, set the conditions

It ensues that rje btsun Mid la truly travelled to Ri bo Gan dho/dha la in Gar sha where he had his first miraculous vision of a journey to India in order to visit dPal gyi ri in the south and meet 'Phags pa Klu sgrub.

3. g. Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa's concern with the hermitage places sanctified by rje btsun Mid la is expressed in a slightly lengthier treatment concerning the authenticity and devotion for the great holy places associated with the supreme poet-saint, in which he reaches a non-committal conclusion on the various issues discussed in various works of great authors.

g. Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa, *Mid la'i rnam thar* (p.25 lines 19-35): "Yang Bod yul gyi Tsa ri dang Te se dang/ 'di pa gnyis ni/ sNgon bCom ldan 'das rtsa mchog gi grong khyer na byin pa'i mDo dang/ slob dpon chen po Padma Bod nas rGya gar bu byon pa'i gtam rgyud dang/ Jo bo chen po rje lHa gcig A ti sha mNga' ris na byon pa'i gtam rgyud dang/ pandi ta chen po Shakya shri dBus nas byon dus kyi gtam rgyud dang/ rje Mar pa lo tsa bas lHo Dug mtsho 'khol ma'i 'gram na dpal Zhi ba bzang po'i drung na mjal rgyud rnams la bltas na/ Tsa 'dra dang/ Te 'dra yin nam bya ba 'dug la/ rje Mar pa'i lung bstan ni mi 'dug la/ Te se 'di Bon po la phrogs pa la bla ma rje btsun ras chen de/ mnga' bdag rTse ldes gdan drangs nas/ zhag gcig Te ser bzhugs nas Te se phrogs/ Bon po ming sring bton pa'i lo rgyus ni rnam thar chen mor gsal/ Tsa ri la ni Ye rang byon skad mi 'dug la/ Shakya thub pa'i sprul pa chos rje Sa skya pan chen la sogs pa'i/ Bod kyi mkhas grub phal che yis ni/ Bod yul gyi Tsa ri Te se 'di gnyis dngos min/ Tsa 'dra Te 'dra yin pas dngos kyi go ni chod gsung bar 'dug la/ rje btsun rgyal ba rTen ne dang/ chos rje Nyi seng la sogs kyi Zhi byed pa'i grub chen kha cig kyang/ Dags po rin po che lHa rje pa rang gi gsung sgras mi 'dug ste/ de man chod kyi Dwags rgyud pa phal che yis ni/ gnas chen rang yin par bzhed do/ 'on kyang rje Mar pa dang/ rje btsun Mi la ras pa yab sras kyi zhal gsal yang mi 'dug la/ rje Khyung tshang Dznya na gu ru dang/ mNga' ris Zhang lo tsa ba'i zhal gsal yang mi 'dug/ kho bos kyang mDo rGyud du ma rnams la/ bya ngang pa chu la mar len pa lta bu cig byas pa la/ Tsa ri Te se gnyis kyi gsal cha kha tshon chod pa rang ma thong bas/ der kha tshon geod ma phod la/ chu bo Si ta'i 'gram dang/ Ri bo Gangs can na yod bya ba/ rDo rje mkha' 'gro'i rgyud dang/ rMa bya chen mo'i mDo na 'dug pa byang phyogs Sham bha la dang lho phyogs Tra zhes bya ba dang nye bya ba yang 'dug ste/ kho bos kha tshon rbad ma chod nas rang sor bzhag la/ Bod yul gyi Tsa ri Te se 'di gnyis la dngos su ma phyin te/ lar 'di gnyis kyang sgrub gnas khyad par can re yin nges par 'dug pas/ phun sum tshogs bsam nas/ bla ma gong ma rnams kyi gsung sgras dang/ Te se'i Nyi ma byang chub dang Tsa ri'i Bya btang ras pa/ de rnams kyi chos zhal yang mthong ba la brten nas kho bos kyang dkar chag re byas pa yod do//; "Moreover, concerning both Tsa ri and Te se (spelled so) of the land of Tibet, having consulted *sNgon bCom ldan 'das rtsa mchog gi grong khyer na byin pa'i mDo*; the account of the great slob dpon Padma's journey from Tibet to India; the account of Jo bo chen po rje lHa gcig A ti sha's journey to mNga' ris; the account of when the great pandi ta Shakya shri left from dBus and the account of when rje Mar pa lo tsa ba met dpal Zhi ba bzang po at the bank of lHo Dug mtsho 'khol ma, what the statements "something like Tsa" and "something like Te" stand for, [one should first say that] they are not mentioned in the prophecy of rje Mar pa. However, this Te se being controlled by the Bon po, the *bla ma rje btsun ras chen* (i.e. Mid la ras pa), having been invited by mnga' bdag rTse lde, stayed a single night at Te se and took over Te se. One can consult the account of the eviction of the Bon po *ming sring* in the *rnam thar chen mo*. There is no record of self-originated *Ye* at Tsa ri, and most of the learned masters of Tibet, such as chos rje Sa skya pan chen, the incarnation of Shakya Thub pa, hold that both Tsa ri and Te se of Tibet are not the authentic ones. [According to him], "something like Tsa" and "something like Te" should actually be interpreted in the sense that they are splinters [of the original ones]. Zhi byed pa *grub chen*-s such as rje btsun rgyal ba rTen ne and chos rje Nyi seng plus Dags po rin po che lHa rje pa

for Gangs Ti se to be perpetually associated with the bKa' brgyud pa.⁴ Mid la's frequentation

himself do not mention this in their writings. Most of Dags [po] lineage from that one on accept/ recognise them as their great holy places. However, rje Mar pa and rje btsun Mi la ras pa, the father and son, do not take [the matter] into consideration. Khyung tshang Dznya na gu ru and mNga' ris Zhang lo tsa ba, too, do not say anything [on the subject]. I myself, like a duck floating a river downstream into many *mDo* [and] *rGyud*, did not personally see any conclusive statements in this conundrum. Hence, I do not dare to propose any conclusive statement, but in *rDo rje mkha' 'gro'i rgyud* and *rMa bya chen mo'i mDo* they are mentioned; they are said to be at the bank of river Si ta and within Ri bo Gangs can (Himalaya). It is further stated that they are near Sham bha la in the north and what is called Tra in the south. I do not intend to propose a definitive solution and leave [the matter] as it has been [said] above. Both Tsa ri and Te se should not henceforth [be seen] as the authentic ones, but it is an excellent idea truly to consider them as extraordinary meditation places. Basing myself on my reading of the texts of the *bla ma-s gong ma* and basing myself on the literary material of Te se'i Nyi ma byang chub and Tsa ri'i Bya btang ras pa, I have composed a *dkar chag* for each of them".

Sa skya pandi ta's idea in *mDo gsum rab dbye* that Ti se is a splinter of another mountain brought to Pu hrang stod by Hanumanta reduces the *axis mundi*, sanctified by Buddhism, Hinduism and Bon, to a dependency of another holy site. It is legitimate that both the Buddhist and Hindu traditions have sites that are substitutes of other ones but the great Sa skya pa master's view smacks of sectarian criticism towards the bKa' brgyud pa school in particular, whose members had great reverence for the mountain.

Sa skya pandi ta's rejection touched a nerve of the members of the bKa' brgyud pa school for many centuries to come since the late '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* attributes to Sa skya pandi ta an anti-bKa' brgyud stance in his dismissal that Gangs Ti se and mtsho Ma dros are authentic. The text (IHa sa ed. p.24 lines 5-10) reads: "rJe btsun Sa skya pandi ta'i zhal nas/ Gangs can ni Ti se min/ Ma dros mtsho ni Ma pham min zhes khyod bKa' brgyud pas ri bo Gangs can du ngos bzung pa'i Gangs ri 'di Gangs chen ma yin te de'i mtshan nyid mDo nas bshad pa rnams 'di la med pa'i phyir zhes dang/ 'di Ti se yang ma yin te mDo na gsungs//"; "rJe btsun Sa skya pandi ta said: "[Masters] says that this snow mountain is not Ti se. Ma dros mtsho is not Ma pham. You bKa' brgyud pa consider this snow mountain to be the great snow mountain. This is not the great snow mountain. It is a fact that authentic *mDo*-s do not talk about this [mountain]. It descends from these *mDo*-s that Ti se is not the great mountain".

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* retorts (IHa sa ed. p.26 lines 6-8): "Ti se dang Ma dros pa'i mtshan nyid mDo nas bshad pa de dag khyod Sa skya pandi tas ma gzigs//"; "Ti se dang Ma dros are mentioned in authentic *mDo*-s. You, Sa skya pandi ta, have not checked them".

4. '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.22b line 6-f.23a line 1) claims a continuity of intents handed over from rje btsun Mid la to his direct disciples: "Gangs Ti se dang/ mtsho Ma pham gyi bdag po mdzad cing rjes 'jug rnams la gnas 'di sgom shig gsungs par rjes su gdams nas de nas bzung gnas kyi bdag po bKa' brgyud pas mdzad pa byung yin no//"; "[Mid la] became the owner of Gangs Ti se and mtsho chen Ma pham, and after he told his disciples that they should meditate at this holy place, they followed his advice. It happened that the bKa' brgyud pa became the owners of this holy place".

This statement should be read in loose terms rather than in strictly historical ones, because rje btsun Mid la's immediate successors did not establish themselves at Ti se. The door of the pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se was opened, as will be amply shown in the present book, only during subsequent generations after the Dwags po bKa' brgyud segment.

of Gangs Ti se is not always described in the literature in clearcut terms. For instance, a little known and less official biography—*Mid la'i rnam thar* in *mTshan ldan bla ma rnams kyi rnam thar bzhugs so*—penned by chos rje Byang chub 'od,⁵ is just one of several *rnam thar* of Mid la ras pa in which a rather confused but historically significant episode is included.

The biography says that rje tsun Mid la was invited to Pu hrang, where Gangs Ti se is located in its sTod part, upon the request of mnga' bdag rTse lde who, before a coup at court ended his life, was the ruler of, jointly, Gu ge, Pu hrang and La dwags, and thus in control of Gangs Ti se.⁶

I have dated the assassination of rTse lde (see *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* in Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.335-343) to sometime before 1093 based on the fact that rNgog lo tsa ba Blo ldan shes rab returned from Kha che in that year and found dBang lde sitting on the Gu ge throne. This assessment is also based on other evidence derived from the biography of Rwa lo tsa ba in Taranatha's *gShing rje gshed chos 'byung* (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.338 and n.534), a biography more realistically written and thus more reliable than the *rnam thar* of the great master of rDo rje 'Jigs byed by Rwa Ye shes seng ge. The account is interesting *per se*, for it documents the interaction—at least from a distance—between rje btsun Mid la and the last of the great kings of unified mNga' ris skor gsum, famous for his promotion of Buddhism in Upper West Tibet. It shows that rTse lde was not only keen to support and invite the major proponents of the Buddhist scholasticism of his time, as he did during the 1076-1078 Tho ling *chos 'khor*, but felt reverence for the greatest mystic of his generation.

5. The colophon does not clarify the part this *chos rje*, not to be confused with lha bla ma Byang chub 'od of the royal family of mNga' ris skor gsum, had in this text in the possession of H.H. the 17th rGyal ba Karma pa O rgyan 'gro 'dul 'phrin las grub pa'i rdo rje, but I read the passage in the sense that he was its author. Much gratitude is due to him for his generosity in making this *rnam thar* and other works available to me through the auspices of Josayma Tashi Tsering.

6. Events in the implementation of rje btsun Mid la's decision to go to Gangs Ti se are described in *Mid la'i rnam thar* (f.61a line 1-f.61b line 4), a biography included in *mTshan ldan bla ma rnams kyi rnam thar bzhugs so* written by chos rje Byang chub 'od, which can be summarised as follows:

- rJe btsun Mid la received an invitation to go to Gangs Ti se from the king of Gu ge rTse lde.
- He was accompanied by four disciples during this attempted journey to the sacred mountain, which failed. They were gShen ras pa, Li khor Phya ru ba, one learned woman (*'dzang mo* spelled so for *mdzangs mo*) from gCung pa Gre phugs, and one more from dGe thi of Gung thang Gyen lang.
- The text says that the reason behind the failed expedition was the learned woman's claim to be sick upon reaching Glo bo at the foot of Dol po. They did not proceed upwards and remained in Glo bo.
- During their stay in Glo bo, rje btsun Mid la gave teachings.
- Li khor Phya ru ba, who originally was not a disciple of the *bla ma*, went again to see him after rje btsun Mid la stayed at Gangs Ti se for a great meditation and became faithful to him. He established a religious association with the poet-saint.

The episode ends without any reference to a meeting with rTse lde or to Mid la ras pa's journey to Pu hrang in order to meditate at Ti se. The biography says that rje btsun Mid la proceeded to Glo bo in order to go to Ti se, but then the *rnam thar* gets entangled in introducing other episodes before finally saying that Mid la returned east from Glo bo to Nya nam.

The *rnam thar* by gTsang smyon He ru ka ignores the account of rTse lde's invitation and says no more than that rje btsun Mid la broke his journey to Ti se in Glo bo but then carried on from there to the sacred mountain.⁷ On the contrary, the episode recorded in *Mid la'i rnam thar* in *mTshan ldan bla ma rnams kyi rnam thar* conveys the understanding that rje btsun Mid la accepted the invitation but could not go to Pu hrang eventually. The matter is explained in more precise historical terms in *IHo rong chos 'byung*, which confirms that the initial plan to proceed to Gangs Ti se was abandoned and that rje btsun Mid la went there subsequently with different companions; Ras chung pa was among them.⁸

7. gTsang smyon He ru ka, *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* (p.365 lines 6-12): “Na mo gu ru/ rje btsun Mi la ras pa dpon slob 'ga 'shas lung bstan ltar Gangs Ti se la byon nas Glo bo mTsho bar du phyag phebs pa'i tshe/ slob ma sgom ma gcig nad rdzung btab nas 'gro ma nyan pa la/ der byon stabs chag ste/ dbyar Glo bo stod du chos gsung shing bzhugs/ nam zla ba ston bser du song ba dang/ yar Ti se la byon pa'i tshe/ nya ma pho mo rnams kyi skor ra la thog gi bar du gshegs skyel byas pa'i sar phyag dang skor ba mang du byas/”; “Na mo gu ru. rJe btsun Mi la ras pa and a few of his disciples proceeded towards Gangs Ti se, as predicted by [Mar pa's] prophecy. When they reached Glo bo mTsho bar (spelled so for Tsho bar, “the middle division of Glo bo”), one female meditator pretended to be sick. Having accepted not to proceed [farther], they broke the journey there. During the summer, he taught religion in Glo bo stod. As soon as the wind of the autumn month blew in the sky, when they left upwards towards Ti se, the male and female who had listened to his teachings (*nya ma*) made many prostrations and circumambulations at the spot up to which they escorted him [which corresponded to] the processional path around the top of the pass”.

8. *IHo rong chos 'byung* mentions the presence of Ras chung pa in the restricted group of disciples who successfully went to Gangs Ti se with rje btsun Mid la after the first aborted attempt. This indicates that g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa has combined the two occasions into a single one.

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.92 lines 8-18): “sNye nam na bzhugs pa'i dus su mo gcig gis khyod Gangs Ti se la song dang/ lam du skyes bu las can gcig yod pa rjes su bzung nas/ dpon slob lnga 'byon par brtsam pa la ma chos pa'i kham su Ngam rdzong phyug po la gsungs pa'i mgur ma kha yar yod/ de nas gsum po shol/ Ras chung pa dang dpon slob gnyis po byon pa'i mtshar dam rGyags phu ba dang mjal/ phyag phyr khrid nas dpon slob gsum Ti ser byon/ de yang bde ba drug dang/ bde ba bcu bzhi dang/ mi dga' brgyad kyi mgur rnams gsungs/ de nas dam pa rGyags phu pa sNgun nas byon/ dpon slob gnyis lho phyogs nas ldom bu mdzad de/ dPal mo dpal thang la phyin pa na/ kha ba chen po babs nas lam ma shes pas Lam mkhan rgyad kyi mgur ma mdzad/”; “When he was at sNye nam, one woman told him: “You should go to Gangs Ti se. On the way, there will be a great being with [good] *karma* who will follow you”. There is a separate (*kha yar*) song sung to Ngam rdzong phyug po (“wealthy”) concerning the fact (*kham su*) that, though the five *dpon slob* thought to leave [for Ti se], [the plan] was unsettled (*ma chos pa*). There is a broken song he sung to the wealthy Ngam rdzong [ras pa] in the region. Hence the three gave up [the prospect]. Eventually, the master and [his] disciple Ras chung pa, altogether two, left and met dam [pa] rGyags phu ba. They took him along with them, and the *dpon slob*, altogether three, went to Ti se. With regard to this, he sang the songs *bDe ba drug* (“The six [expressions of] happiness”),

Hence rje btsun Mid la's momentous visit to Gangs Ti se would have been preceded by an attempt to go to the mountain, which did not succeed due to developments that led him elsewhere. The death of rTse lde did not prevent him from visiting the mountain after the king's invitation, in line with rje btsun Mid la's proverbial detachment from worldly affairs.

Another rare biography of Mid la ras pa, the one penned by g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa in water ox 1433, talks about the invitation by mnga' bdag rTse lde that culminated in rje btsun Mid la's eviction of the Bon po—Na ro Bon chung *ming sring* ("brother and sister")—from Gangs Ti se.⁹

The versions of these events found in g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa's *Mid la'i rnam thar* and *lHo rong chos 'byung* are different. *lHo rong chos 'byung* states that twice Mid la set out to Ti se the first time unsuccessfully, while Mid la's actual journey to the mountain occurred on the second occasion. Thus, the account of chos rje Byang chub 'od refers to the first aborted attempt at proceeding to the mountain to honour the invitation of mnga' bdag rTse lde. Similar to the statements in chos rje Byang chub 'od's work, the biography by g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa, written just a dozen years before *lHo rong chos 'byung*, maintains that there was a single attempt by Mid la to proceed to Ti se, and this was on the occasion of rTse lde's invitation considered to have been unsuccessful by the latter text. This is proved by the reference in the works by chos rje Byang chub 'od and g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa to the same disciples who composed his entourage at the first attempt.

The date of the first, failed endeavour to go to Gangs Ti se works as a *terminus post quem* for the year in which Mid la ras pa was successful in his pilgrimage to the holy mountain, recorded in *lHo rong chos 'byung*. The succession from one failed proposition to the journey west and the factual presence of rje btsun Mid la at Gangs Ti se does not help to assess with more precision the death date of rTse lde better than I could do in *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang*.

bDe ba bcu bzhi ("The fourteen [expressions of] happiness") and *Mi dga' brgyad* ("The eight [expressions of] unhappiness"). Then [on the way back], dam pa rGyags phu pa (spelled so) split off from them at sNgun, and when the *dpon slob*, altogether two, went for alms (*ldom bu*) in the south, upon reaching dPal mo dpal thang, there was a heavy snowfall. They could not find the way and he sang the song *Lam mkhan brgyad* ("the eight guides").

9. After saying that the retinue of rje btsun Mid la during the first attempt to go to Gangs Ti se, which turned out into a failure, were gShen sgom ras pa, Li khor Pya ru ba, one mDzangs mo ras ma of Cung pa Kre phyag, and dge bshes Za ras ma of Gung thang Gyen lang, g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa, *Mid la'i rnam thar* (p.23 lines 33-34) adds: "dPon slob brgyad byon pa la/ Li khor ba dang mDzangs mo gnyis Blo bo na mar btang nas/ dpon slob drug yar byon nas/ rdzu 'phrul sna tshogs kyis rtsod pa mdzad nas Bon po bton nas/ Ti se phrogs pa'i lo rgyus zur nan gsal//"; "Of the eight *dpon slob* who [originally] set out [to Ti se], both Li khor Pya ru ba and mDzangs mo were sent down to Glo bo. The six *dpon slob* went up and [Mid la] evicted the Bon po by means of his striving in the performance of miracles. One should consult separately the account of his takeover of Ti se".

Numbers are different from *Mid la'i rnam thar* of *mTshan ldan bla ma rnams ky'i rnam thar* in the count of rje btsun Mid la's disciples who went to Gangs Ti se with him.

Even considering that it occurred sometime after 1093, the presence of Ras chung pa rDo rje grags pa (1084-1161) in the group of disciples who successfully went to the mountain is probably anachronistic and, therefore, doubtful but not impossible owing to his young age.

Hence the two dates of rje btsun Mid la's failed and successful journeys to Gangs Ti se cannot have been after 1093, as much as the first one is concerned. The other date fell sometime later than 1094 but not long thereafter.

The association of Ti se with rje btsun Mid la remained a constant theme in the Tibetan literature of the successive periods, even with schools different from the bKa' brgyud pa.¹⁰ It was but natural that his example commanded great attention, able to establish a direct descendancy in the implementation of the duty to move west to the sacred mountain and lakes, among rje btsun Mid la's disciples. However, this did not happen for more than one generation until the time of the early diffusion of the school's *ri pa*-s ("mountain dwellers", i.e. hermits), which did not happen in the footsteps of the most celebrated poet-hermit of Tibet, the great master of *gtum mo*. The first phase I examine in this volume concerns the earliest bKa' brgyud pa at Gangs Ti se after Mid la ras pa, which did not take place before the end of the 12th century.

10. A late source such as *Dris lan nor bu'i phreng ba* (i.e. *g.Yag sde chos 'byung* p.578 line 6-p.579 line 4), dealing with the issue whether some of the holy places of Tibet should be considered as substitutes for the original ones in India, associates Gangs Ti se with rje btsun Mid la even beyond his actual involvement in it: "dPal ldan Dus kyi 'khor lo dang/ mNgon pa'i gzhang las gsung pa yi/ Gangs ri'i gSer gyi bya skyibs dang/ 'Dzam bu'i shing dang sa srung dang/ glan chen lnga bryas bskor ba dang/ dgra bcom pa lnga brya bzhugs pa'i (p.579) gnas/ gangs can de ni Ti se min/ glang po de rnam kyang de na med/ de bzhin 'Dzam bu'i ljon pa dang/ gSer gyi bya skyibs gal yod/ ces dang/ Phal po che yi mDo sde ltos/ da lta Ma pham 'di la ni/ mchos nyid de dag gang yang med/ ces dang/ Tsa ri tra shes bya ba ni/ lho phyogs rgya mtsho'i 'gram na yod/ Tsa ri tra gong de ma yin/ ces dang/ gal te gnas chen yin na yang/ yul der 'gro ba'i gang zag ni/ dbang bskor thob cing dam tshig ldan/ brda' dang brda' yi lan shes shing/ ces gsung pas rje btsun Mi las Ti se la Ri bo Gangs can dang Ma pham la Ma dros gsung shing/ grub thob gong ma phal che bas rTsa ri shar phyogs rKong po'i phyogs la ngos bzung ba thams cad bkag ste/ 'Grel pa las// Dus 'khor gyi 'jig rten khams le nas gsung pa'i ri bo Gangs can dang/ ces sogs rgyas par mDo rGyud kyi lung rigs dang bcas pas bkag go/"; "gSer gyi bya skyibs, near the snow mountain (i.e. Gangs Ti se); the 'Dzam bu tree, surrounded by [other] trees, including 500 medicinal trees (*glan chen* spelled so for *glang shing*); and the abode of 500 *dgra bcom pa* [are] mentioned in the *dpal ldan Dus kyi 'khor lo* and *mNgon pa* texts (p.579). One should read *dPal po che'i mDo sde*, in which it is said: "This mountain is not Ti si (spelled so); there are no elephants [there]; likewise, where are the 'Dzam bu tree and gSer gyi bya skyibs?" So it is said. "The present Ma pham has no such attributes/characteristics". So it is said. "Tsa ri tra is at the southern ocean's shore: this is not Tsa ri tra gong ("upper one", i.e. the hermitage in Tibet)". So it is said. Given that it has been affirmed: "Since one supposes that these are the great holy places, the one who proceeds to these localities should have obtained an empowerment and hold a vow; and should have the awareness to recognize this sign and that sign", rje btsun Mi la named the snow mountain Ti se and Ma dros Ma pham. Most of the past *grub thob*-s dismiss all the identifications that Tsa ri is situated to the east of rKong po. According to the commentaries dealing with this [subject], [the identification of] Ri bo Gangs can, mentioned in the chapter of *Dus [kyi] 'khor [lo]* concerning the phenomenal world, is dismissed in the authoritative passages extensively dealing with it".

The hiatus in the earliest signs of devotion for Gangs Ti se in the bKa' brgyud ranks after the great poet-saint is proved by the absence of traces in the literature that would have, otherwise, documented a presence of rje btsun Mid la's direct disciples at the holy mountain.

They preferred to dwell in other localities more easterly than Pu hrang stod where the mountain is located, often to the immediate north of the Himalayan range. Symptomatic are the cases of Ngam rdzong ras pa and his disciple Gung thang pa Rol pa'i rdo rje, who frequented La phyi, the area of sKyid grong and Bal po rdzong (the latter immediately south of the former),¹¹ both places graced by past visits of rje btsun Mid la.

11. Despite the fact that Ngam rdzong ras pa received teachings in Pu hrang, a major centre of learning and practice before the golden period of mNga' ris skor gsum ended, he did not remain there but returned to mNga' ris smad where he met rje btsun Mid la. After attending on him for several teachings, Ngam rdzong ras pa sojourned for his meditation retreats at holy places such as La phyi, Chu bar and Bal po rdzong's Sing ga la forest which, later on, was one of the seats of bKa' brgyud pa meditators but conspicuously not at Gangs Ti se. A few significant passages excerpted from *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.151 lines 6-11) read as follows: "rJe Ngam rdzong ras pa Bho de ra tsa/ 'khrungs yul La stod lho'i phyogs/ Ding ri'i mGo lcim lung zhes bya bar/ yab Ngam rdzong bla ma sKyabs zhes bya ba sNgags rnying ma gcig dang/ yum rDor mo bza' gnyis kyi sras su 'khrungs/ Pu rangs su Byang chub sems dpa' spro tse gdams las sPyod phyogs/ bSlab btus rgyud bla ma sogs mTshan nyid kyi chos mang po gsan nas yul du byon pas/ yab yum gshegs 'dug pas skyo ba skyes te sgrub pa byed par dgongs//"; "rJe Ngam rdzong ras pa Bho de ra tsa. His birthplace was Ding ri mGo lcim lung in La stod lHo. His father was Ngam rdzong bla ma sKyabs, who only [practised] *sNgags rnying ma*, and his mother was Dor mo bza'. He received in Pu rangs many philosophical teachings, such as *sPyod phyogs*, excerpted from *Byang chub sems dpa' spro tse gdams* and *bSlab btus rgyud bla ma*. Upon returning to his native place, he found that his parents had died. He decided to go to meditate".

Ibid. (p.151 lines 16-17): "rJe btsun chen po Brag ling pa la bzhugs pa'i spyang sngar byon//"; "He went to see rje btsun chen po [Mid la], who was staying at Brag ling ba (spelled so)".

Ibid. (p.151 line 20): "Lo bcu bdun gyi bar du bsten nas bsgoms//"; "After receiving teachings, he meditated for seventeen years".

Ibid. (p.152 lines 6-7): "Bal po rdzong gseb dang/ Sing ga la'i nags su sgrub pa rtse gcig tu mdzad//"; "He had a one-pointed meditation within (*bseb*) Bal po rdzong and at the forest (*nags*) of Sing ga la".

Ngam rdzong ras pa's disciple Gung thang pa Rol pa'i rdo rje frequented the places of his master, and I cite here a few passages concerning his presence in mNga' ris. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.152 line 18-p.153 line 9) says: "De'i rgyud pa 'dzin pa'i slob ma ni/ Gung thang pa Rol pa'i rdo rje [note: La stod dGa' ba rdo rje yang zer] ni/ lo tsa ba Dar ma tsul khriims kyi dbon po yin zhing/ Gung thang sTag ris su yab Grags pa zhes bya ba sngags pa zhig dang/ yum sNa nam za Nyi ma zhes bya ba'i sras su sku 'khrungs/ Su phag Dar ma 'od (p.153) ces bya ba sngags pa zhig las/ bDe mchog gi dbang thob pas lHan skyes zhal gzigs/ rten 'brel khyad par can shar/ lo bcu gsum lon pa na yab 'das/ de nas Glang 'khor du yig rtsis slob pa la byon/ lo gcig nas yum 'das/ 'jig rten 'di la dgos pa med/ da ni chos shig byed dgongs nas/ bla ma zhig btsal snyam nas byon pas/ rje Mi la'i slob ma Ngam rdzong ras pa Bal po rdzong gseb Sin ga la'i nags na bzhugs zer ba thos te der phyin nas mjal/ thugs rjes bzung nas lto gos chos gsum gyis bskyangs/ bDe mcog snyan rgyud kyi dbang gdams pa thams cad lhag ma med par gnang/ lo lnga bsten//"; "His (Ngam rdzong ras pa's) disciple and lineage holder was Gung thang pa Rol pa'i rdo rje [note: he was also known as La stod dGa' ba rdo rje], the nephew of lo tsa ba Dar ma tshul khriims. He was born at Gung thang sTag ris to

La phyi, like Tsa ri, was a destination deeply connected to the bKa' brgyud pa endeavours in the lands on the "upper side" from the end of the 12th century onwards. Hence events related to the school's expeditions to mNga' ris stod smad are dealt with in this book of mine. sKyid grong, a stronghold of bKa' brgyud pa groups at the time of their diffusion westwards, was a place largely frequented by the Tshal pa. However, it is surprising that the major 'Bri gung *bla ma*-s who must have transited this locality did not leave any signs of their endeavours there.

In no other sources are the circumstances that led the bKa' brgyud pa to go to populate the mountains and holy places in remote territories better described than in those of the 'Bri gung pa. The text in which the early bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of Gangs Ti se is formulated *in extenso* is the late work dedicated to the history of the 'Bri gung pa at this mountain, which I call *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* for the sake of clarity. This 1896 source by the 34th 'Bri gung *gdan rabs*, dKon mchog bstan 'dzin chos kyi blo gros 'phrin las, credits 'gro mgon Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110-1170) making a proclamation to his disciples. He told his followers that they had to take the responsibility for opening the pilgrimage door to Gangs Ti se. This was the legacy left to them by the bKa' brgyud pa masters of the previous generations, manifestly implying rje btsun Mid la as the main one.¹²

his father Grags pa, a *sngags pa*, and his mother sNa nam za Nyi ma. After receiving the *dbang* of bDe mchog from a *sngags pa* called Su phag Dar ma 'od (p.153), he had the vision of [this deity] with his *shakti* (*lhan skyes*). Special signs (*rten 'brel*) arose in him. His father died when he was thirteen. He went to study writing and calculation at Glang 'khor. His mother died one year later. He heard [people] saying that rje Mi la's disciple Ngam rdzong ras pa was staying at the forest of Sing ga la within Bal po rdzong. Having gone there, he met him, who kept him [there] out of his compassion and protected him [by providing] food, clothes and teachings. He had all *dbang*-s and *gdams pa*-s of *bDe mchog snyan rgyud* bestowed on him completely. He attended upon [this teacher] for five years".

Ibid. (p.153 lines 15-21): "De nas sgrub pa 'ba' zhig byas/ ri khros 'grims/ dgun Bal po rdzong gseb tu brten nas ras rkyang kho na byas/ de nas lo gnyis shu rtsa bdun gyi steng du Nag tsho'i dbon po las Tshangs spyod kyi sdom pa zhus/ Gung thang Brag la zla ba bdun/ Brag ling la lo gsum/ rGyang 'phen du zla ba bdun bsdad pa'i dus su/ dPal lhan skyes zhal mthong/ bla ma dan lan gsum mjal/ Jo bo Wa ti la mjal ba'i dus dus su/ shar phyogs su song zhig lan gsum du lung bstan//"; "Thereafter he only meditated. He visited hermitages. In winter while hanging around (*brten*) the grove of Bal po rdzong, he only wore a cotton [cloth]. Passing the age (*steng du*) of twenty-seven, he received the *sdom pa* of *Tshangs spyod* ("pure conduct") from a descendant of Nag tsho [lo tsa ba] (Nag tsho'i *dbon po*). [He stayed] seven months at Gung thang Brag and three years at Brag ling. During the seven months he spent at rGyang 'phen, he had a vision of dPal lhan skyes ("dPal [bDe mchog] and consort"). He met the *bla ma* (Ngam rdzong ras pa?) thrice. When he went to see Jo bo Wa ti, it was prophesied thrice that he would go east three times".

Ibid. (p.154 lines 15-18): "De dus bla ma dgun lo bdun cu don bryad pa la/ yon tan bzang pos mjal nas zhus pa yin/ sku lusni shin tu bzang zhing/ da dung yang lo gcig gnyis thub tu re gsungs nas/ gdams pa thams cad zla ba bdu nas tshar par mdzad do//"; "At that time, when he was aged seventy-eight, Yon tan bzang po visited him, and so he received [teachings]. He left his body in a very noble way. Having said: "I can survive up to one or two years from now", he completed giving teachings in seven months".

12. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.23a lines 3-6): "'On kyang rje Phag grus nyid kyi slob ma 'Bri gung

To learn about the situation which led to the dispersion of the monks to the mountains and distant holy places, a cross-check of the later literature that concerns monographically the migratory fluxes of the hermits with the earlier documents that deal more cursorily with the subject is the need derived from this overall topic.

Among the earlier material, the biographies of sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217)—*'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* and the other known as *Ling tshe* which is divided into episodes—by his nephew 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187-1241), are principal sources. 'Bri gung gling pa himself was in the lands on the "upper side" for seven years. He also put his uncle's most famous text, *dGongs gcig yig cha*, into written form. All these works have been a major source of inspiration for most of the systematic literature on the subject of the bKa' brgyud pa presence in Upper West Tibet—i.e. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* and also the related *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* both authored by dKon mchog bstan 'dzin chos kyi blo gros 'phrin las.

A few other 13th century *rnam thar*-s are no less important documents on which much of the work in this book of mine is based. They are *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* and the biography of grub chen Seng ge ye shes (1181-1255) together with those of the successors in his lineage found in rDo rje mdzes 'od's *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*. Some of the numerous biographies of rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189-1258), which belong to different periods, are also significant. Given the role in the diffusion of the bKa' brgyud pa in the lands on the "upper side" played by the Tshal pa, Kun dga' rdo rje's *Deb ther dmar po* is the other major text used here while *Gung thang gi dkar chag*, which has drawn its sTod Tshal pa section from the latter work, is a subsidiary source. On the whole, the bKa' brgyud pa literature that comprises other works used in this volume of mine is detailed enough on the subject of its members in the lands on the "upper side" during the period under study to offer insight into this topic.

pa 'Jig rten mgon po dang grub thob Gling rje ras pa gnyis la gnas gsum la ri pa gtong dgos tshul dang/ sngon byon rgyal ba nyid kyis lung bstan pa.../ gnas Ti se gangs su sgom dga' / Ti se gangs su 'byon pa skyid/ ces sogs gsungs pas slob ma gnyis kyis kyang ri pa gtong bar dam bcas nas Gling ras kyis nyid kyi slob ma rje 'Brug pa rGya ras pa Ye shes rdo rje la bka' bstsal bas/ rGya ras kyis bla ma'i bka' bzhin Ti ser byon//", "However, both rje Phag gru's disciples 'Bri gung pa 'Jig rten mgon po and grub thob Gling rje ras pa were instructed that it was necessary to send *ri pa*-s to the three sacred places. He (Phag mo gru pa) said: "This is the holy place prophesied by [our] earlier masters... One will rejoice to meditate at Ti se gangs, [thus] it will be rewarding to go to Ti se gangs". The two disciples promised to send *ri pa*-s [there]. Gling ras's disciple rje 'Brug pa rGya ras pa Ye shes rdo rje was ordered [by him to go]. rGya ras went to Ti se in accordance with his *bla ma*'s order.

Ibid. (f.23b lines 1-2): "De'i rje su de nyid kyi slob ma rgyal ba rGod tshang mGon po rdo rjes chu'i bcud len la brten nas sgrub pa yun ring du mdzad//", "After him, his disciple rgyal ba rGod tshang mGon po rdo rje meditated there for some time by living on water".

The statement that gTsang pa rGya ras went to Ti se is disproved by his biographies (see below p.28).

In order to set the terms of the matter, I shall first reintroduce some of the passages of the later literature relevant to the migratory waves of the *ri pa*-s, although this phenomenon has already been studied in secondary sources (including by myself in *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang*), and also introduce some other passages not dealt with before. I will also focus on the corpus of early bKa' brgyud pa biographies, without which I could not attempt to write a short history of some of this school's masters in the lands on the "upper side". Given the close contacts between the lineage holders of rje btsun Mid la's tradition, which were at the heart of the foundation of the bKa' brgyud pa schools, most of them in the 12th century, I will give due space to the interaction of these masters, insofar as the subject of their presence in the lands on the "upper side" is concerned, and thus their activities will be often treated together in the following pages.

'Jig rten mgon po's decision to disperse his disciples to distant hermitages: the first 'Bri gung pa departures

In iron pig 1191, sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po,¹³ pondering his role as the head of the 'Bri gung monastery and its school while absorbed in meditation, decided to disperse his disciples to mountain retreats. He was led to this move by a series of considerations concerning the dimensions into which his monastic community had rapidly grown.¹⁴ As will be shown, the

13. It is well known that 'Jig rten mgon po is considered to have been a reincarnation of 'Phags pa Klu sgrub. Less well known but equally commonly held is that he was also considered to have been a rebirth of Khri Ral pa can. 'Jig rten mgon po could not have been a rebirth of any other sPu rgyal *btsan po* than one of the *chos rgyal mes dbon rnam gsum*. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, '*Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.112 line 7-p.113 line 3) says: "De nas thams cad kha mthu par rje rin po che mnga' bdag Ral pa (p.113) can yin te mdzad pa dang mthun pa'i yon bdag slob dpon dang mthun ba'i nye gnas 'bangs dang mthun pa gdul bya da ltar 'di rnam yin zhes gleng bar 'dug pas de ltar lags sam zhus pa la mnga' bdag Ral pa can dang cha med de Bod khams kyi rgyal po cig tu skyes nges zhes yang yang gsungs so/ yang mnga' bdag Ral pa can de ni rten 'brel la mnga' brnyes pa yin pas Bod mi thams cad dpa' ba dang sa mtha'i dgra'i gnod pa med pa dang Chos dar ba'i rten 'brel yin bya ba mang po gsung/"; "Then everyone agreed that *rje rin po che* was mnga' bdag Ral pa (p.113) can. They conversed together saying: "These of the present time are the same *yon bdag-s* and *slob dpon-s* [of Ral pa can] who [performed the same] deeds, [had] the same *nye gnas* and subjects, and the same people to be trained", and asked ['Jig rten mgon po]: "Is it so?". He repeatedly said: "It is not known whether I was mnga' bdag Ral pa can, but it is sure that I was born in the country of Bod as a king". Moreover, he explained *in extenso* that mnga' bdag Ral pa can was powerful due to his karmic nexus (*rten 'brel*). This karmic nexus being that all the men of Bod were brave, no harm could be caused by the enemies from the borders of the country, and the religion was diffused".

14. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.83 lines 18-22) has this to say on the growth of the monastic community at 'Bri gung sometime around 1191 when 'Jig rten mgon po sent out the first wave of hermits to remote holy places: "'Di skabs 'dus pa sngon ma las kyang cher rgyas te/ 'khor phyogs gcig 'dus pa bdun khri la/ rab tshe 'dir Sangs rgyas thob pa mang/ 'bring sa bcu'i dbang phyug man chad nas/ dbang sems nyid rtogs pa

other major bKa' brgyud pa schools established by the fellow disciples of Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po also dispersed their members to distant holy places.

'Jig rten mgon po's decision implemented several different levels of thought. There were a number of factors linked with the situation in dBus and beyond during those days:

- most of everything else, the astonishing growth of the monastic community of 'Bri gung. Even if statistics provided by the sources are grossly inflated, still it must have reached proportions beyond control;
- the dire effects of famines in the years before 'Jig rten mgon po came to his decision;
- the opportunity for strategical relations offered by the existence of several local powers in various principalities in Tibet and beyond its borders.

'Jig rten mgon po had a few tactical reasons that led him to choose his approach vis-à-vis the situation that had developed at his monastery.

Like other masters who had established their own bKa' brgyud pa schools, 'Jig rten mgon po was quick to realise the benefit of diffusing his teachings to distant regions and the potential to obtain the support of the rulers of those principalities for his community once established there, and also for his head institution. The strategy thus envisaged a widening of the 'Bri gung pa's support base.¹⁵ The way the potentates, who were the recipients of 'Jig rten

yan chod la/ 'khor khri phrag bye ba bsam yas kyang zhes rnam thar mthong ba don ma nas gsungs pa ltar/ tha ma rnams kyang sems kyi ngo bo mthong ba sha stag yin zhing/ de yang gong gi lung bstan las/ sprul sku'i sems dpa' ni thams cad rab tu byung zhing tshul khri ms rnam par dag pa kho na dang/ sems dpa' ni thams cad kyang Byang chub sems dpa' yin par dgongs pa'o//"; "At that time the assembly became bigger than before. Among the 70,000 retinue who had gathered at the same locality, the best ones were the many who had achieved enlightenment; the average ones were the tens of thousands and millions ranging from those who had mastered the ten stages to those who had experienced the nature of the mind (*sems nyid*). This is a statement found in *rNam thar mthong ba don ma*. The worst ones were those who had only recognised the essence of the mind. As to them, in reference to ['Jig rten mgon po's] prophecy, and in order to decipher the meaning of the phrase "the group of hundreds of thousands of *sprul sku* and *sems dpa'*", the expression *sprul sku* stands for the fact that they all took the *rab tu byung* vow and only followed the pure moral discipline, and *sems dpa'* for the fact that they all are thought to have been Byang chub sems dpa'".

15. Cases are found in the literature of 'Jig rten mgon po's interest in establishing contacts with political powers in the west. One was his urging 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa to have a golden umbrella made in Bal po for the glory of 'Bri gung—the same activity is attributed to gNyos chen po lHa nang pa by his biographies—possibly to impress the local chieftains with the might and wealth of the monastery (see below p.74-77). Another is the account of his appearance in the sky in front of Ghu ya sgangs pa's cave, urging him to appease Ti se lHa btsan (i.e. the lord of the mountain, a metaphor for the local chieftains). *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.28a line 5-f.28b line 2) reads: "rDo rje 'dzin pa de nyid skabs shig Ti se Shel 'dra'i rgyab brag ri sgom zhwa 'dra ba'i 'og gi brag phug tu bzhugs pa'i dus shig tshe nyin geig Ti se zhing skyong gis rGya gar gyi dzwa ki bdun du sprul nas mdun du yongs te phyag byas nas/ gser sha ba'i mgo tsam zhig 'bul du byung ba la/ rdo rje 'dzin pas/ bya ba btang ba'i rnal 'byor la/ rin chen gser gyi dgos pa med/ gsungs (f.28b) nas ma bzhes pas/ de'i dus sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po seng ge dkar mo la chibs

mgon po's teachings in various lands, are allegorically dealt with as deities associated with the localities where sKyob pa sent his disciples, is telling. For instance, the metaphor of the support extended by Klu rgyal po Ma dros pa is treated in the 'Bri gung pa literature as a symbol of sKyob pa rin po che's relations with the rulers of Upper West Tibet—in particular Pu hrang, Gu ge lHo stod and Ya rtse. Other powers—India, China, Byang Mi nyag etc.—were among the most important supporters of the members of the 'Bri gung pa monastic community. The patronage shown to this school's members was not restricted to their own land; these potentates, too, sent lavish gifts to 'Bri gung.¹⁶

A meaningful passage in *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus*, placed after the account of the circumstances whereby Klu rgyal po Ma dros pa received teachings from sKyob pa rin po che, contains the statement, similar to the one just mentioned above, that 'Jig rten mgon po was able to keep several kings bound to him by the strength of his charisma.¹⁷ This goes

pa zhig mngon sum du mdun gyi nam mkhar byon nas 'di skad gsungs/ bu the tshom spongs shig rnal 'byor pa/ lha dam tshig ldan pa'i zhing skyong gis/ yon 'bul ba'i rten 'brel dang du longs//", "Once, when this *rdo rje 'dzin pa* (Ghu ya sgang pa) was staying in the rocky cave at the back of Ti se Shel 'dra below the rock that looked like a meditation hat, it happened one day that the Ti se *zhing skyong* ("local protector"), having transformed himself into seven Indian *yogin*, came to prostrate in front of him. They offered him [a piece of] gold as large as a deer's head. The *rdo rje 'dzin pa* said: "I am a *rnal 'byor*, one who has renounced worldly life; therefore, I do not need any precious gold", [and] he did not accept it. At that time, sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po actually appeared in the sky in front of him riding a white lioness and spoke the following words: "Son, remove your doubt, *rnal 'byor pa*! Accept the auspiciousness of this offering [given by] the *zhing skyong*, the god who has pledged [support]"."

The donation, offered by the local secular rulers, with whom the 'Bri gung pa had established *yon mchod*, was accepted. Also see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (n.685). With the gold given to him by Ti se lHa btsan, Ghu ya gangs pa built rGyang grags, the main 'Bri gung pa monastery at the mountain, sited within the inner *skor lam*, sometime after wood pig 1215, the year the *rdor 'dzin* reached Gangs Ti se.

16. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.81 line 23-p.82 line 3): "lHo 'Dzam bu'i gling gi bde skyid thams cad 'byung ba'i gnas/ Klu'i rgyal po Ma dros pas bdag byas longs spyod phun sum tshogs pa (p.82) 'bad med lhun grub tu 'byung/ Bod kyi sa skyong chen po thams cad dang/ rGya dkar nag/ Mi nyag Gar log/ Hor la sogs pa'i rgyal po chen po thams cad kyis kyang zhabs la gus pas gtugs shing 'bul ba bgyis//"; "Klu'i rgyal po Ma dros pa from the holy place where peace and happiness of lHo 'Dzam bu'i gling originates, was the patron. Abundant wealth (p.82) effortlessly and spontaneously came. All the great protectors of the land of Tibet, and all the great kings of [countries] such as rGya dkar nag (India and China), Mi nyag, Gar log and Hor bowed to ['Jig rten mgon po] with reverence and made offerings".

17. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.14a lines 4-5): "Klu rgyal po Ma dros pa dug sprul chen po'i gzugs kyis 'ongs nas mngon sum du chos nyan/ dus geig la sku lus bcu gsum sprul nas/ Kha che, Hor and Mi nyag sogs/ 'Dzam gling gi rgyal po chen po bcu gsum btul//"; "After taking form as the body of a huge poisonous snake, Klu rgyal po Ma dros pa, indeed received teachings [from 'Jig rten mgon po]. After manifesting himself in thirteen bodies at the same time, ['Jig rten mgon po] subjugated thirteen great kings of 'Dzam bu gling, including Kha che, Hor and Mi nyag".

beyond a claim of religious authority, for 'Jig rten mgon po's biographies do not fail to remember his help in protecting Byang Mi nyag from the invasions of Jing gir rgyal po, which he did for twelve years until the *karma* of the Tangut kingdom was exhausted.¹⁸

'Jig rten mgon po was keen to establish contacts with the rulers of those lands and to introduce their people to his teachings in order to secure the diffusion of his own doctrine and the survival of his school in territories beyond the traditional sphere of activity of his clan, masters and associates.

Such an opportunity offered the other advantage of an increased authority over the Tibetan lands and the one of attracting to his school the best potential disciples who could then develop their spiritual capacities and count on full support from the regional powers to promote their religious and secular enterprises.

Assuming that these events took place in the period 1181-1191, given that the episode appears in '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* after the foundation of 'Bri gung in 1179 (ibid. f.13b lines 5-6), they must have occurred between 'Jig rten mgon po's sojourn in Byang thang dating to 1181 (ibid. f.14a lines 1-2) (see below n.20) and the first wave of *ri pa*-s sent to La phyi, Tsa ri and Gangs ri in 1191. In those years the king of Kashmir was Jassaka (1180-1198) (Dutt, *The Rajatarangini of Jonaraja* p.7-8); the Hor king was Jing gir rgyal po; and the king of Mi nyag was Rin sha'o (1139-1193). For Rin sha'o see the Tibetan translation of the chapter of the *Sung Annals* concerning Mi nyag in sTag lha Phun tshogs bkra shis, *rGya'i yig tshang nang gsal ba'i Bod kyi rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (in particular p.542 lines 8-16) and Evgenij Ivanovic Kycanov, "Il grande stato di Xia (982-1227 d.C.). L'impero tanguto".

18. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, '*Jig rten mgon po'i ling tshe rnam thar* (p.31 lines 9-12): "De nas Mi nyag gi rgyal pos sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon mjal te/ gos chen dang gser phul nas gsol ba btab par/ 'Jig rten mgon pos rten 'brel mdzad pas/ Mi nyag gi rgyal khams lo bcu gnyis kyi bar du bde bar byung/ de mtshon par byed pa Mi nyag gi rgyal po sogs ser po can gyis mchod pa 'bul ba yin/"; "Then, the king of Mi nyag met sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon and addressed a prayer to him with an offering of brocade and gold. Since 'Jig rten mgon po established karmic ties [with him], the Mi nyag kingdom was peaceful for twelve years. This is an indication that the king of Mi nyag, wearing a golden brocade [robe], made an offering [to 'Jig rten mgon po]".

Given that 'Jig rten mgon po protected Me nyag for twelve years, it must be that he accomplished this feat for the last twelve years of his life, corresponding to 1206-1217, when this kingdom was under Mongol pressure. It may have been only fortuitous, but fire tiger 1206, the first year of the period of twelve during which I suggest that 'Jig rten mgon po's protection of Me nyag occurred, coincided with the ascension to the local throne of a new king. He is named rNam rgyal in the chapter of the *Sung Annals* dedicated to Me nyag (see its Tibetan translation in sTag lha Pun tshogs bkra shis, *rGya'i yig tshang nang gsal ba'i Bod kyi rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* p.542 line 17-p.543 line 1) and Sho ho in the *Ti shri ras pa'i rnam thar* found in *IHo rong chos 'byung* p.215 lines 1-2). Both sources assign to him the same regnal period (1206-1211). In 1206, the year of his ascension to the throne, the Hor troops invaded Me nyag but the raid was inconsequential. sKyob pa rin po che's protection must have covered part of the reign of the next king named Tshung shi in the former source and rGyal rgod in the latter. This ruler died in 1225 according to the chapter of the *Sung Annals* dedicated to Me nyag, or in 1226 according to *Ti shri ras pa'i rnam thar*.

'Jig rten mgon po also saved rDo rje gdan from the threat posed to it by Muslim invaders (see, e.g., bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* p.78 lines 17-18).

The bKa' brgyud pa system thus required the support of secularism in the service of the school and, consequently, their exercise of strong influence over the secular powers was conceived with a significant difference from the *chos srid zun brel* system adopted in Tibet in a different period of its history. I do not mean the Sa skya pa so much, whose power was controlled by the Yuan higher authority during the Mongol period, but especially dGa' ldan pho brang.

The bKa' brgyud pa formula implied a division of religious and secular authority, for no attempt was made to substitute themselves for the local potentates. At most they inclined towards adding their authority to that of the locals. As its formulation aptly indicates, the *chos srid zung 'brel* system of dGa' ldan pho brang envisaged instead that the two powers had to rest in the same hands, which amounted to theocratic rule. No wonder that, when the Sa skya pa, with the authorisation of their Yuan overlords, rose to the status of both religious and secular rulers of Tibet, keeping the two roles separate though, they came into a collision route particularly with the 'Brigung pa.

'*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* confirms this analysis, though it sets about its argumentation in a slightly different way, still not too distant from the conditions that led 'Jig rten mgon po to his choice I have been discussed a few lines above. '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* says that, after 'Jig rten mgon po founded 'Bri gung (1179), there were two types of reasons that led to the dispersion of the monks to the mountains. A spiritual reason and a mundane reason. The spiritual reason was that sending them to hermitages in the mountains was a way to improve their religious practice. The mundane reason was to provide for their subsistence not only in dBus where 'Bri gung was located but to involve powers far and near to participate in their support.¹⁹

19. *Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.15a line 2-f.15b line 2): "De ltar chos rje 'Bri gung pa dgung lo so bdun pa sa mo phag gi lor gZho stod 'Bri gung Thel kyi dgon pa btab pas lo der dge 'dun brya lhag tsam byung/ de nas rim gyis je 'phel je 'phel du song nas dgung lo so dgu bzhes pa'i tshes dge 'dun stong tsha bcu gsum du longs sogs/ de'i tshes nges don du sgrub gnas khyad par can gyi sgo 'byed cing bstan pa rgyas pa'i ched du dang/ drang don du dge 'dun gyi tshogs grangs mang ba la thugs sun pa'i tshul mdzad nas dgon pa'i shar phyogs Tsha 'ug ces bya ba'i lung stong du byol thabs kyis phebs shing/ gsung mgur las/ nga la gra pa zhig yod pa bem po song/ 'di phyi'i dgos pa bsam mkhan med/ 'khor lang long mang po bskyans pas phung/ bdag rnal 'byor pa ri khrod kyi (f.15b) dgon pa 'grim/ nga la spyod lam zhig yod pa tshes 'dir shor/ mi chos kyi mdun ma bsgrub sgrub nas/ dad ldan gyi slob ma bslu bslu 'dra/ bdag rnal 'byor pa ri khrod kyi dgon pa 'grim//; "Likewise, when chos rje 'Bri gung pa was thirty-seven in earth female pig (1179), he founded the monastery of gZho stod 'Bri gung Thel. In that year, there were over one hundred monks. Subsequently, [the monastic population] grew progressively bigger. When he was thirty-nine years old (1181), it reached [the number of] 13,000. At that time, in terms of the ultimate truth (*nges don*), in order to open the door of extraordinary meditation places and to diffuse the teachings, [and] in terms of the relative truth (*drang don*), since he was irritated by the large size of the monastic congregation, he went away to the empty valley called Tsha 'ug to the east of the monastery. According to the song he sang: "I have monks who turn out to be inconsiderate people (*bem po*). There is no one who thinks about the needs of today and tomorrow. It is a disaster having to take care of many careless disciples. I, a *yogin*, have left for a monastery which is a

This essay of mine will confirm that in the system of the 'Bri gung pa there was almost invariably a spiritual and a mundane reason, and one aim I assign to myself is to examine individual cases and assess, for each of them, whether one reason prevailed over the other.

▪ The first attempts

In iron ox 1181, soon after the foundation of 'Bri gung but ten years before he sent the first group of *ri pa*-s to the hermitages (1191), sKyob pa rin po che rehearsed a stratagem that was meant to convince the monks to accept his decision to disperse them to distant hermitages. He also rehearsed his own version of the *bla ma*/patron relation by experimenting on some local rulers of Byang thang the peculiar approach which would become his trademark. His relation with a patron is not yet defined as *yon mchod*, a notion commonly used during the 13th and 14th centuries, which was opposite to the concept of *chos srid zung 'brel*. Hence the events of 1181 were the laboratory to establish some fundamental principles that he adopted in the years to come.²⁰

hermitage. (f.15b) I have a lifestyle (*spyod lam*) which must be abandoned in this existence. Since I consistently practise (*bsgrub bsgrub*) the expedients (*mdun* sic for '*dun ma*) of lay rule (*mi chos*), it is as if I am constantly deceiving those disciples who are faithful. I, a *yogin*, have left for a monastery which is a hermitage".

The attribution of these events to 1181 is probably incorrect, for the external evidence provided by the other sources (see n.31) date them to ten years later, in iron pig 1191. Evidence internal to the passage seems to disprove the date 1181. It is unlikely that, despite the figures of the monastic community being grossly inflated in all the sources dealing with them, it should be ruled out that the 'Bri gung community grew so exponentially in the span of no more than three years.

Given that the foundation of 'Bri gung is mentioned at the beginning of the passage cited in this note, I quote another one from the same source ('*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* f.12a lines 3-4) on the origin of the name of 'Bri gung: "Yul de ni sngon chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po'i blon po 'Bri Se ru gung ston gyis bzung pa'i yul yin pas 'Bri gung zhes 'bod!"; "Since, in antiquity, this locality was the locality controlled by chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po's minister 'Bri Se ru gung ston, it was known as 'Bri gung".

20. 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas, '*Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.101 line 4-p.102 line 6): "De'i dus su dgung lo sum cu rtsa sum zhes so btsan po Thang lde dang 'Od lde la sogs pa lngas bcus gdan drangs na Nam ra la dgun smad de dang dbyar ca ge bzhugs te byang skid ma mi skye ba'i yul du nas kyi brgya 'bul dang bsnyen bkur dang zhabs tog dpag tu med pa byung te phye ma phur ma chen po yang byas pa yul du gser gdugs sgrub mi yang btang dbyar de tshul du bzhugs pa sum brgya byung ngo nyin cig gso sbyong gi dus su dge 'dun ma 'tshogs pas bka' bkyon nas da phyin chad gso sbyong mi byed zhes gsungs pas tshangs pa mi mdzad gyi bdag po byung nas zhu ba phul nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor la yang 'ja' tshon chung ngu bskor ba je chel nam mkha' khyab par gyur bas nga'i bstan yang 'di kho na 'drabs thams cad du khyad par 'ong zhes gsung ngo de nas thugs dgongs la mi med pa'i sa cig tu sgom par 'dod nas bros kyang dge 'dun la bros par 'dug 'dir bsdad na btsad po'i mnga' ris su song bas rab tu byung (p.102) ba mi 'ong nad pa dang gcong can mang po'ang bar 'dug tshogs skyong ba la 'Bri gung dga' bar 'dug pas bzhud par dgongs te nas mang po yod pa yang btang rgyug zad par byas nas brgyags med nged 'gro ba yin byas pa la jo Thang na re rgyag la tshogs med ngas ru ba 'dir bsdu khyim re re rab tu byung ba re bla mchod byed cing bzhugs par zhu zer nas ma btang skabs der gnas brtan Blo gros gzhon nu

dang dge bshes Sar pa la sogs pa Phag mo gru pa'i gdan 'dren byung bas snyad de la btags nas mkhan slob bgres po rnam gnyis dang mjal ba dang gdan sar lan cig mi 'gro kha med de nas byang du 'byon par chad de de nas tshur byon no lam du lHo pa lHa bzher gyis zhabs tog chen po byas 'Dam du 'Dan ma'i 'gron po bDo A dbyang mGo 'khor chos rgyal la sogs pa phyug po mang po dang phrad nas mi chos rnam la sna len ston mo cig mdzad par bzheng nas thud mang du bzung ba la thams cad kyis phyag rten dar leb re byas nor phul na bla ma bzheng par 'dug ste nged bu smad gsong go zer nas 'bul ba ma byas tshong dus su phyin pa dang thams cad kyis kha log khyed la bla ma 'di 'dra ba yod pa la khyed kyis ja log gcig ma phul khyed mi min zer bas 'khyod par gyur te de nas 'Bri gung du byon nas lo gnyis kyis bar du dge 'dun gyi tshogs bskyags dge 'dun mang po yang byung/'; "At that time ['Jig rten mgon po (b.1143)] was thirty-nine years old (1181). He was invited by fifty [dignitaries], such as btsad po Thang lde and 'Od lde [to visit them]. He spent the late part of winter and one summer at Nam ra. A *brgya 'bul* ("offering of one hundred") of barley, great respect and uncountable acts of service took place [in his honour] in the land of Byang where *sgyid ma* ("cultivations"?) do not grow. A huge [quantity of] *phye ma phur ma* (*Tshig mdzod*, "a type of scented powder for offerings") was also made. He also sent [people] to make a golden umbrella in Bal yul. That summer 300 [persons] entered into the moral [law] (*tshul du zhugs*) (i.e. took vows). One day, the monks did not gather when he performed the restoration of the vow (*gso sbyong*) and he rebuked them: "I will not restore [your] vow from now on". Having said so, since he appeared to them as a pure [and] fearless lord, they pleaded with him [for forgiveness]. The circle of the sun surrounded by a small rainbow became bigger and eventually covered the sky. He said: "My teachings are exactly like that, and will come to pervade everywhere". Then, since he wished to meditate in a place where there were no human beings, he thought: "If I leave, I will go away from my monks. If I stay here, I will become the subject of the king, and no people who take the monk vow (p.102) will come. 'Bri gung is preferable in order to protect the assembly, given that there are many with diseases and [other forms of] suffering". Thinking to leave, he sent [to 'Bri gung] much barley he had there. Having said: "I have run out of supplies. I have no more supplies. I am leaving", jo Thang [lde] replied: "There is no problem with supplies. I will gather them from this *ru ba* ("nomadic encampment"). [You] should give the monk vow to one person in each household, and be [my] *bla mchod*. I beg you to stay", and did not let him go. At that time, gnas brtan Blo gros gzhon nu and dge bshes gSar pa came with an invitation from the Phag mo gru pa. He used this as a pretext, since going to the *gdan sa* (i.e. gDan sa thel) was unavoidable. Seeing, at the same time, that both the *mkhan po* and his disciple were old, it was [earlier] agreed that ['Jig rten mgon po] should go to Byang and then back [to gDan sa 'thel and 'Bri gung]. On the way, lHo pa lHa bzher rendered him a great service. At 'Dam, he met many wealthy men, such as bDo (spelled so) A dbyang mGo 'khor chos rgyal, the '*gron po* (lit. "traveller", i.e. "newcomer" or "temporary resident"?) from 'Dan ma, and these lay people (*mi chos rnam la*, *la* should be cut and *mi chos* made the subject) proposed to offer a feast [as a sign of their] hospitality. Despite having much cheese, all of them gave him a large scarf as a present. Having said: "If we offer him precious things, the *bla ma* will accept them, but we need to maintain [our] families", they did not give him offerings. Those who went [there] for trading criticised them saying: "You have such a *bla ma* here, and do not even offer him a single brick of tea. You are not men", so that they repented. Then ['Jig rten mgon po] went to 'Bri gung and protected the monastic assembly for two years. Many monks came".

The presence of a bKa' brgyud pa master was not a complete novelty in the area where btsad po Thang lde and 'Od lde were the rulers. 'Ba' rom, one of the earliest monasteries built by the disciples of Phag mo gru pa, was founded by 'Ba' rom pa Dar ma dbang phyug in water bird 1151, thirty years before the events recorded in this note.

At that time, he was the guest of *btsad po* Thang lde and 'Od lde, local lords of the area of Nam ra between gNam mtsho and A mdo rdzong of Nag chu kha in eastern Byang thang,²¹ and said to be descendants of the illegitimate *lha sras btsan po* who ruled after the collapse of the dynasty and the loss of the empire.²²

The reasons for his presence in this territory are made clear by a significant combination of statements and thoughts that he made public during that period, all summing up his lifetime agenda. One of his intentions was to expand the 'Bri gung community. He told the people who became his followers on that occasion that his teachings would become all-pervasive as the sky. He also saw his role, despite his effort to be a living example of the bKa' brgyud pa hermit tradition, as that of a *bla ma* who had to take care of his monastery and attract as many followers as possible to 'Bri gung, which implied the concern of providing subsistence to his school's monks.

He thus used the resources he had received from his Nam ra *sbyin bdag-s* for the sustenance of the freshly established monastic community at 'Bri gung. In turn, sKyo pa 'Jig rten mgon po expected his monks to adopt the traditional bKa' brgyud pa values he

Another noticeable issue raised by these accounts is that the first attempt made by 'Jig rten mgon po to have a precious umbrella made to be a canopy over his throne was made as early as 1181. This turned out to be a major enterprise brought to fruition by his disciples during their missions to Bal po, where they went to fulfil this task, in the years to come—almost two decades later—as is shown profusely below (p.108-125).

21. Ten years later in the eventful 1191, a king of Byang and his younger brother—were they from Nam ra?—are mentioned in *Khro phu lo tsa ba'i rnam phar thar pa*, which shows that they had contacts with the great master famous for the statue of Byams pa he built at his *dgon pa*. The biography (p.193 lines 3-4) says: “De nas lo nyi shu tham pa la yang 'Dul ba'i 'phro mnyan nas Khro phur 'ongs pa'i tshes bsnen rdzogs byed pa mang po'i las chog byas/ Byang gi btsad po g. Yu rtse'i gcung po lHa lde po bya ba bsnen rdzogs byed pa'i las chog byas pa'i snye ba 'khor rang yin snyam byed gsung/”, “Then at the age of twenty (1191), upon pondering the diffusion of 'Dul ba, when [Khro phu lo tsa ba Byams pa'i dpal] went to Khro phu, he authorised the karma of many to have the *bsnyen rdzogs* [vow]. lHa lde po, the younger brother of the king of Byang, g. Yu rtse, leaned towards a *karma* permissible to receive the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow. [Khro phu lo tsa ba] said: “I think he is one who should receive it”.”

22. 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas, 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar shows that progeny of the last illegitimate *lha sras btsan po-s* ended up settling in this part of Byang thang. Given the available literature on the descendants of Yum brtan and 'Od srung, it is impossible to establish to which of the two lineages *btsad po* Thang lde and 'Od lde belonged. It is mere speculation to consider them to have more probably belonged to the progeny of Yum brtan because he controlled dBu ru which borders on the gNam mtsho tract of Byang thang (*Nyang ral chos 'byung* p.446 line 21-p.447 line 8 and Vitali, “The Role of Clan Power in the Establishment of Religion (from the *kheng log* of the 9th-10th century to the instances of the dByil of La stod and gNyos of Kha rag”). Yum brtan's son Khri lde mgon btsan divided his dominions among his two sons. The unnamed descendants of the younger son, Nyi 'od dpal mgon, were by the fourth generation after Yum brtan in control of Klung shod, 'Phan yul— lands of dBu ru north of lHa sa—and mDo stod (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston* p.433 line 20).

propounded, foremost among them being purity of practice and meditation at hermitages.

One principle he set at that time in his relations with the secular lords with whom he interacted was that of avoiding being the officiating *bla ma* of any secular lord in line with the principle of hermit life. This is confirmed by his meeting with a number of important kings of his time, which never required his presence at any court, and by the role of emissaries that some of his disciples assumed without a stable presence at the courts that they visited (see below n.208 and n.218).

The adventures of his disciple 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa (1180-1240) who experienced several difficulties and even ordeals in order to comply with 'Jig rten mgon po's order not to become the *mchod gnas* of the king of the Tanguts in Byang Mi nyag—he was rgyal po rGyal rgod—where he was sent by his teacher, is a meaningful case in point (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.502 line 6-p.510 line 1). It could seem contradictory that 'Jig rten mgon po did not mind sending his people to attend upon powerful rulers but at the same time made it clear that they should not commit themselves to a binding relationship with them. This attitude bespoke a lucid awareness of the situation prevailing within his school. 'Jig rten mgon po's wish was to secure autonomy for himself and his followers, so that no secular ruler could exercise too much influence over 'Bri gung, but at the same he needed these rulers to obtain practical support for his monastery and community.

The creation of the office of the 'Bri gung *sgom pa* served the purpose of establishing a secular outlet for 'Bri gung so that they could run the mundane affairs in symbiosis with the kingdoms that supported his monastery and monks.²³ The motive for creating the 'Bri gung

23. bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.79 lines 10-16): “rTogs ldan Mi nyag sGom rin gyi dgong pa nye gnas kyi phul bar phyag phab ste dang por Brag Rin chen can gyi phug par bzhugs/ dgung lo so bdun pa sa phag lor gdan sa chen po dpal 'Bri gung Byang chub gling gi chos sde 'di nyid btab cing Thog kha gSer khang dang/ Bla g.yel chen po sogs rim gyis brtsigs/ dpon sgom pa rDo rje seng ge 'phrin las kyi byed por bskos/”; “Once he was entrusted with the monastery of rtogs ldan Mi nyag bsGom (spelled so) rin by one [of the latter's] *nye gnas*, ['Jig rten mgon po] went there. Initially, he stayed at the cave at Brag Rin chen. He founded gdan sa chan po dpal 'Bri gung Byang chub gling chos sde in earth pig (1179), when he was thirty-seven years old. He built [its] gSer khang on the upper floor and Bla g.yel chen po, one after another. He appointed dpon sgom pa rDo rje seng ge to be the officer of secular activities”.

The passage associates the creation of the 'Bri gung *sgom pa* to the early years after 'Jig rten mgon po's second foundation of the monastery after that by Mi nyag sGom rin. However, Sperling (“Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa” p.34) convincingly proves that rDo rje seng ge could not have been appointed head of the monastery's secular affairs in 1179, for he was born between the years 1199 and 1210. Hence there is no precise date to which the introduction of the office of lay chieftain of 'Bri gung can be assigned.

In his quotation on the same page of a passage from *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng*, Sperling omits the sentence concerning the construction of 'Bri gung gSer khang and Bla g.yel. This is why he refers the introduction of the secular post at 'Bri gung to the 1179 foundation year of the monastery. As unreliable as it is, the date 1179 for the adoption of the secular post at 'Bri gung should be related to the completion of 'Bri gung gSer khang and Bla g.yel which, according to *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (see below n.89), took place in 1195. Still this chronology is

sgom pa institution differed drastically from that behind the Sa skya *dpon chen*, which was introduced to represent the interests of the head of the Sa skya pa in his absence from Tibet and, in the course of time, of his Mongol imperial overlords.

▪ The background of the bKa' brgyud pa schools' distinctiveness

While rje btsun Mid la was the great meditator who opened the door of Gangs Ti se, his followers had a different perspective which combined the need to live a hermit's life with the need to foster a growing monastic community, and this latter aim was definitely extraneous to the poet-saint's practice and lifestyle. He moved from hermitage to hermitage with a small group of ascetics.

'Jig rten mgon po and other masters of the bKa' brgyud pa schools embraced a strategy of adapting rje btsun Mid la's ideals to the needs of a religious community which had taken shape, in the meantime, to follow the instructions of sGam po pa (1040-1123), which Phag mo gru pa (1110-1170) then transmitted to his own disciples. The followers had passed from a small group that lived with the master Mid la to a large community dispersed in places far away from dBus, the operational base of most of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools—the Phag mo gru pa, 'Ba' rom pa, Tshal pa, 'Bri gung pa, 'Brug pa, sTag lung pa etc, at the beginning of their history but not the Karma pa.

No clues are found in the sources to explain the reasons that led Phag mo gru pa to tell his disciples to go and meditate at Gangs Ti se, except that he had received an exhortation from Dwags po lHa rje who urged meditators to pursue their practice at Tsa ri, La phyi and Gangs ri.²⁴ sGam po pa considered this activity to be commendable despite the absence of hermit life

unreliable given the chronological assessment provided by Sperling that rDo rje seng ge must have been born between 1199 and 1210.

No improvements are provided by bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan's '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* which offers evidence substantially supportive of Sperling's appraisal. In the biography of rDo rje seng ge's brother, bSod nams grags pa, the second '*Bri gung gdan sa*, the '*Bri gung pa* author mentions the abbot as the eldest of the three brothers, and cites his birth date as 1199. He is followed by rDo rje seng ge and the youngest, gCung rin po che, without giving the birth dates of these two brothers. The text (ibid. p.108 lines 6-10) reads: "rJe sKyob pa rin po che'i yab kyi mched dKon mchog rin chen gyi sras A nye ma grags la sras dBon rin po che/ dbon brgyud pa rDo rje seng ge/ gCung rin po che bcas gsum 'khrungs las/ che ba dBon rin po che nyid/ sGa yul Non 'dzam 'ong lung zhes par/ sa mo lug gi lor sku ltams//"; "The son born to dKon mchog rin chen, the brother of rje sKyob pa rin po che's father, was A nye A grags, whose sons were dBon rin po che (i.e. bSod nams grags pa); rDo rje seng ge, the lineage perpetuator; and gCung rin po che. Among them, the eldest, dBon rin po che, was born at sGa yul Non 'jam 'Om bu lung in earth female sheep 1199".

Given the fluctuation in the assessment of the secular role attributed to rDo rje seng ge, it is unclear whether the title *sgom pa* borne by the secular chieftain of the '*Bri gung pa* school was already adopted at the time the monastery's foundation or else at a later time in the days of this dignitary when he had become adult. The difference in years is conspicuous.

24. *Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.23a lines 2-3): "De'i res su eje sGam po pas/ 'gro mgon Phag mo

at the three great holy places during his own generation or perhaps because of this omission. Phag mo gru pa is not credited by the literature with any particular concern for the mountain. Hence it is difficult to ascertain the actual thrust of his injunction to the disciples whether it was a facultative instruction given to them or one that they had to respect by all means.

It is equally difficult to establish how much 'Jig rten mgon po's enterprise was dictated to him by a genuine urgency to establish his school at some of the most focal pilgrimage places of Tibet, as wished by Phag mo gru pa. Or how much the pressing need to provide subsistence to his followers eventually led him to combine the two factors, as stated by 'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus.

One indication of his genuine intention to include Gangs Ti se among the focal places of the 'Bri gung pa practice is an aborted attempt which he made to go to the mountain. Both the 'Jig rten mgon po'i rnam thar-s penned by 'Bri gung gling pa ('Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar and *Ling tshe*) say that sKyob pa rin po che tried secretly to go to Gangs Ti se.²⁵

gru pa la/ Tsa ri/ La phyi/ Gangs ri gsum du rgyun ma mchad tsam sgrub pa brgyud kyis 'dzin phyir ri pa gtong tshul gsungs//"; "Thereafter, rje sGam po pa told Phag mo gru pa: "Ri pa-s should be sent to Tsa ri, La phyi and Gangs ri, altogether three, in order to pursue the instructions belonging to the uninterrupted meditation transmission"."

One should note that sGam po pa did not practise the advice that he gave to Phag mo gru pa and did not show any particular interest for Gangs Ti se since he did not follow the example of his teacher rje btsun Mid la.

25. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar (p.97 line 4-p.98 line 4): "De nas Kheng so la byon te sNa tsha Li sos gser gyi Nyi khri phul de nas Myang por gnas brtan Gro lod kyis gdan drangs nas zhabs tog rgya chen po byas nas tshur byon nas Ti se la bzhud par bzhed pas Byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi spun zla' mgo phul nas bzhugs zla ba geig mtshams mdzad gzims spyil yang byas yang bzhud par bzhed nas dpal chen rDo rje ye shes su bzhag ste dpon g.yog lnga rta gsum mtshan mo bros nas phyin pa la 'Brong bu la rtser bya nag mang po 'phur nas byung bas thugs dam mdzad tho la cig 'tsigs nas mda' 'ong par 'dug te 'di ka chings yin da lan 'di yan chad ngu ra mda' byung ngad rnal 'byor pa ma yin gsung ngo der dpal rDo rje ye shes dud pa chen po btang ba dang thang ba med par phyag byas pas yid ma (p.98) ches jo btsun rGya mtshos yang mgon du phyin pas bzhud pa tshor nas du dud dBus dge 'dun bsdus nas drug tsha rgya pa bdun cu ra mda' la phyin pas jo btsun gyi rta 'thengs thams cad ma mthun te ra mda' ma byung ngo de nas dbu thod pa bcings sku la na bza' phying pa gsol chibs la bcibs nas byon pas Si ri rong pas mthong ste la la ci brer lung lung ci zer nas mdun du brgyugs pas tshub ma chen po cig tu gyur nas bzhud de sus kyang ma mthong ngo der rim so rnams kyis shol bteb yang ma gnang bar bzhud do cog rtse la kar pha tshan gsum gyi ru ba la byon nas mun yang sros su nye lhags pa yang langs mthun rkyen yang nyung bas mtshan nas smos te byed pa yin no byas pa la bya rgod la sgom thebs pa de e yin zer yin byas pas de 'dir mi 'ong zer nas te tsom du gyur//"; "[Jig rten mgon po] then went to Kheng so, and sNa tsha Li so ("Li so from the sNa [family]") offered him a *Nyi khri* written in gold. Then, gnas brtan Gro lod invited him to Myang po. He rendered an extensive service and [then] came back. Having decided to proceed to Ti se, he stayed on and meditated for one month because he was offered the head of Byang chub rgyal mtshan's brothers (i.e. they were offered as disciples). Despite that a residential hut was even made [for him], he decided to proceed [to Gangs Ti se]. The five *dpon g.yog* fled at night on three horses leaving behind dPal chen rDo rje ye shes. On the way, many black birds came flying over the top of the

The way the episode is told in these works is obscure. After he departed with an extremely small group of companions for the journey, horsemen went in pursuit of him. The reason for this desperate effort to stop him, which he wanted to foil, is not mentioned but his presence at 'Bri gung was much needed. The concluding events of the attempt to reach Gangs Ti se are also omitted in the sources, but one must surmise that 'Jig rten mgon po did not make it to the mountain. The omens were not propitious, and he returned back long before reaching his destination. How much he was determined to follow his *bla ma*'s wish or was driven by his own intention is not possible to know. However, I am inclined to believe that 'Jig rten mgon po followed Phag mo gru pa's advice. Not a single piece of evidence is available suggesting that the authenticity of the words that rDo rje rgyal po spoke to his two main disciples about

'Brong bu pass. He checked the signs (*thugs dam sic for thugs rtags*) and built a [*lha*] *tho*. He said: "This is to tie to a pillar (*ka chings*, i.e. to the *lha tho*) those in the pursuit of us. If, this time, those in the pursuit of us go beyond this [point], I am not a *rnal 'byor pa*". At the time, dPal rDo rje ye shes was making much smoke, tirelessly offering prostrations and appeasing (*ches sic for bca' ba?*) the *yi dam*. (p.98) Jo btsun rGya mtsho too went to meditate where he realised that ['Jig rten mgon po] had left. The conch shell was blown and the monks gathered. Seventy *drug tsha rgya pa* (?) went in the pursuit of him, but the horse of the *jo btsun* limped and none of them could adjust [to such a slow pace]. Thus, it happened that they did not go in the pursuit of him. Then, ['Jig rten mgon po] tied a turban around his head. For bodily dress, he wore a felt cloak. He mounted a horse to leave. The Si ri rong pa saw him. Some said: "What is that?", some turned up (*lung lung sic for long long?*) saying: "What is that?", and rushed in front of him. But since there was a big storm, he left and no one noticed [him leaving] at all. At the time, his attendants (*rim so*) had wanted to cancel [the journey], but he refused and left. As he reached the *ru ba* ("nomadic camp") of the Pha tshan gsum ("the three paternal families") at Cog rtse la dkar, it was getting dark. It was almost dusk, the wind was blowing, and his provisions were scarce. He said: "I will perform recitations", and [the locals] asked him: "Is this a meditation focused on birds of prey (*bya rgod*)?". He replied: "It is", and they retorted: "These do not come here", and he began to have doubts".

The end of the episode shows that 'Jig rten mgon po, upon reaching the nomadic camp of the Pha tshan gsum and finding the omens inauspicious, decided to turn back.

'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten mgon po'i ling tshe rnam thar* (p.31 lines 13-19) is more laconic: "sKyob pa rin po che Gangs Ti se la gsang ltabs kyi byon pa'i tshes/ jo btsun rGya mtshos shes nas Yang dgon du phyin/ dge 'dun rnams bsdus nas rta pa bdun cus rab mda' la phyin/ sKyob pa rin po che dpon slob rta pa lnga po 'Brong bu la rtsar 'byor skabs/ bya nag mang po 'phur nas byung/ der thugs dam mdzad de thog gcig brtsigs nas rab mda' 'ong par 'dud ste 'di jag chings yin/ 'di yan la byung na nga rnal 'byor pa min pa'i rtags yin gsung/ de nas rab mda' sne khrid pa jo btsun gyi rta'i rkang pa 'things pa dang/ nang 'khor phan tshun ma thun pas rab mda' ma byung/"; "When sKyob pa rin po che secretly went to Gangs Ti se, jo btsun rGya mtsho came to realise this and went to Yang dgon. The monks having been gathered, seventy horsemen went in the pursuit of him. When sKyob pa rin po che, the master and disciples, [altogether] five horsemen, arrived at the foot of the 'Brong phu pass, many black birds came flying [above]. He checked the signs (*thugs dam sic for thugs rtags*) and built a [*lha*] *tho*. He said: "There are people in the pursuit of us, and this is to block those bandits. If they come beyond here, this would be the sign that I am not a *rnal 'byor pa*". Thereafter, the legs of the horse of the *jo btsun*, the leader of those in pursuit, limped, and since [the pace] within the group [of pursuers] was not the same, they did not go in pursuit of him".

his desire that Gangs Ti se should be frequented by meditators should be dismissed. It would thus seem that it was Phag mo gru pa who propounded a veritable sanctification of rje btsun Mid la ras pa's lifestyle and practice by urging his own disciples to follow in the great poet-saint's footsteps.

▪ The first contacts with local lords and 'Jig rten mgon po's stratagem

According to the 'Bri gung pa material, Phag mo gru pa gave the same injunction to gTsang pa rGya ras Ye she rdo rje (1161-1211), one of his main disciples, who was supposed to reach Gangs Ti se and meditate there, but he decided not to go when he was almost ready to leave.²⁶ The biographies of gTsang pa rGya ras thus seem to confirm, independently of the material on 'Jig rten mgon po, that Phag mo gru pa had actually advised his two main disciples to go to Ti se, and consequently that the actualisation of the principles of a life of retreat, as set by the example of rje btsun Mid la, was urged by Phag mo gru pa upon his followers indistinctly.

The difference of the outcome of Phag mo gru pa's injunction to his two disciples is that sKyob pa rin po che tried at least to go on pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se but was quick to abandon the enterprise as soon as some negative signs manifested. gTsang pa rGya ras did not even attempt to try but hurriedly renounced, moved by his wish to meet Zhang g.Yu brag pa.

26. *gTsang pa rGya ras kyi rnam thar (IHo rong chos 'byung* p.657 lines 11-12): "La phyi dang Ti se la 'byon par bzhed pa bshol/"; "He planned to proceed to La phyi and [Gangs] Ti se but canceled [the trip]".

Mon rtse pa, *gTsang pa rGya ras kyi rnam thar (dKar brgyud gser phreng* p.279 lines 4-6): "De nas sNga phur byon/ dbon po che sar 'don pa la sogs pa'i gdan sa'i grogs don zhabs su rcud nas/ Ti se la byon par byas/ gsangs nas yod de tsa na gzhan gyis thos nas/ grogs po dang bu slob rnams kyis gshol nan char btab nas mi thon/ sgom pa 'Gar dang/ Don grub spun la sogs pa dpon g.yog kha yar Bur phu'i ri la byon/ de dus kun tu na bza' ras kyang de gsol nas mgur 'ga' zhig len pas/ kun gyi yid phrogs snyan pa shin tu che bar yong skad/ de nas glang lo la bla ma Zhang dang mjal/"; "[gTsang pa rGya ras] then went to sNa phu. He entered the service of assisting the *gdan sa* such as [in the case of] the *dbon po*'s ascension to a higher rank, and then decided to go to Ti se but kept this secret. Matters being the way they were, this was [still] heard by some other people, so he did not leave, being earnestly requested by his friends and disciples to cancel [the journey]. The master and some disciples, including sGom pa 'Gar and the Don grub brothers, went to Bur phu'i ri. It is said that he wore a cotton robe at all times and only sang songs. Hearing them captivated everyone's mind in a remarkable way. Then, in the year of the ox (1193), he met bla ma Zhang".

Given the year in which gTsang pa rGya ras planned to go to Ti se, one realises that 'Jig rten mgon po was able to fulfil—albeit not personally—the wish of their teacher Phag mo gru pa before gTsang pa rGya ras's proposition to which he did not give course, having dispatched the first group of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s to the lands on the "upper side" in 1191 (see below p.112, n.29 and n.31). One needs to wonder whether gTsang pa rGya ras gave up the idea of the pilgrimage to the mountain and the lakes given the unsettled conditions in which mNga' ris skor gsum was in that year (see below p.156 and n.29).

Petech ("The Bri-gung-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh" p.315) subscribes to the statement in *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.23a line 5-f.23b line 1) that gTsang pa rGya ras went to Gangs Ti se indeed, a fact dismissed by gTsang pa rGya ras's biographies.

It would be ungenerous to attribute to only practical reasons 'Jig rten mgon po's superior determination, for his own example shows that he was moved by a concern for meditational practice, in a way typical of the bKa' brgyud pa.

The date of 'Jig rten mgon po's aborted journey to Gangs Ti se cannot be fixed with precision, but evidence provided by the sequence of events in his biography leads to sometime before 1181,²⁷ when he sojourned in Nam ra, and in the aftermath of his re-foundation of 'Bri gung (1179). In any case, it occurred several years before he sent his *ri pa*-s to Gangs Ti se and the other major rje btsun Mid la ras pa pilgrimage places in iron pig 1191, as will be shown below.

His attempt to journey to the mountain fell in the critical period for the peace and security of the stretch of lands in southern Byang thang as far as Pu hrang, lands that were being ravaged by major disturbances on the part of foreign invaders, which made the pilgrimage impracticable (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.367-371). Had secular conditions not been conducive to the opening of the meditational retreats, as they became several years after the death of 'gro mgon Phag mo gru pa, who could not send his disciples to those distant holy places, and following the foundation of 'Bri gung and Tshal Gung thang, rDo rje rgyal po's advice to his disciples would have gone unfulfilled.

'Jig rten mgon po's original plan was to accept disciples at his monastery up to one thousand meditators in addition to the monastic community at 'Bri gung also numbering one thousand. He thus envisaged the idea that the monastic community of 'Bri gung should be composed in equal proportion by disciples living at the monastery and in hermitages.

Sometime before 1191, the 'Bri gung assembly grew bigger than that (see above n.14 for its grossly inflated figure, which nevertheless indicates that it had surged to a considerable size).²⁸ In that year, he decided to send his best disciples to explore the possibility to open

27. The first date after 'Jig rten mgon po's failed attempt to go on a pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se is found in the following passage of 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.101 line 4): "De'i dus su dgung lo sum cu rtsa dgu bzhes so btsan po Thang lde dang 'Od lde la sogs pa lnga bcus dan drangs Na mar la dgun smad dang dbyar ca ge bzhuks/"; "At that time when ['Jig rten mgon po] was thirty-nine years old (b.1143, i.e. in 1181), he was invited by fifty people, including btsad po Thang lde and 'Od lde [for a visit]. He spent the late part of that winter and one summer at Nam ra" (see above n.20 for the full account of this episode). Hence, the sequence of 'Jig rten mgon po's activities of those years was that he founded his 'Bri gung dgon pa, then planned to leave for Gangs Ti se but eventually went to Nam ra in eastern Byang thang.

28. 'Bri gung not only grew in terms of monastic community but in importance, too, following the establishment of 'Jig rten mgon po's reputation. *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.14b lines 2-5): "rGya gar Wa ra na si rgyal po Gho tsa de wa dang rGya gar pan chen Bi shu ta tsandra sogs rgyal po dang pandi ta du mas 'Bri gung du dngos su byon nas zhabs la gtugs/ Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa dang grub thob Nyar re Se bo sogs grub thob pa'i gang zag mang pos kyang bla mar bskur/ sku che ba'i snyan pas rGya dkar nag sogs 'Dzam bu gling mtha' dag khyab/ dgung lo sum cu rtsa lnga nas bdun cu don lnga'i bar chos kyi 'khor lo bskor bas rgyal ba'i bstan pa rgyas par mdzad/"; "rGya gar Wa ra na si rgyal po Gho tsa de wa and rGya gar pan chen Bi shu ta tsandra,

“the door” to the meditational retreats and to disperse his monastic community to the hermitages at those localities. The biography of 'Jig rten mgon po by his nephew 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas says that sKyob pa rin po che assigned this task to Ngad phu pa, along with gNyos and dpal chen Chos ye among others—sGom She (spelled so), dpon sGom, ston 'Byung and slob dpon rGyal ba—without specifying the holy places to which they were sent.²⁹

sKyob pa rin po che had previously sounded out with the authorities of the lands where the pilgrimage places were located in order to gauge the local acceptance of his disciples in these remote areas. These potential *sbyin bdag*-s are allegorically garbed in the names of the local protectors (Ti se lHa btsan, La phyi Zhing skyong and Tsa ri Zhing skyong),³⁰ but there

many kings and *pandi ta*-s, actually went to 'Bri gung, and bowed to his feet. Many people who had obtained spiritual accomplishments, such as Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa and grub thob Nyar (spelled so for Nyag) re Se bo, respected him as their *bla ma*. The fame of this great man pervaded the whole of 'Dzam bu gling, including India and China. From when he was thirty-five (1177) until when he was seventy-five (1217), he turned the wheel of the teachings”.

The passage credits 'Jig rten mgon po with an activity of religious master from before the second foundation of 'Bri gung accomplished by him to his death. The passage also credits somewhat apologetically that famous religious personalities of the previous generation, such as Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193), the first Karma pa, and grub thog Nyag re Se bo Rin chen rgyal mtshan (?-1200 or 1201) bowed to his feet.

29. 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.105 lines 2-3): “dGe'dun yang stong du longs so/ de yang dang po nyid nas tshugs dgongs la sgom chen stong ma byung bar du bskyangs nas de nas thams cad ri khrod du gtong bar bzhed pas thog mar dPal chen dang/ sGom She dang/ dpon sGom/ ston 'Byung/ slob dpon rGyal ba/ slob dpon Ngad phu ba/ dge bshes gNyos dang bcas pa drag drag thams cad ri la btang nas lo cig na Rom po bdag lHa mo'i dge ba la gdan ma drangs so//”; “The monks had reached one thousand [in number]. Since ['Jig rten mgon po]'s thought in this regard from the very beginning to protect them until they would reach one thousand meditators, he decided to send everyone to hermitages. He initially sent out dpal chen Chos ye, sGom She (spelled so), dpon sGom, ston 'Byung, slob dpon rGyal ba, slob dpon Ngad phu ba and dge bshes gNyos. All the most eminent [meditators] were sent to the mountains. [Being away] from one year, they were not invited to the funerary rites (*dge ba*) of Rom po yon bdag lHa mo”.

The passage is meaningful in another respect. It indicates who were the best disciples of 'Jig rten mgon po as early as 1191, the first generation of his close followers. Among his most distinguished disciples of the next generation there were 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa and grub chen Seng ge ye shes, whose life and deeds I introduce below.

30. *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.15b line 3-f.16a line 4): “Nub gcig gi tshe ston pa Shakya thub pa'i bstan pa'i rgyun la dgongs nas gzhan snang dbang bsdud kyi rten 'brel dang ting nge 'dzin yud tsam zhig mdzad pas/ de ma thag Ti se lHa btsan/ La phyi Zhing skyong/ rTsa ri Zhing skyong gsum gtso gyur gyi Bod yul gangs ri'i khrod kyi gnas bdag gzhi bdag du ma zhig 'dus nas rje nyid kyi zhabs la phyag byas nas so so'i mchod gnas su gshegs par gsol to/ nged rje nyid kyis sku lus kyi sprul pa grangs med pa zhig bskyed nas so so'i gnas su rdzu 'phrul gyis yud tsam re phebs shing gnas de rnams thams cad zhabs kyis bcags (p.16a) nas gzhi bdag rnams la chos gsungs shing dam la bzhag/ de'i tshe mi ma yin de rnams kyis so so'i mchod gnas su gtan du bzhugs par zhus

is no reason not to identify them more prosaically with the local rulers. In the case of Gangs Ti se, Ti se lHa btsan seems to refer to the Pu hrang *jo bo* of that period, bTsan stobs lde, who in the end could not achieve much because the lands of which his kingdom was part were soon thereafter in disarray (*mNga' ris rgyal rabs* p.69 lines 8-9 in Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.121 and below p.33-34 for the causes of the unsettled time).

In that same iron pig 1191, sKyob pa rin po che went to Tsha yug to meditate—an example that, once set, created the conditions for the monks to accept hermit life in retreats. He did not return to sit on the throne of 'Bri gung without securing the consent of his monks to go on retreats and encourage substantial donations for the sustenance of his people, even after dPal chen Chos ye had to rush back from Tsa ri to Tsha yug but failed to convince him to return to his monastery.³¹ The urgency in calling him back stemmed from the fact that the 'Bri gung

pas rje'i zhal nas/ kho bo'i rnam smin gyi lus 'dis bla ma'i bka' bsgrub phyir sgrub pa byed pa dang/ dge 'dun gyi tshog skyong dgos pas na gtan du sdod mi khom zhes gsungs pa la/ 'o na chod gnas shig gtong bar zhus pas/ der gnas chen ri brag de rnam sgom chen ri khrod pa gtong bar zhal gyis bzhes so//"; "One night when he was meditating at that meditation cave (i.e. Ting 'dzin phug), he thought of the continuity of ston pa Shakya thub pa's teachings. He performed meditation for a while to establish a karmic nexus in order to bring other occurrences under control. All of a sudden, many *gnas bdag-s* and *gzhi bdag-s* of the holy places in the Snow mountain hermitages of the land of Tibet gathered [there], with Ti se lHa btsan, La phyi Zhing skyong and Tsa ri Zhing skyong, altogether three, as the main ones. They prostrated to the feet of the *rje* himself and prayed him to come as *mchod gnas* ("officiating *bla ma*") to each one [of these holy places], whereupon the *rje* emanated into uncountable manifestations of his body and miraculously went for a moment to the holy place of each of them. Having visited all these holy places, (f.16a) he gave teachings to the *gzhi bdag-s* and bound them to a vow. At that time, the *mi ma yin-s* having requested him permanently to remain as *mchod gnas* at each [place], the *rje* said: "This body, the ripening of my previous *karma* (*rnam smin*), needs to fulfil the attainments ordered by [my] *bla ma*. If I am to maintain the assembly of the monks, I have no time to stay permanently". Since they requested: "If so, send a *mchod gnas*", he then promised to send hermit *mchod gnas-s* to the rocky mountains at those great holy places".

'Jig rten mgon po's capacity to perform ubiquity reminds the account in the biographies of Rin chen bzang po whereby Lo chen consecrated Tho ling in Gu ge, Kha char in Pu hrang and Nyar ma in Mar yul on the same day. *Rin chem bzang po'i rnam thar bsodus pa* (p.258 line 5-p.259 line 1) says: "De nas Pu hrangs kyi Kha cher/ Gu ge'i Tho gling/ Mar yul gyi Nyar ma dang gtsug (p.259) lag khang chen po gsum grub nas rab gnas kyang zhag gcig la mdzad do//"; "Then, since Kha cher of Pu hrangs, Tho gling of Gu ge and Nyar ma of Mar yul, the three great *gtsug* (p.259) *lag khang*, were completed, [lo chen Rin chen bzang po] performed their consecration on the same single day".

However, lo chen Rin chen bzang po could have performed the three *rab gnas-s* from distance, as was customary in the tradition.

31. 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas, 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar (p.105 line 3-p.107 line 1): "De nas dgong lo bzhi bcu zhe drug bzhes te/ Tsha yug du skyo pa bsangs byon ba La phyir la byon bar ma gnang nas/ dPal chen Tsa ri nas tshur bos nas yod pa khong phyir btang/ na bza' dang bzhugs gdan dge 'dun gyi spyi mdzo'/ sbyil po tshun chad sbong dag du mdzad/ der dge 'dun thams cad Tsha yug du phyin/ zhu ba yang yang phul ba dang/ bla ma Mal gyis 'byon pa'i zhu rten du nas khal brgya phul bas dgon par byon/ de nas dge 'dun thams cad ri

community was without a head to take care of it. Only the promise of the monks to meditate at the mountain retreats convinced sKyob pa rin po che to go back to 'Bri gung.

Another major goal that 'Jig rten mgon po planned to achieve with his decision to press his monks to leave for distant holy places was to see through a generational change at 'Bri gung to give way to younger disciples. This was a plan overtly mentioned in the passage of

dang gra sa gzhan dang yul phyogs tha dad pa thams cad du song gsungs nas rnying pa thams cad las pas bdas te phan tshun du bskye gsar pa 'ga' zhis skyong/'", "At that time ['Jig rten mgon po] was aged forty-six (1191), and went to Tsha yug in search of solitude and purification (*skyo bsangs*). Since there was no opportunity (*sa ma gnang*) to go to La phyi, he summoned dPal chen, who was at Tsa ri, who [therefore] came back, but while he was there at [Tsha yug], he too was sent away. [sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po] disposed of his robe, mattress and even the most insignificant properties of a monk. At that time, all the monks went to Tsha yug and repeatedly requested him [to go back]. Since bla ma Mal offered him 100 *khal* of barley as a token of request to come back, he went back [to the monastery]. He then told all the monks to leave for the mountains and other monasteries (*grwa sa*) in directions different from their own places. All the remaining senior [monks] were sent away. He took care of some new ones who had been dispersed for their mutual benefit".

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.25b line 5-f.26a line 3): "De'i dus su Thel gyi dge 'dun rnams kyis rje nyid 'tsol du phyin pas Tshwa 'ug dPal gyi ri khrod du bzhugs pa dang mjal / dge 'dun re res rdo re re bskyal nas brtsigs pa'i chos khrii steng du bzhugs nas chos gsungs/ der dge 'dun rnams kyis gdan sar phebs (f.26a) par zhus pas/ rje'i zhal nas/ nga la rje Phag mo gru pas ri khrod sgrub pa gyis shig ces pa'i zhal ta yod pas dang mi 'gro/ khyod rang rnams song zhis gsungs/ nan gyi gshegs par zhus pas/ 'o na rang re pha sbad sgrub pa ma byas na bla ma'i bka' dang 'gal ba yin pas/ yang na khyed rang sdod nged ri la 'gro/ yang na nged sdod khyed rnams ri la song gsungs pas/ der dge 'dun rnams kyis ri khrod du 'gro ba khas blangs so/'"; "At that time the monks of ['Bri gung] mThil went to search for the *rje*, and met him at the hermitage of Tshwa lug dPal. Each monk carried a stone. He sat on the religious throne that they built and gave teachings. Since the monks begged him at that time to go back to the *gdan sa*, (f.26a) the *rje* said: "rJe Phag mo gru pa ordered me to meditate at a hermitage, therefore, I cannot return [to 'Bri gung]. You should go back". Since they earnestly pleaded with him, he said: "[Things being so], if I do not meditate myself, I would go against the wish of [my] *bla ma*. Either you stay [at the monastery] and I go to the mountains, or I stay [at the monastery] and you go to the mountains". Hence the monks agreed to go to the hermitages".

'*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.16a line 4-f.16b line 1): "De'i tshe slob ma rnams kyis 'tshol du phyin pas Tsa'ug tu bzhugs par zhes nas gdan 'dren du phyin pas/ rje rin po che'i zhal nas/ kho bo sgrub pa byed 'dod pas phyr mi 'gro yi/ khyed rang rnams song zhis gsungs/ nan gyis zhus pas 'o na nga la 'gro ba'i mgon po Phag mo gru pas ri khrod du sgrub ba pa byed ngad gyis shig bya ba'i bka' yod pas/ yang na kho bo ri la 'gro/ khyed rnams 'dir sdod/ yang na khyed rnams ri la song kho bo sdod (f.16b) ces 'dam ka btang bas/ der slob ma rnams kyis ri la 'gro khas blangs so/'"; "At that time the disciples went to look for him, and came to know that he was at Tsha 'ug. They went [there] to take him back [to 'Bri gung]. The *rje rin po che* said: "Since I wish to meditate, I will not go back. You go back". They earnestly pleaded with him, and he said: "If so, since an order was given to me by 'gro ba'i mgon po Phag mo gru pa to meditate at hermitages, either I go to the mountains and you stay there [at the monastery], or you go the mountains and I stay there [at the monastery]". (f.16b) Saying this, he gave them a choice. Hence the disciples promised to go to the mountains".

'*Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po rnam thar* by 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas (see previous n.31 dealing with his retreat at Tsha yug and his stratagem to convince the monks to become *ri pa-s*).

The same passage of '*Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po 'i rnam thar* holds that dpal chen Chos ye had been sent to Tsa ri, while *Ti se 'Bri gung lo rgyus* reiterates that Ngad phu pa was the disciple sent to explore the feasibility to open the door of Gangs Ti se.³²

The discrepancy between the small number of *ri pa-s* dispatched in the first place to the three main hermitage localities of rje btsun Mid la—eighty each to Tsa ri, La phyi and Gangs ri—³³ and the exorbitant number composing the successive expeditions seems to confirm that the first batch of hermits were sent out with an explorative task in view to settle them at distant holy places and to explore whether mountain retreats could be institutionalised.

The sequence of events of that period was:

- 'Jig rten mgon po first established initial contacts with authorities of the lands where the pilgrimage places were located;

- he then sent his best disciples to explore the feasibility of opening the pilgrimage doors; and

- in the meantime, he persuaded the monks to go to the hermitages by setting a personal example to his disciples.

The 1191 project to populate Upper West Tibet with *ri pa-s* came to nothing. The “doors” of Gangs Ti se and, therefore, mtsho Ma dros and the other holy places could not be opened to the 'Bri gung pa. Although explorative, Ngad phu pa's expedition did not establish the *ri*

32. *Ti se 'Bri gung lo rgyus* (f.26a lines 3-4): “Dang por dge bshes Ngad phu pa chen po gtsos pa gzhi khrod thon cing sems ngo 'phrod pa'i dbu che brgyad bcu skor re re Tsa ri/ La phyi/ Gangs ri gsum du brdzangs//”, “The first time, [they] went [to lay] the foundations of the hermitage [life at Gangs Ti se] led by dge bshes Ngad phu pa chen po, and those endowed with a superior mind were sent in groups of eighty each to Tsa ri, La phyi and Gangs ri”.

Ngad phu pa, who led the first 'Bri gung pa expedition to Ti se in 1193, has an extremely short biography in bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.104 line 23-p.105 line 2): “dPal ldan Ngad phu ba ni/ khyis rmug par snying rje sgom pas/ ro gcig gi rtogs pa thugs (p.105) la 'khrungs/ lDan du byon nas chos sde btab cing phrin las kyang shin tu che//”; “[A man] having been bitten by a dog, dpal ldan Ngad phu ba meditated on compassion and the realisation of the inseparability (*ro gcig*) [of phenomenal existence] (p.105) was born in his mind. Having gone to lDan [ma in Khams mDo stod], he founded its *chos sde*. His other activities were extremely great”.

33. '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.16b lines 1-3): “De ltar bZhi khrid thob pa'i slob ma rnams ri la lan gsum du bkye ba las/ dang po Ti ser brgyad cu/ La phyir brgyad cu/ rTsa ri rir brgyad cu bcas ri pa nyis brgya dang bzhi bcu tham pa bkye pas dpal Ngas phu pa dang/ de bshes gNyoS sogs grub pa thob pa ces mang po byung//”; “Likewise, according to the subdivision into three expeditions, the disciples who had received *bZhi khrid* (“explanations lasting for four days”) were dispersed to the mountains. The first time they were dispersed [in a group of] eighty to Ti se, eighty to La phyi and eighty to Tsa ri, altogether two hundred forty. Those who attained spiritual accomplishments were extremely many, including dpal Ngad phu pa and dge bshes gNyoS”.

pa-s at Gangs Ti se given that the next years 1193-1194 saw a devastating invasion of mNga' ris. The secular conditions in mNga' ris stood which were not ripe for the establishment of the pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se, as amply proved by *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar*, which documents the desecration and destruction in mNga' ris (see below p.42). The “door” of Gangs Ti se took several more years to be opened, and this was not achieved by a single effort.

What happened at the other two localities?

▪ The pilgrimage at Tsa ri

Similar secular conditions did not apply to the 1191 failure to open the “door” of Tsa ri, which had to be attempted again. These failures indicate that the 'Bri gung pa were not yet ready to establish themselves at the holy places frequented by rje bstun Mid la even at another of his three main pilgrimage places. The reasons for this fiasco are not indicated in the sources. An obvious point one can at least say is that they were unrelated to the unsettled conditions in mNga' ris skor gsum.

Given that no disturbances are recorded in the sources during those years in the area of convergence of several regions (Klo, Mon, mNyal, Byar, Dwags po and Kong po) where Tsa ri is located, and that the 1191 expedition aimed at exploring the possibility of transferring conspicuous numbers of *ri pa*-s, one can suggest that it did do no more than to accomplish its preliminary task.

The attribution of the successful opening of the door of Tsa ri and when this happened is a subject of controversy among the various bKa' brgyud pa schools. The sources record another attempt on the part of 'Jig rten mgon po's disciples. A passage in bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan's *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* credits gTsang pa rGya ras with opening the “door” of the Tsa ri to function as a place for meditation, but continues by stressing that his effort did not have lasting success. It adds that it took the 'Bri gung pa trio of gNyo, mGar and Chos (i.e. gNyo lHa nang pa (1164-1224), mGar Dam pa Chos sdings pa (1180-1240) and dPal chen Chos ye (?-?)) to open it definitively.³⁴ On the other hand, the 'Brug pa

34. bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.93 lines 4-7): “sNgon du Tsa ri r sGam po pa chen pos skyes bu Ye shes rdo rje brdzangs te gnas sgo phye mod kyang/ rje 'dis kyang ri pa rjes ma gong bshad 'di ma rdzangs tsam gyi skabs su/ mNyo 'Gar Chos gsum brdzangs te Tsa ri'i gnas sgo sngon ma phye ba rnam kyang phye zhing/ phye ba rnam kyang legs par gtan la phab//”; “Earlier the great being Ye shes rdo rje was sent by sGam po pa chen po to Tsa ri, and it may be that he opened the door of the holy place. However, when the last group of the above mentioned *ri pa*-s had as yet to be sent by this *rje* ('Jig rten mgon po), mNyo (spelled so), 'Gar [and] Chos, altogether three, were sent and opened the door of the holy places of Tsa ri which had not been opened earlier [by gTsang pa rGya ras]. Those opened were permanently established in an excellent way”.

The statement that gTsang pa rGya ras met sGam po pa who exhorted him to open the door of Tsa ri is an unfounded assumption on the part of bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan because Dwags po lHa rje was already dead when gTsang pa rGya ras (1161-1211) was born. Given the spelling mNyo, which he normally renders as gNyo, it seems that bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan derived this passage from sMyos lHa gnang pa's (spelled so in the text) *Tsa ri'i dkar chag* (p.20 lines 20-22), where a similar statement is made and the same spelling is found.

material—in particular, the guide to Tsa ri by 'Brug pa kun mkhyen Padma dkar po (*Tsa ri tra legs bshad* p.48 line 6-p.57 line 6)—ridicules the three 'Bri gung pa and highlights gTsang pa rGya ras's superiority. He performed miracles that led to the opening of the door of the pilgrimage, whereas the 'Bri gung pa failed. This is just one of several episodes of inter-sectarian rivalry between the two bKa' brgyud pa schools.

More than stressing rivalries among members of different bKa' brgyud schools, my concern is to point out that the date of the meeting of gNyos, mGar and Chos with gTsang pa rGya ras that took place at Tsa ri following the attempt by the 'Bri gung pa in 1191 is rather uncertain. It could not have happened before wood tiger 1194, the year in which Chos sdings pa reached 'Bri gung from Khams and met 'Jig rten mgon po for the first time.³⁵ If the matter is seen from this angle, year 1194 is thus a *terminus post quem* for gNyos, mGar and Chos's journey to Tsa ri while, according to the biographies of gTsang pa rGya ras, he for his part returned to dBus after being in Tsa ri and received ordination from bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa brTson 'grus grags pa (1123-1193 or 1194) in 1193.³⁶ This chronological disparity is hardly reconcilable, and there is no particular evidence to support any one of these dates over the other.

A passage in *Tsa ri'i dkar chag* by sMyos lHa gnang pa (the way he spells his name should be noted) clarifies the apparent chronological contradiction of the opening of the "door" of this holy place. gTsang pa rGya ras went twice to Tsa ri in order to open its "door".³⁷

35. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.427 line 5): "De nas dgung lo bco lnga lon/ sa po stag la bab... /'" and (ibid. p.430 line 4): "... Thil du phyin pa la/ pha jo spyen sngar byon gsung lo/"; "Then, when he was aged fifteen in earth male tiger (sa po—sic for pho—stag) (wrongly for wood male tiger 1194) ...", "... having arrived at ['Bri gung] Thil, he said: "I have come to meet my *pha jo* ("venerable father")".

36. Mon rtse pa, *gTsang pa rGya ras kyi rnam thar (dKar brgyud gser phreng* p.279 lines 1-3): "De nas Tsā ri byon pa'i lam nas 'Bri khung du yang byon/ Kyu ra dang mjal Thugs rje chen po chos zhus nas/ Tsā ri na dam pa skye bo la sogs pa'i kha yar rtsam 'dug nas dbyar cig bzhus/ mKha' lding ma la sogs pa'i mgur yang mang du gsung/ tshur lam Byar po la thon nas byon/ grogs Lo ro Ba tra yod pa yul du song/ chos rje dpon g.yog gnyis Ngam shod la thon nas byon A jag pa dang Lan tra 'phrad/ bSam yas kyi tho phyi der mi ngan cig gis mi tsham pa'i las byas/ kho yang physis 'dzes khyer zer/"; "Then, on the way to Tsā ri, [gTsang pa rGya ras] went to 'Bri khung, too. He met sKyu ra ['Jig rten mgon po]. He received teachings on Thugs rje chen po. Since some people were at Tsa ri, including [several] noble persons, he stayed there for one summer. He sang many songs, such as *mKha' lding ma*. On the way back, he went across the Byar po la. Since his travelling companion was Lo ro Ba tra, he went to his place. The *chos rje*, the chieftain and his servant, altogether two, crossed Ngam shod and went on. They met A jag pa and Lan tra. In the area of bSam yas, a bad man had committed uncountable crimes. It is said that he, later, was taken away (*khyer* sic for 'khyer) by leprosy ('dzes sic for mdze)".

Soon below the same text mentions gTsang pa rGya ras' return to Central Tibet, his meeting, shortly thereafter, with bla ma Zhang and the year in which it happened (ibid. p. 279 line 6): "De nas glang gi lo la bla ma Zhang mjal/"; "Then in the year of the ox (1193) he met bla ma Zhang".

37. sMyos lHa gnang ba (spelled so), *Tsa ri'i dkar chag* (p.22 lines 11-14): "mKha' 'gro seng ge'i

The first time, his efforts did not sort the expected results. He had to return the year after and, on the occasion, was successful in opening the “door” of the holy place. gTsang pa rgya ras’s inconclusive attempt should be dated to 1193, just before he went to see bla ma Zhang g. Yu brag pa and received both the *rab tu byung* and *bsnyen rdzogs* vows from him at the same time (*lHo rong chos ’byung* respectively p.652 lines 13-14 and p.653 lines 8-10). The next year, when he returned to Tsa ri as an ordained monk and opened the “door” of the holy place, meeting gNyos, mGar and Chos in the process, was wood tiger 1194, the same year in which mGar reached ’Bri gung, met sKyob pa rin po che, and was sent by ’Jig rten mgon po to Tsa ri at the young age of fifteen.³⁸

gdong can gsum byon nas/ bu khyod snying rus dang gtul zhug che ba zhig ’dug ste/ khyod kyi chas ’di byas pa’i lho gnas mchog dpal gyi rTsa ri’i sgo yang mi phyed do/ nang sprul pa’i lha tshogs kyi zhal yang mi mjal/ mchog dang thun mong kyi dngos grub yang mi len no/ da len phar log/’; “[The *mkha’ ’gro ma* with three lion faces said]: “Son! You [gTsang pa rGya ras] are zealous and moved by a superior aim (*gtul shug* sic for *brtul shugs*), but by acting in this way you will not be able to open the door of the holy place Tsa ri, will not have the vision of the cycle of deities manifesting within [the holy place], and will not obtain the extraordinary or [even] ordinary siddhic powers. Go back now”.”

Ibid. (p.22 line 23-p.23 line 1): “De dus gnas kyi sgo ma phye bar phar log byon/ sang gnang dus kyi da tshod rtsa na/ mkha’ ’gro mas lung bstan pa bzhin du rdzas zha gos rnam ’dzom par byas ne rdo yis mtshan mar phebs tshogs ’khor mdzad/ de nas mar byon/ mGon po gri gug can gyi lam lkag/ ske nas zung dril bu zhin skrol/ rdo rje zhin gnam la ’phang sa la rdab/ de yis dus su sgo ’byed mdzad/ de nas gCig (p.23) char la phebs gnas kyi sgo phyed pa yin yang Myos mGar Chos gsum gyis ji ltar byon dgongs/’; “At that time, [gTsang pa rGya ras] went back without opening the door of the holy place. Around that time the next year, equipped with the implements, hat and dress, as had been advised by the *mkha’ ’gro ma*, he arrived at the female organ in stone and performed a *tshogs ’khor*. Then he went down [towards destination]. The road was blocked by mGon po bearing the *gri sgug* (spelled so for *gri gug*). He held [mGon po] by the neck and shook it as if he were a bell. He threw him into the sky as if he were a *rdo rje*, and [mGon po] fell on the ground. At that time, he opened the door [of Tsa ri]. Then he went to gCig (p.23) char, and wondered how it was that sMyos (spelled so), mGar and Chos, altogether three, had come there, although he was the one who opened the “door” of the holy place”.

38. Another precocious member of ’Jig rten mgon po’s school, bSod nams grags pa, the second ’Bri gung *gdan sa*, underwent rigorous meditation practice in his teens. bsTan ’dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *’Bri gung gdan rabs gser ’phreng* (p.108 line 24-p.109 line 7) says: “dGung lo bcu (p.109) gsum lon pa na ’dag sbyar mdzad cing sgrub pa la bzhugs/ rdor dkar dang gdan gcig gi brtul zhugs la gnas nas/ lo bcu gsum bar rim gnyis zab mo’i rnal ’byor mthar phyni par mdzad/ de nas rje sKyob pa’i zhal nas/ da res bKa’ brgyud grub pa la brtson pa ’dis/ mi rabs bcu gsum bar du sgrub pa mi dgos par ’brel tshad don ldan ’byung ngo/ da gzhan snang bstun par/ stag phur slob gnyer byed par byon dgos gsungs/’; “When [bSod nams grags pa] reached the age of thirteen (1201), (p.109) he stayed in walled-in meditation, [practising] diet restriction (*rdor dka’*, *rdor* “meat and fat”, *dka’* “austerities”) and staying on the same couch. He brought the profound *rnal ’byor* (*yoga*) of the two stages to their ultimate stage during thirteen years (1201-1214). Then rje sKyob pa said: “The present effort to practise austerities and meditate is so efficacious that the amount of karmic nexus is [greatly reduced so] that there is no need to meditate for the next thirteen generations. Now you should go to study at sTag phu to submit [yourself] to other people’s points of view”.”

There is one more enlightening passage in *Tsa ri'i dkar chag* which confirms the date of the meeting of gTsang pa rGya ras with gNyos, mGar, and Chos at Tsa ri as 1194. In this passage which records his thoughts concerning his interaction with sGyer sgom zhig po, a fellow bKa' brgyud pa present at Tsa ri, gTsang pa rGya ras declares that he then was a fully ordained monk,³⁹ thus showing that the second time he was at Tsa ri was after he had received the monastic investiture from Zhang g.Yu brag pa in 1193. The episode also conveys the sense that sGyer sgom, too, had some claims to have been the one who opened the "door" of Tsa ri.

What happened to the 1191 'Bri gung pa expedition to the La phyi holy place is not clarified in the sources. It seems that the first expedition sent from 'Bri gung had the same preliminary, explorative goals as the two that went to Tsa ri and Gangs ri in the same year.

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* and '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* allow the understanding that there was synchronism among the 'Bri gung pa expeditions to La phyi, Tsa ri and Gangs ri, but the fact that the 'Brug pa literary material—sMyos lHa gnang pa's *Tsa ri'i dkar chag*—and a 'Bri gung pa work—bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan's '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng*—document another expedition to Tsa ri with no concomitant sending of *ri pa*-s to the other holy places is strong evidence that the expeditions were not sent out from 'Bri gung on every occasion at the same time.

rTa sga and Pu rangs, the Tshal pa strongholds in mNga' ris smad and stod

Similar to sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po, bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa nurtured ambitions to promote the presence of his school's members in distant lands—including the west—in order to pursue religious activities and to be in contact with the local powers. Nonetheless, he resorted to a structural organisation of his own. The literary material about the Tshal pa on the "upper side" is not as circumstantial and exhaustive as that concerning the 'Bri gung pa but the picture drawn on them from the sources is complete enough to allow an understanding of the situation that prevailed within this bKa' brgyud pa school.

The basic principle that Zhang g.Yu brag pa adopted was delegation and, thus, it was characterised by a sensible difference from the system of 'Jig rten mgon po. Bla ma Zhang did not intervene personally in the process of sending *ri pa*-s to the lands on the "upper side".

39. sMyos lHa gnang ba, *Tsa ri'i dkar chag* (p.30 lines 2-5): "sKyes bu dang sGyer sgom gnyis Gong kha de ru mjal nas/ skyes bu'i thugs dgong la nga rab byung btsun pa yang yin/ rTsa ri'i gnas sgo phye ba'i khong nga la kham 'dri byed du 'ong bsam Dam pa sGyer sgom gyis thugs dgongs la/ rTsa ri phyin pa na nga snga/ rtog pa ni nyams khong la kham 'dri byed du nyams//"; "After both the great being [gTsang pa rGya ras] and sGyer sgom met at Gong kha, the great being thought: "I am a *rab byung* monk. [Knowing] that I have opened the "door" of the holy place of Tsa ri, he must have come to question me (*kha 'dri*) about it". sGyer sgom thought: "I was the earliest to come to Tsa ri. We had equivalent perceptions. I have come to ask him questions"."

Unlike the head of the 'Bri gung pa school who dispatched his direct disciples away from their *dgon pa*, bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa chose to delegate the task to IHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od (1145 or 1146-1215)—one of the 'od *bzhi*, the four *slob ma*-s to whom he dubbed a name ending with the syllable 'od. IHa phyug mkhar pa sent his own followers to holy places in mNga' ris.

That IHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od, a native of Dol in IHo kha, is seen by the literary tradition as the originator of the sTod Tshal pa is documented in *Deb ther dmar po*,⁴⁰ which does not provide clues on the reasons and circumstances that led him to promote the Tshal pa in the lands of mNga' ris.

Kun dga' rdo rje's text does not elaborate on the need to urge his disciples to meditate at the pilgrimage places of mNga' ris. All *Deb ther dmar po* does is to mention the existence of the sTod Tshal pa group of disciples, active in mNga' ris. Given the restraint in the work's treatment of IHa phyug mkhar pa's disciples, a trademark of *Deb ther dmar po* with every topic it deals with, an assumption is that he must have promoted this diffusion to fulfil the wish of bla ma Zhang, his teacher.

IHa phyug mkhar pa's brief biography in *Deb ther dmar po* is rather reticent in respect of his contribution to the diffusion of his school in the west. It is especially useful for his death date and the foundation years of the temples credited to him, but not for his birth date given as 1145 rather than 1146 as in *IHa phyug mkhar pa'i rnam thar*.⁴¹

40. Kun dga' rdo rje has a résumé of IHa phyug mkhar pa's disciples, which establishes the origin of the sTod Tshal pa among other important members of the school. (*Deb ther dmar po* p.134 line 21-p.135 line 5) reads: "IHa phyug mkhar pa'i zhal slob/ ci smras nyan pa'i bsam tan shes rab yod ces pa ni bla ma sPyan snga ba yin/ mkhas pa gzhag gzu ston nas yod ces (p.135) pa rin po che sTon nam mo/ ku tsang rnal 'byor ye shes yod ces pa ni bla ma Ba lam pa yin/ mngon shes can gyi sher byang yod ces pa ni Ru thog pa yin te/ dBu stod du Ru thog bskor ba rnam dang Za lung ba sogs de las 'phel/ rTa sga ba sNang sgom zhig pa nas sTod Tshal thams cad 'phel ba dang/ rin po che Sang 'bum Yang dgon gyi gdan sa mdzad cing sGom sde btab pa sogs byung ngo//"; "IHa phyug mkhar pa's disciples were bla ma sPyan snga ba, known for possessing *samadhi* wisdom, whatever he said or heard; rin po che sTon nam, known for being an all-time guide [and] an unprejudiced master (p.135); bla ma Ba lam pa, known for possessing the wisdom of all-inclusive *rnal 'byor* (*yoga*) wisdom; rtogs ldan Brag po che ba, known for possessing prophetic wisdom and compassion; and Ru thog pa, known for possessing the happiness manifested by the one who has realised emptiness (*rtogs ldan zhig po*). In dBu stod, those from Ru thog (Ru thog *bskor ba*) and the Za lung ba grew in numbers from the latter one. All the sTod Tshal [pa] grew in numbers from rTa sga ba sNang sgom Zhig po (i.e. Sangs rgyas Tshal pa). Rin po che Sang 'bum made Yang dgon gyi *gdan sa* and built sGom sde. These were the existing [disciples of IHa phyug mkhar ba]".

41. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.134 lines 9-21): "IHa phyug mkhar pa'i ni/ 'khrungs yul Dol gyi Zhur na lung gdung rus gZi sNgags rnying ma'i rgyud/ yab jo bo Sangs rgyas skyabs/ sras lcam sring bzhi yis chung shos skya bo'i dus rNgog mDo sde/ Gan pa Dar re/ Lo re ras pa rnams bsten/ Zhang rin po che dang mjal nas lo gsum la khong rang la las slob zhus/ Sha mi 'dul 'dzin la mkhan slob zhus nas IHa sar bsnyen par rdzogs/ Nyi zla 'od du mtshan gsol/ Zhang lo nyi shu rtsa gcig bsten/ chos ma lus pa thob/ byin rlabs zhugs nas rtogs pa 'khrungs/ Ba lam mTha' brag na bzhugs yod pa phrad tsam gyis gdan drangs nas/ lug lo la 'Hu phu btab/ der lo gsum bzhugs nas mTha' brag tu

IHa phyug mkhar's influence led to the constitution of two groups of sTod Tshal pa in

byon/ glang lo la IHa phyug btab nas bco brgyad song ba'i dus su/ rta lo la Yang dgon gyi gdan sa slob dpon Byang yes gtad nas IHa phyug dang sbrel ba lo lnga tsam mdzad/ khyi lo la kho rangs gi nye gnas Sangs rgyas 'bum Yang dgon du bskos/ phag lo la dgung lo bdun cu rtsa gcig pa la IHa phyug tu gshegs so//"; "dPal ldan IHa phyug mkhar pa's birthplace was Zhur na lung of Dol. His clan was gZi. His lineage was [that of practitioners of] *sNgags rnying ma*. His father was jo bo Sangs rgyas skyabs, who had four sons and daughters. He was the youngest of them. When he was a lay child, [his name] was rNgog mDo sde. He attended upon Gan pa Dar re and Lo re ras pa. He met Zhang rin po che three years later. He asked him to be his *las slob*. Having asked Sha mi 'dul 'dzin to be the *mkhan slob*, he took the *bsnyen par rdzogs* vow in IHa sa. He received the name Nyi zla 'od. He studied under [bla ma] Zhang for twenty-one years. He obtained all teachings without exception. As these were accompanied with blessings, spiritual realisations were born [in him]. When he resided at Ba lam mTha' brag, he met [Ba lam pa?], and since he was invited [to do so], he founded 'Ju phu in the year of the sheep 1187. After staying three years there (1187-1189), he went to mTha' brag. Eighteen years elapsed (1193-1210) after founding IHa phyug mkhar in the year of the ox 1193 [and] at that time, having been entrusted with the *gdan sa* of Yang dgon in the horse year (1210) by slob dpon Byang ye, who was [his *gdan sa*] jointly with IHa phyug for five years (1210-1214). In the year of the dog 1214, he appointed his attendant Sangs [rgyas] 'bum [to be the abbot of] Yang dgon. He died at IHa phyug in the year of the pig 1215, aged seventy-one (i.e. he was born in 1145)".

IHa phyug mkhar pa's dates are established by means of a cross-reference in *Deb ther dmar po* that identifies the dog year in which he appointed his disciple Sangs rgyas 'bum to the throne of Yang dgon. A passage of the biography of Sangs rgyas 'bum found in the same source (*Deb ther dmar po* p.133 lines 14-15) says that the dog year was wood dog 1214. The rest of the dates have been identified using this wood dog year as the basis for all the chronological calculations in IHa phyug mkhar pa's life.

However, *IHa phyug mkhar pa'i rnam thar* (p.358 lines 3-4) reads: "dBus gTsang ru bzhi bye brag g. Yor po yi/ khyad par Dol IHa phyug na Zang zhur Gyi na lu dung/ rigs ni sngags pa ba gZi gdung gi rus/ yab du Gyur pa jo bo Sangs rgyas skyabs and his mother was Gyur pa 'Tshur mo shes rab//"; "[He was born] in g. Yor po [which belonged to] the dBus gTsang ru bzhi, in particular, at Gyi na lu ung of Zang zhur in Dol. His family [members] were *sngags pa-s*. His *gdung rus* was gZi. He had Gyur pa jo bo Sangs rgyas skyabs for father and Gyur pa 'Tshur mo shes rab for mother".

A sentence in the biography of him (see *ibid.* p.362 line 7 and below in this note) says that he received the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow at the age of thirty in wood female sheep 1175. This would make him born in 1176.

Ibid. (p.358 lines 6-7): "Dang por gSang sngags rnying ma'i rgyud pa/ dge bshes dGe glings pa yin gsung/ de yang sku mched gsum lcam mo'ang dang bzhi'byungs pa'o/ gcen po gnyis pos bla ma rNgog mDo sde'i spyang sngar byon nas/ dpal dGyes pa rdo rje'i dbang rgyud dang gdams ngag tshar bar zhus//"; "Early [in his life], he said that dge bshes dGe glings pa was [his teacher] of gSang sngags rnying ma'i rgyud. As to this, there were three brothers and one sister, four in all. The elder two went to see bla ma rNgog mDo sde and received the *dbang, rgyud* and *gdams ngag* of dpal dGyes pa rdo rje completely".

Ibid. (p.359 lines 4-5): "Der dgung lo nyi shu rtsa bdun gyi bar du yum dang gcen po kun gyi zhabs tog byed cing yul du bzhugs//"; "Hence, until age twenty-seven (1172), his mother and two elder brothers rendered service to him. [Hence] he stayed in his native place".

Ibid. (p.359 line 7-p.360 line 2): "Su la yang ma nyan par dMyal mar byon nas/ Lo ro Chu khyer zhes bgyi ba grub thob de dang zhal 'jal (p.360) nas/ de'i phyags phyir zhag bcu drug tsam

bzhugs/ gdams ngag kha yar tsam zhus so/ de'i dus su bla ma Zhang rin po che Dus gsum gyi thams cad kyu Sangs rgyas ye shes kyi ngo bor gyur pa/ grub pa thob pa'i rnal 'byor pa/ Byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen p skyes bu dam pa de dang slar yang g.Yu brag la sogs par yang zhal lhan du 'jal//"; "He went *mar* ("downwards") to dMyal without listening to anyone at all. He met the *grub thob* named Lo ro Chu khyer. (p.360) He stayed with him for sixteen days and received various instructions. At that time, he met Bla ma Zhang rin po che, who had turned out to be the essence of all the Sangs rgyas of the three times, the *yogi* who had spiritual powers, the noble being who was a *Byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po*. [He met him] furthermore at g.Yu brag and other [localities]"

Ibid. (p.360 line 4): "Chu mo sprul gyi lo la zhal 'jal nas/ of Sangs ra rgya ba'i chos zhu par phul//"; "In water female snake 1173, he met bla ma Zhang who was giving the teachings requested by the people of Sangs rang rgya".

Ibid. (p.360 line 7): "De nas rin po che phyags phyir byon te Dar phug du khrid tshar bar mdzad//"; "[IHa phyug mkhar pa] went on together with the *rin po che* and at Dar phug he was bestowed a *khrid* completely".

Ibid. (p.361 lines 1-2): "Rin po che'i zhal nas khyod sku mched bla ma rNgog gZhung pa'i slob ma dang gSangs sngags kyi bdag po yin nas gsung//"; "The *rin po che* said: "You, brothers are disciples of rNgog gZhung pa and holders of *gSang sngags*".

Ibid. (p.362 line 4-p.363 line 1): "Jo bo Shakya mu ne'i drung/ 'Phrul snang gi gtsug lag khang na bzhugs pa'i spyang sngar byon te/ mkhan po dge ba'i bshes gnyen Sha mi 'Dul ba 'dzin pa dang/ las kyi slob dpon rin po che nyid kyi mdzad/ gsang te ston pa slob dpon sTon pa dad pa'i dge 'dun mang po dang bcas pa'i spyang sngar dngung lo sum bcu tham pa la/ shing mo lug gi lo la slab pa chig rdzogs par mdzad/ (p.363) bla ma rin po che'i zhal nas/ nyi ma dang zla ba lta bur 'gro don byed pa gcig yong ba yin gsung nas/ mtshan yang Shakya'i dge slong Nyi zla 'od zhes bya bar btags gsung//"; "He went in the presence of Jo bo Shakya mu ne at 'Phrul snang gi gtsug lag khang. With dge ba'i bshes gnyen Sha mi 'Dul ba 'dzin pa acting as *mkhan po*, the *rin po che* himself acting as *las kyi slob dpon*, and slob dpon sTon pa acting as *gsang te ston pa*, in the midst of many faithful monks, when he was thirty years old in wood female sheep (1175) (b. 1146), the vow was bestowed upon him in its complete form. (p.363) Since the *bla ma rin po che* said: "[You] will be beneficial to sentient beings like the sun and moon", he said he received the name dge slong Nyi zla 'od".

Ibid. (p.363 lines 5-7): "De nas physis gcen po gnyis pos yum kun grongs nas/ de'i dus su ka ca pan sun yod pa kun tub tub du gtsongs nas/ bla ma rin po che la la lus par phul nas/ yongs bdag mdzad 'jig rten blos btan//"; "Then, after the death of the mother and his brothers, all of them, having sold all the properties he could put together at that time, he offered everything to the *bla ma rin po che*. He renounced worldly life".

Ibid. (p.365 lines 3-4): "Lo nyi zhu rtsa gcig gi bar du bla ma rin po che bsten//"; "He attended upon the *bla ma rin po che* for twenty-one years (1173-1193)".

Ibid. (p.366 line 5): "sPyi khungs dang Ba yul la sogs par ri khrod dang/ gangs khrod la sogs par thugs kyi dam bca' bstan//"; "He was firm in his resolution to stay at mountain hermitages and snow mountain hermitages, such as sPyi khungs and Ba yul".

Ibid. (p.367 lines 1-2): "Phyis gZhal zu gang phug du bzhugs/ nyams myong gi mgur bzhengs/ Ba yul du 'gro don bkod/ de nas Ba lam mTha' brag du bzhugs nas bsgrub pa mdzad//"; "He then stayed at gZhal zu gang phug. He composed songs on his personal experiences. He set teachings at Ba yul for the benefit of sentient beings. He then stayed at Ba lam mTha' brag, where he meditated".

Ibid. (p.367 lines 4-7): "Jo bo 'Phrang po ba spyang drangs nas 'Ju phu phul/ sna len mdzad nas/

mNga' ris. The rTa sga ba were established by Sangs rgyas Tshal pa,⁴² as a consequence of his

yon mchod dpon slob grogs mchod dangs mar gyur/ 'Ju phu Chu bzangs dpal rdzong lug gi lo la btab/ bu slob dBur g. Yor gyi sgom chen dad pa can gus pa can 'jig rten blos btang pa nyams rtogs can' bsam gyis mi khyab ps rnams byon/ gra tshogs Sum gyi tshal 'dus/'; "Jo bo 'Phrang po ba invited him and offered him 'Ju phu. Since he gave him hospitality, he purified the sponsors, the *dpon slob*-s and their associates with a purification ritual. He founded 'Ju phu Chu bzangs dpal rdzong in the year of the sheep (1187). Disciples who were hermits from dBur [and] g. Yor, who had faith and devotion, and who were renouncers and had spiritual experiences, [such] hermits came [to 'Ju phu as many as] it is beyond imagination. He also congregated groups of monks at Sum gyi tshal".

Ibid. (p.368 lines 5-6): "dGon pa 'pho ba dang/ bla ma'i spyan mnga' dang/ gdan sar bzhugs pa lam la gtogs par grong logs par zhag gcig kyang mi bzhugs/"; "He kept moving from one *dgon pa* [to another]. After leaving the *bla ma* and the *gdan sa*, on the way, he would not stay in the vicinities of a household, not even for a single night".

Ibid. (p.376 lines 4-6): "De nas gdul bya smon lam gyi dbang gis dBu rur chos dar zhing Sangs rgyas bstan pa dar ba'i/ snod bcud 'jol pa'i Ba lam phur/ lHa phyug mkhar zhes dgyi ba yi/ dgon pa bsgrub gnas de ru btab/ gong gi dam bca' thams cad mdzad/ dBur g. Yor gyi las can thams cad 'dus/"; "Then, owing to the power of the prayers of the people to be trained, diffuse the in [Buddhist] religion in dBu ru and attract the local environment in order to spread the teachings of Sangs rgyas at upper Ba lam he founded lHa phyug mkhar dgon pa at this meditation place. He performed all commitments as those mentioned above. He gathered all people of dBur and g. Yor with a *karma*".

Ibid. (p.385 lines 2-5) (colophon): "Bla ma rin po che nyid la zhus shing gtugs nas/ Shakya'i dge slong Kangs khar Dznya na nas/ dpal ldan lHa phyug du byi ba'i lo/ sa ga'i zla ba'i tshes lnga la tshar bar bkod pa'o/ slad kyi gnas/ de nyid du Shakya'i dge slong Kir ti [note: Pu rangs pa] bo dhi cung zad rgyas par sbyar ba'o/ rNam thar mu tig 'phreng ba zhes bya ba/ rdzogs so/"; "In order to be beneficial to oneself and others, a request having come to the *bla ma rin po che* himself, Shakya'i dge slong Kangs khar Dznya na completed writing the *rnam thar me long rtsal* of the *bla ma rin po che* with the three marks of distinction, on the fifth day of *sa ga zla ba* of the year rat (1216?) at dpal ldan lHa phyug [mkhar]. Subsequently at the same holy place Shakya dge slong [note: Pu rangs pa] Kir ti bo dhi expanded it a little. It is called *rNam thar mu tig 'phreng ba*. Completed".

Given that there is no record of lHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od's death and his involvement in Yang dgon after he established lHa phyug mkhar, I suggest that the completion date of his *rNam thar mu tig 'phreng ba* that fell in a rat year was 1204.

42. A short biography of sNang sgom ras pa of rTa sga, an alias of Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, is found in *Gung thang gi dkar chag* (f.23a line 6-f.23b line 2) which says: "gZan yang rTa sga'i Nang bsgom ras pa zhes grags pa des lHa phyug gi drung du/ Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la rab tu byung mthan yang Sangs rgyas 'od du btags/ khrid bsgrub skor (f.23b) gdams pa thams cad tshar bar mdzad nas/ Byang mkhar/ sPyil skungs/ mTha' brag rnams su mthar phyin par mdzad/ dPal gDan sa ba'i drung du'ang khrid sgrub skor gyi zhun thar bcad/ gdul bya'i 'phen ba la brten nas Ti se dang rdzong drug la sgrub pa la khyon Brag skya rDo rje rdzong du thugs dam gyi rtsal sbyangs/ rTa sga'i dgon pa btab nas sKu Nub ris la gdul bya'i mtthil mdzad/"; "Moreover, the man known as sNang sgom ras pa of rTa sga, this one, took the vows of the Buddha teachings from lHa phyug pa. He was given his other name of Sangs rgyas 'od. After completing all the instruction courses on explanations (*khrid*) and meditation (*bsgrub*), (f.23b) he meditated to the utmost limit at Byang mkhar, sPyil skungs (spelled as) and mTha' brag. He also critically examined the teaching courses

foundation of the homonymous rTa sga dgon pa in one of the years which fell some time before the turn to the 13th century (between 1195 and 1200). The other group can be named the Pu hrang Tshal pa in the light of the region where they were settled.

A situation had consolidated not far from where rTa sga was built. The Tshal pa *dgon pa*, Mar lung, comes to the notice of the literature owing to its destruction around 1193 which led the life and deeds of Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge (1153-1241) to happen in various regions of mNga' ris stod smad and bar, having lost his monastery. That he concentrated to the west took place after the death of bla ma Zhang g. Yu brag pa. Mar lung pa and Sangs rgyas Tshal pa had travelled together to the west.⁴³

In a short span of time, events conditioned the Tshal pa on the “upper side” conspicuously. Sangs rgyas Tshal pa's foundation of rTa sga in the years between 1195 and 1200 compensated the loss of Mar lung in water ox 1193, destroyed by the Hor Sog po (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* f.91a line 4-f.91b line 2). They ascertained together the damage done to Mar lung. While Sangs rgyas Tshal pa played a pivotal part in the establishment of bla ma Zhang's school in the west, Mar lung pa had no role in the diffusion of the Tshal pa beyond the location of his *dgon pa*.

on explanation (*khrid*) and meditation (*sgrub*) with dPal gDan sa ba. In order to benefit the people in need of training, he went to meditate at Ti se and the *rdzong drug*. He refined his meditation skills at Brag skya rdo rje rdzong. Having founded rTa sga'i dgon pa, he established the centre for people in need of training in sKu [thang] (also spelled Ku thang) and Nub ris”.

43. *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.94a lines 4-5): “sTod phyogs su yong bar chas pa'i dus/ slob dpon lHa phyug mkhar pa'i nye gnas/ mched grogs Sangs rgyas mTshal chung ba la sogs pa'i mched grogs nmams kyi skyel ma mdzad pa'i dus/ rnal 'byor 'gro glu 'di gsungs so//”, “At the time of his (i.e. Mar lung pa's) coming to sTod, when his travelling companion Sangs rgyas mTshal chung, who was the *nye gnas* (“personal disciple”) of slob dpon lHa phyugs mkhar pa, and other travelling companions were appointed as escort, he sang the following song of a liberated *yogin*”.

Ibid. (f.149a line 4-f.150a line 1): “De'i dus Zhang 'gro ba'i mgon po g. Yu brag pa'i dngos slob mTshal pa chen po Nyi zla 'od yin/ de'i nye gnas Sangs rgyas Tshal pa bya ba yin pas de'i bla ma mya ngan las 'das pa dang/ sTod phyogs Mi la'i rdzong (f.149b) drug la sgom du byon”, “At that time, Zhang 'gro ba'i mgon po g. Yu brag pa's direct disciple was mTshal pa chen po Nyi zla 'od. His *nye gnas* was Sangs rgyas Tshal pa. [When] the former's *bla ma* (Zhang rin po che) died, he (i.e. Sangs rgyas Tshal pa) went to meditate at Mi la rdzong drug in the direction of sTod”.

Ibid. (f.149b lines 3-4): “De nas bdag gis mched grogs nye gnas mTshal chung ba/ dBus nas byon pa'i phebs//”, “Then, my (i.e. Mar lung pa's) travelling companion, [Ha phyug mkhar pa's] nye gnas mTshal chung ba, who came [with me] from dBus, arrived”.

Chos legs kyi rnam thar (f.9b line 2-f.10a line 4) deals with Sangs rgyas Tshal pa along the same lines; for a treatment of him also see *Deb ther dmar po* (p.141 line 17-p.142 line 4).

Early sTod Tshal pa exponents in mNga' ris
Masters of rTa sga

Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, the founder,
his successor Dharma bsod nams and affiliates:
mkhan po sPrug gcer ba,
Tshang 'dur ba chen po,
bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po.

The lineage of the Pu hrang Tshal pa
(*Deb ther dmar po* p.147 line 18-p.149 line 1)

g. Yung sa ba,
Tshul dar ba,
Shes rab 'phel ba, and
Sangs rgyas 'od zer.

The first Pu hrang Tshal pa, rtogs ldan g. Yung sa ba, who probably went to mNga' ris skor gsum around the same time as Sangs rgyas Tshal pa and Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge, became the *bla mchod* ("officiating *bla ma*") of the Pu hrang king.⁴⁴ This local *jo bo*—probably Ngam Klu rgyal—initially granted him Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs at Ma pham g.yu mtsho (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.365-366 and n.581), a sign that the activity of the Pu hrang Tshal pa was confined to this kingdom during that period.⁴⁵

A monastery, not identified in the sources, was then donated by Pu hrang *jo bo* after Ngam Klu rgyal—the next-in-line sTag tsha Khri 'bar—to g. Yung sa ba's successor, Tshul dar ba,

44. No other group than the Pu hrang Tshal pa-s was in sTod, proving that rTogs ldan g. Yung sa ba had founded this group. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.147 lines 18-23): "Rin po che'i slob ma rTog ldan g. Yung sa ba'i Mi la'i rdzong drug dang Ti se la byon/ Mi la rDo rje phug gzhugs nas thams cad kyi rtsal sbyangs/ 'gro don dang physis dpag tu med pa byung nas/ sPu rang rgyal po'i thad sor bzhugs nas/ rgyal po yab yum gyi nang gi bla mchod mdzad/ dad gus dpag tu med pa la brten nas sgom sder yang gser gyi 'bul ba skyel 'dug/'", "rTog ldan g. Yung sa ba, the disciple of [Zhang] rin po che, went to the Mi la rdzong drug and Ti se. After residing at Mi la rDo rje phug, he performed [meditation] practices at all of them. Having subsequently laboured for the benefit of sentient beings, since he stayed with the sPu rang king, he became the personal *bla mchod* ("officiating *bla ma*") of the king and his wife. Due to their inestimable faith and reverence [in him], they provided [g. Yung sa ba] with donations of gold and a meditation place".

45. *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.30b lines 4-5) writes about the places belonging to the Tshal pa-s in sTod: "mChod rten Khong seng ngal bso'i gnas/ gSer gyi bya skyibs sgrub pa'i gnas/ gSang ba mchod phug mchod pa'i gnas/ sTod na skor ba'i gnas gsum yin/'". They were rGad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs, which was their *sgrub pa'i gnas* ("meditation site"); gSang ba mchod phug, which was their *mchod pa'i gnas* ("place for offerings"); and mchod rten Khong seng, which was their *gnal bso'i gnas* ("place for prostrations") These sites are called *sTod na skor ba'i gnas gsum* and, elsewhere in the same text, *Gangs Ti se sTod kyi gnas gsum* (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* f.14a line 1).

after the king established *yon mchod* with the rTa sga abbot Dharma bsod nams. In those days, the territorial sphere of competence between the two Tshal pa groups was clearly defined but the Pu hrang Tshal pa must have reported to the rTa sga ba.

rTogs ldan mDzes pa (1166-1244) was another early master of the same bKa' brgyud pa school but he is not included by the literature in either group of sTod Tshal pa, despite being a native of mNga' ris who left traces of his work in this region—at rTa sga in particular.⁴⁶ He was

46. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.140 lines 8-21) reads: “rTogs ldan mdzes pa'i 'khrungs yul mNga' ris Ma pham g.yu mtsho'i 'gram Za 'og gle g.yang Chung ka rur/ Mal dgos pa mGon gi bu 'bring po g.Yu rung Byin brlabs kyi sras su 'khrungs/ Khyi ra ras pa'i skye bar grags shing La stod rTa sgar mkhan po sPrug gcer ba la sogs la bsnyen par rdzogs nas mDzes pa snying por btags/ des rTa sga ba'i 'bul ba'i zla la/ glo 'bur shar gyi ganydzira de 'khur nas dBus su chos 'tshol du 'ong/ Mal gro sgang bu dgon gsar du rTogs ldan Ru thog pa la phyag tu chen mo zhus nas bsgrub pa lo gsum byas pas/ nub cig gi rmi lam na/ bud med sma ra khyu ge ba cig byung nas/ Zhang rin po che la gsol ba thob/ sPyil khung su bsgrub pa gis zer ba rmis/ glo 'bur nub tu sku 'dra la mandala phul nas gsol ba btab pa'i sngar gyi nyams de kun las lhag pas nyams skyes/ de nas Byang gi Phyi 'brong bu spyil khung du ri mi 'babs par lo bcu gsum byas/ shing mo phag lo la Za lung btab/ slob ma rTogs ldan grwa pa mang du byung/ lo gsum cur tshogs pa bskyangs bdun cu don dgu 'brug gi lo la gshegs//”. “The native place of rTogs ldan mDzes pa was Za 'og gle g.yang Chung ka ru on the shore of mNga' ris Ma pham g.yu mtsho. He was born as the son of g.Yu rung Byin (spelled so) brlabs, the middle son of Mal dgos pa mGon. He was reputed to be the rebirth of Khyi ra ras pa. At La stod rTa sga, having received the *bsnyen par rdzogs* vow from mkhan po sPrug gcer ba and others, he was given [the name] mDzes pa snying po. Bringing (*zla la*) the offerings of the rTa sga ba, he left for dBus in search of teachings carrying the eastern *glo 'bur* (“side chapel”) *gandzira*. After he earnestly asked rTogs ldan Ru thog pa for [teachings] at dGon gsar, the branch [monastery of] Mal gro sgang, he spent three years (1200/1-1202/3) in meditation. One night, in a dream, he dreamt that a woman with whiskers appeared, who told him: “Pray to Zhang rin po che [and] perform meditation at sPyil khung”. He offered a *mandala* to the portrait image [of Zhang rin po che] in the western *glo 'bur* [of rTa sga dgon pa], whereupon a realisation arose in him which surpassed any previous perception. He then spent thirteen years (1203-1215) at sPyil khung [of] Byang gi Phyi 'Brong bu without descending from the mountain. In wood female ox (1215), he founded Za lung. Many monks who had realisations were his disciples. He protected its congregation for thirty years (1215-1244). He died in the year of the dragon (1244) aged seventy-nine (i.e. he was born in 1166)”.

The biography of rTogs ldan mDzes pa is significant in many respects, one of them being that the sequence of years in which this master engaged in his activities has helped me to fix the span of years during which the foundation of rTa sga by Sangs rgyas Tshal pa fell—i.e. after 1195 and before 1200—(see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.393-401).

I digress here to consider the identity of the locality Byang gi Phyi 'Brong bu sPyil khung, documented in *Deb ther dmar po* as the meditation place where rTogs ldan mDzes pa stayed for several years. This reference confirms the fact that 'Brong bu is the early name of 'Brong pa (as I say in *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.434 and n.726 and my article “Nomads of Byang and mNga' ris smad. A historical overview of their interaction in Gro shod, 'Brong pa, Glo bo and Gung thang from the 11th to the 15th century”). Byang gi Phyi 'Brong bu sPyil khung is, therefore, to be located in the same area by virtue of the reference to Byang (southern Byang thang), which is not conclusive, for it could refer to other territories, and to Phyi, which is conclusive, because it

also active in Central Tibet (*Deb ther dmar po* p.140 lines 13-17).

refers to Phyi [gling] and the Phyi [gling pa-s], nomads of the southern Byang thang area of 'Brong pa.

The location of Phyi 'Brong bu of Byang in southern Byang thang—the area of Pra dum rtse—is confirmed by *Deb ther dmar po* in a passage from the biography of the Tshal pa master Tshang 'dur ba chen po (on him see below p.51-60), who founded a temple at this locality. Tshang 'dur ba chen po's movements during that period led him from gTsang to Phyi, then to rTa sga and eventually to Ku thang. His foundation at Phyi indicates that the area was a stronghold of the Tshal pa. The passage (ibid. p. 144 lines 17-19) reads: "Phyi yul du Mang dkar ba rnam kyis gdan drangs//"; "The Mang dkar ba, having invited him to Phyi yul (lit. "external land", but better Phyi rTsang), and with them as the main sponsors, he founded Khyu ri dgon pa".

A locality in the same area, known as sPyi to *Gru chen gyi rnam thar* (p.444 lines 5-6), was where the Bon po master Gru chen Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan met his teacher, the great dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal. The same source gives Gru chen's itinerary which led him after sPyi to monasteries in the tracts of lands from sKyid grong to Dol po. Given the volatility of the spelling of place names, I cannot say whether sPyi corresponds to Phyi, but this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely.

Byang gi Phyi 'Brong bu should not be confused with other localities with the same names. *IHo rong chos 'byung* talks about seven disciples of Zhang g.Yu brag pa, who were lineage holders of *bKa' brgya ma* and stayed at seven meditation places frequented by their *bla ma* (ibid. p.198 line 17-p.199 line 5): "Zhang gi sgrub gnas bdun du bKa' rgya ma rnam thob nas gsang ba'i mtshan bdun gsol ba ni/ Bya mkhar [note: g.Ya' lung yang zer] 'Brong bu ru ba Padma badzra dang/ bSam yas mChims phu ru bDe chen rdo rje/ Zangs yul mon gdong du mTsho skyes rdo rje zhes/ 'Brong bu sPhyi khung du Mi bskyod rdo rje rgrags/ mTshams sgang chos spyil du Zhe sdang rdo rje gsol/ (p.199) sBrag gi g.yu brag tu dGa' ba'i rdo rje rgrags/ lHa sa bar khang du Rol pa'i rdo rje mtshan/ lHa sa bar khang la zhag gcig las ma bzhugs na'ang thugs dam gi bogs che zhing/ ngo mtshar ba'i lta mang du byung bas 'dren pa yin no/ khyad par gyi gnas chos nyid de kho na nyid mngon sum du gzigs pa ni mThur lHa lung gi brag ral pha bong spyi sprod ni mchog tu gyur pa yin no//; "The seven [to whom] secret names [were given], since they received *bKa' brgya ma* at the seven meditation places of [bla ma] Zhang, are as follows: Padma badzra at Bya mkhar [note: also known as g.Ya' lung]; bDe chen rdo rje at bSam yas 'Chims phu; mTsho skyes rdo rje at Zangs yul Mon gdong; Mi bskyod rdo rje at 'Brong bu sPyi khung; Zhe sdang rdo rje at mTshams sgang chos spyil; (p.199) dGa' ba'i rdo rje at sGrag gi g.Yu brag; and Rol pa'i rdo rje at lHa sa Bar khang. Despite staying no more than one day at lHa sa Bar khang, [Rol pa'i rdo rje] had great benefit from his meditation. Many extraordinary omens occurred, and he was led [by them]. At a special holy place, he realised the true essence of the ultimate nature of existence. This was [at] the boulders of mTshur [phu] lHa lung gi brag ral spyi sprod ("the mTshur lHa lung rocks, altogether forming a gorge"), and it turned out to be excellent".

Mi bskyod rdo rje stayed at 'Brong bu sPyi khung which bears the same name as the place where rTogs ldan mDzes pa sojourned for many years, absorbed in meditation. In the latter's *rnam thar*, the meditation place is called Byang gi Phyi 'Brong bu sPyi khung. It cannot be ruled out, but not definitively established either, that the two were one and the same person, given that the name Mi bskyod rdo rje, being a secret name, may have been used to address rTogs ldan mDzes pa, but there is no evidence to establish this.

Another great early bKa' brgyud pa who interacted with the Tshal pa, skyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po, was in 'Brong bu, but no further details are given in *'Jig rten mgon po'i ling tsho rnam thar*, written by his nephew 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas, who does not say more than that he was in 'Brong bu on his attempt to visit Gangs Ti se (see above n.23).

The life history of the proto sTod Tshal pa like him shows that they were mNga' ris pa but that their sphere of influence was in dBus, too, hence they lived a life itinerary opposite to that of those who followed Sangs rgyas Tshal pa's example and went to the lands on the "upper side".

Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje introduces the biographies of lHa phyug mkhar pa and rTogs ldan mDzes pa in *Deb ther dmar po* just before the section on the sTod Tshal pa. In particular the latter's *rnam thar* comes immediately before those of the sTod Tshal pa, as if he should be added to lHa phyug mkhar pa as a master whose work was conducive to the establishment of the group of the school's affiliates in sTod.

Again, unlike the literary treatment reserved to 'Jig rten mgon po's putative attempt to proceed to Gangs Ti se, the Tshal pa historical material does not clarify the extent of lHa phyug mkhar pa's personal involvement in mNga' ris. All one knows about his presence in the lands of the west is that he was in lower Byang thang in earth dragon 1208, several years after both the rTa sga Tshal pa and the Pu hrang Tshal pa, as I define them, had come into being (see below p.83).

In that earth dragon year, after 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa (1180-1240), heading the caravan of the 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s together with gNyos lHa nang pa, had left Khab Gung thang on the way to Gangs Ti se, and thus he was somewhere in southern Byang thang (aka Byang), he met a gathering of local monks and notables who went to welcome him. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam mthar* says that everyone who was in the area attended the ceremony with the exception of lHa phyug mkhar pa and a few other personalities.⁴⁷ This was at least one occasion during the long years in which he resided at lHa phyug mkhar dgon pa in dBus (1193-1215), from

One more 'Brong bu (also called 'Brong ngu) is located in Nag[s] shod. It was founded by Dus gsum mkhyen pa's disciple Gangs pa Rin chen 'od zer, the fourth abbot of mTshur phu. The modern work by Ri dbang bstan 'dzin, *Nags shod 'Bri ru'i lo rgyus* (p.347 lines 6-10) says: "De sngon 'Gom tsho shog dang da lta Shag chu shang khongs Wa thang dgon bKa' brgyud 'phel rgyas gling dang Glang del theg mchog gling gnyis nang las Shag Wa thang dgon bKa' brgyud 'phel rgyas gling ni Bod rab byung bzhi pa'i sa sprel (phyi lo 1248) 'Brong ngur chos rje Gangs pas phyag btab/ skabs der chos rje dgung lo bdun cu donbzhi phebs/"; "Of both Wa thang dgon bKa' brgyud 'phel rgyas gling, earlier known as 'Gom tsho shog, and Glang del theg mchog gling, at present under Shag chu shang, Shag Wa thang dgon bKa' brgyud 'phel rgyas gling was built by chos rje Gangs pa in 'Brong ngu in earth monkey 1248 of the fourth Tibetan *rab byung*. At the time, the *chos rje* reached seventy-five years of age (b.1175)".

47. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.469 lines 5-6): "Yang de'i tshe de'i dus na/ yul 'brog kun tu'ang/ bla ma Bla phyug chen po/ Mi sha skam po dang/ sTag lbags rlon pa kun yod/"; "At that time again, everyone from all the 'brog localities was present except the great bla ma Bla phyug, Mi sha skam po ("dry human flesh") and sTag lbags rlon pa ("wet tiger skin")".

Bla phyug is an obvious alternative spelling of lHa phyug [mkhar pa], found in several sources. Here the variant is introduced as a sign of respect since *bla* obviously denotes a high rank but not as much as *lha*. The other two personalities missing at the gathering seem to have been dubious characters, given their epithets. This would show that the gathering involved both religious and secular exponents.

which he derived his appellation,⁴⁸ that the Tshal pa master headed towards mNga' ris. It cannot be ruled out that he had been on a mission to visit the holy places of the sTod Tshal pa whom he had sent out to the west.⁴⁹

A historical correlation exists between the foundation of lHa phyug mkhar (1193) established close to the passing of bla ma Zhang (1193 or 1194) and the dispatching of the sTod Tshal pa to mNga' ris (after the death of g.Yu brag pa but before 1200). This was when Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge, too, headed west to his monastery Mar lung and then to Gangs Ti se.

All these events, once they are read together, show that the relocation of this school's exponents to the west did not occur during the life of the founder and supreme master of the Tshal pa. His wish was promptly actualised after his demise, so that all these efforts were the opus of his successors but the idea of going to occupy holy places in the west was the brainchild of bla ma Zhang.

That 1193 in sTod still was not a time ripe for the establishment of hermit practices is proved by the failed first expedition sent out by 'Jig rten mgon po in the previous year 1191 although the mission was mainly exploratory. This is deduced historically from the fact that the Tshal pa who preceded the 'Bri gung pa in sTod sent those who became the rTa sga ba after the 1193-1194 Muslim ravage of mNga' ris.

For reasons not explicated in the sources, the 'Bri gung pa could organise a second expedition only over one decade thereafter. Unlike the Tshal pa, they did not take the opportunity provided by the peaceful span of years after 1195 and before 1200, which were again favourable for another Tshal pa wave of hermits to sTod, these time to Pu hrang.

The expedition of a few Tshal pa to mNga' ris stod led this school's exponents to cover the entire arc of lands north of the Himalayan range in the west, an expansion of their territorial diffusion in the same direction. This brings back the presence of the Pu hrang Tshal pa to soon after the takeover of rTa sga, when gNam Klu rgyal, the predecessor of sTag tsha khri 'bar, was the local *jo bo*.

48. While other sources do not indicate the location of lHa phyug mkhar, the monastery lHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od founded in dBus, where he spent a conspicuous number of years from its establishment to his death (1193-1215), *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.199 line 12) says that it was located east of Ba lam dgon pa founded by his disciple Ba lam pa. *lHa phyug mkhar pa'i rnam thar* says that it was located at Ba lam phu ("on the higher side of Ba lam"). Sørensen-Hazod (*Rulers of the Celestial Plain* vol. 1 n.106 and n.410) propose that lHa phyug mkhar was in the lDan valley east of Ba lam in Upper sKyid shod, consonant to the statement in *lHo rong chos 'byung*. Ba lam went back to the dynastic period.

49. Since his biography in the Tshal pa section of *Deb ther dmar po* states that lHa phyug mkhar pa mainly resided at lHa phyug mkhar until 1210 and took care of it and Yang dgon until his death in 1215 (see n.41), the events mentioned in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* said to have taken place in a dragon year, which should be identified as 1208, lead to the suggestion that lHa phyug mkhar pa presumably was on a mission to the lands on the "upper side" in order to meet the sTod Tshal pa. The endeavour required the head of the group to move west instead of sTod Tshal pa members traveling to dBus or sending gift to the monastery.

Hence, a tentative chronology of the Tshal pa in the west is that the arrival of both their groups in mNga' ris was almost contemporary. The presence of the Pu hrang Tshal pa in mNga' ris stod can be tentatively dated to the same years 1195-1200 when the sTod Tshal pa settled in mNga' ris smad owing to the construction of rTa sga dgon pa in the area of Nub ris/ Nub ri. The Pu hrang Tshal pa moved farther west and northwest in Gu ge almost half a century later (see below p.267).

▪ The monastic ladder of the sTod Tshal pa

The hierarchy on which the sTod Tshal pa were structured is documented in another passage of *Deb ther dmar po* which shows that, despite being directly connected to lHa phyug mkhar, they historically depended on Tshal Gung thang, the great *gdan sa* of the school, so that they had to refer to both monasteries even after lHa phyug mkhar pa's death.⁵⁰

The fact that Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, after establishing rTa sga in an unspecified year after 1195 and before 1200 to strengthen the monastic composition there, asked Tshal Gung thang rather than lHa phyug mkhar for some monks may have to do with three possibilities:

- that Sangs rgyas Tshal pa specifically wanted those monks who were at the Tshal pa main monastery;
- that lHa phyug mkhar was not yet developed enough to bear the burden of providing even a few monks to other monasteries; or
- that the Tshal pa had to ask the main monastery in order to obtain monks to populate newly founded institutions, even if they were not residing at Tshal Gung thang.

No other *dgon pa* besides rTa sga was founded by the sTod Tshal pa in the lands to the west, but the frequent donations to the two head monasteries in dBus are signs that also those awarded to them by royal patronage were part of the same hierarchical structure.

▪ The Tshal pa distinctive travel westwards

The early proponents of the Tshal pa school to mNga' ris allow a few further observations. The first group of 'Bri gung pa and Tshal pa left for Gangs Ti se within a very short span of time from one another. The expeditions to the west of the Tshal pa and 'Bri gung pa being almost contemporaneous rested on their frequent sharing of the teachings they received from the masters of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools, who were all their teachers. They belonged to the same cultural milieu and held similar values and beliefs.

The 'Bri gung pa expedition headed by Ngad phu pa, although preliminary and explorative as in the case of the mission of gNyos, 'Gar and Chos to Tsa ri, was followed by the Muslim

50. A passage in *Deb ther dmar po* (p.149 lines 2-3) clarifies the hierarchy in the organization of the sTod Tshal pa, confirming their dependency directly on lHa phyug mkhar but eventually on Tshal Gung thang: "Tshal Gung thang dang lHa phyug tu'ang gsung rab dang/ nor zang zing gi 'bul bskyal/"; "Collected literary works and material goods were provided as donations to Tshal Gung [thang] and lHa phyug [mkhar]"

ravage of the 1193-1194. The concatenation of events left no trace of a bKa'brgyud pa diffusion. The divide between these two departures could have been imputable to Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge's awareness of the grim situation of the lands in the west that the Tshal pa more sagaciously postponed their going west to better days.

Sangs rgyas Tshal pa was able to go on to Gangs Ti se and then founded rTa sga; Mar lung pa briefly stayed behind at Mar lung, his native place in mNga' ris smad. He then went to Gangs Ti se, too.

The main difference between the journeys is why I consider the Tshal pa, despite having gone there a few years later, to have been the first to have established themselves in mNga' ris.

The Tshal pa strategy of transfer was quite different from that of the 'Bri gung pa. The 'Bri gung pa moved in large groups with a few charismatic headmen belonging to prestigious families leading the lot. The Tshal pa favoured sending a few individuals accompanied by equally few assistants, and they, in most cases, were not major disciples of bla ma Zhang but disciples of his disciples. One should recall that bla ma Zhang died in 1193 or 1194 (i.e. almost one quarter of a century before 'Jig rten mgon po), hence at a time not yet ripe for the institutionalisation of the hermitages—the invasion of mNga' ris was going on—and per force it was his own disciples who had to shoulder the responsibility of pursuing his policy of sending members of the school to distant localities.⁵¹

The Tshal pa aimed at creating a network of followers from the localities where they were active, and thus they were not dispersed in large numbers. They formed the nucleus of their school's diffusion in these lands. The 'Bri gung pa aimed at dispersing their *ri pa*-s in the retreat localities and initially keeping their headmen in these localities for a limited period of different length. 'Bri gung gling pa stayed for seven years (see below p.161), gNyos lHa nang pa and mGar Chos sdings pa for a short time (see below p.95), while the Tshal pa sent to mNga' ris remained there for good, as in the case of the Pu hrang Tshal pa, Sangs rgyas Tshal pa and Mar lung pa.⁵²

51. The tactics of Zhang g.Yu brag pa and sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po were different from those adopted centuries later by Tsong kha pa to diffuse his teachings to the Tibetan borderlands. Zhang g.Yu brag pa relied on a dBus pa disciple to establish the Tshal pa in Upper West Tibet. He sent his own disciples, who were—often but not always—from mNga' ris; 'Jig rten mgon po sent to sTod disciples who had little to do with the region. Tsong kha pa did not transfer his followers as 'Jig rten mgon po and the Tshal pa had done in order to disperse the population of his school. He preferred to send back his direct disciples to proselytise in their territory of origin, which was closer to the strategy adopted by the Tshal pa than to that of the 'Bri gung pa. In the case of mNga' ris, he sent Ngag dbang grags pa to Gu ge, sTod Sher bzang and dPal ldan shes rab to Mar yul. lHa dbang blo gros was sent to La dwags after Tsong kha pa's death.

52. Unlike Tshal pa Dharma bsod nams, the 'Bri gung pa 'Gar Dam pa was not awarded possessions in Pu hrang following the Tshal pa healing its ruler. This may have been due, for instance, that 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa, a head of the 1208 expedition, pursued the 'Bri gung pa policy of visiting mNga' ris temporarily. After leaving Pu hrang, he proceeded further west beyond the Tibetan-speaking world. The sTod Tshal pa, instead, became residents of the region. They were awarded localities and possessions because they became local *bla ma*-s.

Only with the creation of the *rdor 'dzin* post the local head of the 'Bri gung pa resided permanently in mNga' ris stod.

One exception to the 'Bri gung pa strategy was Seng ge ye shes, who remained in mNga' ris for the rest of his life—visits to 'Bri gung excluded. He thus adopted an approach similar to that of the Tshal pa, and consequently his disciples were mNga' ris pa or residents of mNga' ris.

Two ways of ascertaining the different strategies chosen by the various bKa' brgyud pa groups in mNga' ris—temporary sojourns versus lifetime activity—have been adopted in the pages of this book of mine. One way has been to take into consideration details meaningful to this topic that emerge from some of these masters' activities, as they appear in their biographies. For instance, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* says that, on his way to Pu hrang, 'Gar Dam pa, with whom I will concern myself profusely below, planned to gift a robe to Sa skya pandi ta (1182-1251) on his way back from the lands on the “upper side”, which shows that his sojourn in sTod had a term.⁵³ The other way has been to take into consideration the dates of the various stages of their journey and sojourns in the lands on the “upper side”.

The Tshal pa who travelled in small groups, or as a few individuals together, made for a much easier journey to Gangs Ti se and contiguous holy places than moving in larger caravans, the way the 'Bri gung pa did. The 'Bri gung pa were thus much more prone to be attacked along the way by foreign marauders or Tibetan bandits, given that their caravans attracted their looting spree, as was the case during their next attempt (see below p.84-86).

The next wave of Tshal pa

The presence of Tshal pa exponents who joined the ranks of the rTa sga ba soon after its foundation occurred either in the last years of the 12th century or the first ones of the 13th. They brought—especially Dharma bsod noms—a new wave of activity which had no contacts with the enterprises of Mar lung pa.

It ensues that the appointment of these Tshal pa at rTa sga was not so much to populate the monastery with more monks. Following the foundation of rTa sga, a further wave of Tshal pa was sent to expand the activities of the school in mNga' ris. They left a significant trace in the lands of mNga' ris smad, such as Glo bo and sKyid grong.

▪ rTogs ldan Dharma bsod noms

Of the four persons summoned by Sangs rgyas Tshal pa upon founding rTa sga, his nephew

53. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.468 lines 2-3): “Phyis tshur lam lo tsa ba dang mjal na/ na bza' sku lus gang tsam 'bul dgongs tsa/ pan chen dang/ slob dpon chu phar ka gnas gzhi' cig na bzhugss nas gda' bas ma mjal gsung/”; “Later, having thought to offer the *lo tsa ba* a full robe for his body if he could meet him on his way back [from sTod], he said that, since the *pan chen* (i.e. Sa skya pandi ta) and the *slob dpon* were residing at a holy place across the river, he could not meet [the Sa skya pa master]”.

Jo sras, who was probably chosen to be the *gdan sa* after him, died two months after arriving at rTa sga. rTogs ldan Dharma bsod nams was chosen by the monastery's founder and its first abbot to be the next *gdan sa*. He ascended the throne of rTa sga soon after his arrival (*Deb ther dmar po* p.141 line 23-p.142 line 10) and supervised the spread of the Tshal pa in Pu hrang, Nub ris/Nub ri, the Men Zhang lands—the '*brog pa*-s who inhabited lands in lower Byang thang, east of Gro shod where Pra dum is sited and west of Gung thang—Dol po and Glo bo (ibid. p.142 lines 8-10 and *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* f.10a line 4-f.10b line 3).

While Dharma bsod nams kept areas in mNga' ris stod—especially Pu hrang—under his personal ascendancy, the other two Tshal pa sent after the foundation of rTa sga, Tshang 'dur ba chen po and bSam gtan rdzong pa, concentrated their activity on several lands of mNga' ris smad and bar. They were responsible for the diffusion of this school in these territories.

▪ Tshang 'dur ba chen po

Tshang 'dur ba chen po spent practically all his monastic life in the lands of mNga' ris smad under the jurisdiction of rTa sga. These territories are termed *lho nub gung gsum*, "south, west and central, altogether three" (*Deb ther dmar po* p.143 lines 10-12). This is a geographical notion that embraces Mang yul as *lho* (to the south of Gung thang); the '*brog pa* lands in lower Byang thang and Nub ris/Nub ri as *nub* (to the west of Gung thang); and Gung thang as *gung* (the central territory). He founded a number of monasteries, established practices based on mantric recitation, and engaged in philanthropic enterprises.

Tshang 'dur ba was quite young when he went to mNga' ris, since he received the *dge slong* vow at rTa sga from Sangs rgyas Tshal pa.⁵⁴ Before proceeding to the lands on the "upper side" and becoming a major member of the rTa sga ba, he was inducted into the teachings of the Tshal pa school by lHa phyug mkhar pa and was given the *dge bsnen* vows by the latter's disciple, bla ma Ba lam pa.⁵⁵

54. mKhan po sPrug gcer ba must have had a predominant role in the spread of Tshal pa influence to the lands of mNga' ris smad, although he remains almost unnoticed in the sources. He was a younger contemporary of Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, since Tshang 'dur ba chen po is found completing sPrug gcer ba's *phyi rten* quite some time later in his life. Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, instead, died soon after Tshang 'dur ba chen po arrived at rTa sga (*Deb ther dmar po* p.143 lines 5-9 and p.145 lines 2-3 respectively).

Another Tshal pa who helped to reinforce the presence of the sect in mNga' ris smad was a nameless disciple of the otherwise unknown Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba. He founded the two monasteries in Mang yul—'Jam dpal gling, from which the well known and still existing 'Jam dpal gling pa family descends—and Rin chen spungs pa (ibid. p.147 lines 11-12). In the documents of the 'Jam dpal gling pa the establishment of 'Jam dpal gling is credited to 'Jam dbyangs chen po, a disciple of Zhang g. Yu brag pa and a member of this family from sKyid grong (see Vitali, "Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-bryud-pa sources)").

55. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.142 line 23-p.143 line 5): "Tshang 'dur ba chen po de yab kyis dPal ldan pa'i drung du spang thog cig phul (p.143) 'dug/ cher song ba dang/ bla ma Ba lam pa'i drung du Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la rab tu byung/ mtshan yang Tshul khirms seng ge bya bar btags/ khrid

Following his formal inclusion into the group of the sTod Tshal pa, he perfected his meditation skills in such great hermitages of the region as rje btsun Mid la's *rdzong drug*,⁵⁶

sgrub skor gdams pa thams cad kyis rgyud smin par mdzad cing/ de nas rin po che Dan sa pa'i drung du byon nas gzim g.yog mdzad kin khrid sgrub skor gdams pa thams cad gnanng/"; "Tshang 'dur ba chen po was sent by his father to dPal ldan pa for a while. (p.143) When he grew up, he was ordained by bla ma Ba lam pa to the teachings of Sangs rgyas. He was given the name of Tshul khriims seng ge. He had *Tantra* thoroughly imparted to him (Ba lam pa) by means of *khrid* and all the *gdams pa* of *bsgrub skor*. Subsequently he went to see rin po che gDan sa pa. He was his *gzim g.yog* ("personal attendant") and obtained [from him] all the instructions on *khrid* and *bsgrub skor*".

56. It is perhaps needless to remind the reader that the word *rdzong* in the bKa' brgyud pa tradition refers to a retreat where ascetics performed meditation, called after the places where rje btsun Mid la resided during his hermit life. Brag skya rdo rje rdzong is included in the list of Mid la's *rdzong drug* known as the *yongs su grags pa phyi'i rdzong drug*. The standard biography of him by gTsang smyon He ru ka (*Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* p.188 line 3-p.189 line 8) lists several groups of his *rdzong*-s. They are, together with the *yongs su grags pa phyi'i rdzong drug* ("the six universally known exoteric *rdzong*"), the *ma grags pa nang gi rdzong drug* ("the six unknown [and thus] esoteric *rdzong*"), the *gsang ba'i rdzong drug* ("the six secret *rdzong*"), which formed the *lte ba bco brgyad* ("the eighteen [holy places corresponding] to the navel (i.e. the central holy places)", plus the *yang rdzong gnyis* ("the two additional *rdzong*"), twenty *rdzong* altogether.

Further, his caves are also classified as the *yongs su grags pa'i phug chen bzhi* ("the four universally known caves") and *ma grags pa'i bzhi* ("the unknown four"). The *yongs su grags pa phyi'i rdzong drug* are Brag dkar rta so dbu ma rdzong, sMin khyug grib ma rdzong, Ling ba brag dmar rdzong, Rag ma byang chub rdzong, sKyang phan nam mkha' rdzong, and Brag skya rdo rje rdzong. The *ma grags pa nang gi rdzong drug* are mChong lung khyung gi rdzong, sKyid pa nyi ma rdzong, Khu byug dben pa rdzong, Shel phug chu shing rdzong, Be rtse 'dod yon rdzong, and rTsig pa rkang mthil rdzong. The *gsang ba'i rdzong drug* are rGya brag nam mkha' rdzong, sTag phug seng ge rdzong, sPas phug ma mo rdzong, La phug padma rdzong, Glang sgo klu bdud rdzong, and Khro rgyal rdo rje rdzong. The *yang rdzong gnyis* are sKyid phug nyi ma rdzong and sPo mtsho nam mkha' rdzong. The *yongs su grags pa'i phug chen bzhi* are gNya' nang gi Grod pa phug, La phyi'i bDud 'dul phug, Brin gyi 'Bri lce phug, and Ti se'i rDzu 'phrul phug. The *ma grags pa'i bzhi* are rTsa'i rKang shugs phug, Ron gyi 'od gsal phug, Ra la'i Za 'og phug and Ku thang gi Phug ron phug.

g.Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa, *Mid la'i rnam thar* (p.24 lines 19-35) has a long list of places that the biography associates with the great poet-hermit's practice. He says that the number of these retreat places in the mountains is beyond imagination and passes to enumerate them:

IHo brag lung pa phu
Gra Dol gZhung gsum
Ri bo sgang dang Ce phu Gur dkar
Tsa phu brag
Tsa phu Brag dmar
Brag dkar sPo mtho
rTa so dbu ma
Za 'og phug
'Od gsal phug
rKang tse phug

rTse nyang phug
 Ra gyang phug
 Ling nga brag dmar
 sMin 'khyug grib rdzong
 Rag ma byang chub rdzong
 'phan nam mkha' rdzong
 Ku thang na yang Brag skya rdo rje rdzong
 Khra tshang srin po rdzong
 Shel phug nam mkha' rdzong
 dBen pa khu byug rdzong
 sKyid pa nyi ma rdzong
 rKang mthil phug
 rTsig pa phug
 Mon yul Bro'i ri khrid rnams
 dkar phug dang/ Pad ma'i rdzong drug
 bCung pa'i ri khrod
 sNya nam rGyags phu
 Nam phug
 mKhar phug
 Chang rdza phug
 Se rib Sing kha nags
 La phyi gong
 'Brug
 sKyid dang
 bKra shis sgang gi dKar leb
 He byams dKar leb
 A ne mes phug
 Pha 'ong grod phug
 Chu mig mgo mang
 Pus gong rDza ma phug
 dKar leb
 Chu bzang phug
 Shing bzang phug chen
 Ram sding phug chen
 Ra lung Zhal dkar
 Ra 'ug shar nub
 Ra 'ug brag rtsa
 Tshar leb gong 'og
 sBas pa kun gsal
 bDud brdugs dpal gyi phug mo che/
 dPa' le brag thog
 Padma phu byang rta phug
 Zur phug
 Dam phug
 Lung bstan phug
 dNgos grub phub
 dKar chung phug

sPang rgyan gangs kyi ra ba and dBang po'i brag. This marked the end of his formative period, and he began to be actively engaged in religious deeds. He dedicated his first major accomplishment to the memory of the *bla ma* who invited him to rTa sga. He had the eight-*mtho* high *gdung khang* of sNang sgom ras pa—another name of Sangs rgyas Tshal pa—and a statue as *'bum phyi rten* made at Tshong 'dus mgur mo. In the absence of a more precise

gCong rong phug
 Sad ma yang dben
 Chang gdong gong 'og
 Ras chen shar nub seng rdzong gong 'og
 Ze phug gong 'og/ bSil ba 'tshal
 rNa g.yon sum mdo
 dNgos grub kyi rug pa gong 'og
 Yang dben pa brin
 rGa ru phug
 Dom phug
 gNyug sdengs
 rGyab ri phug
 Bon ri phug
 Yang dben Pug mo che
 sPo mtho gong 'og
 sNgo rdong phub
 Dur khrod
 mGur chu phug
 'Om chung
 rKyed dkar phug
 Krong khri bkra shis sgang
 Shel phug
 Bla ma phug
 Brag mkhar
 Brags dmar sPo mtho
 rDo rje skyid phug
 'Chong lung dang/ Brin smad kyi bla ma phug
 La so phug stod smad
 Bal po ri khrod
 rGya gar dPal gyi ri

g. Yung ston Zhi byed ras pa's passage (ibid. p.24 lines 35-36) ends with words that disprove rje btsun Mid la's presence in all these holy places: "Bal po'i ri khrod rnam dang/ mdo na rGya gar dPal gyi ri tshun chod dang/ smad kyi shar Tsong ka yan chod dang/ byang A 'dar tsha kha tshun chod/ yun ring thung ma gtogs pa/ bla ma Mid la ras pas ma bzhugs pa tsam med//"; "From the Bal po mountain retreats and, in short, rGya gar dPal gyi ri up to Tsong kha in the east on the lower side and from A 'dar tsha kha in the north, it did not take a long time [for him] to cover them. Bla ma Mid la ras pa did not stay in some [of them]".

Rather than the places frequented by rje btsun Mid la but inclusive of those where the great poet-hermit resided, the list is a comprehensive enumeration of caves, hermitages and other holy places mostly in the territories of Central Tibet but extending to Bal po in the south and Tsong kha in the northeast.

statement, it cannot be ruled out that Tshong 'dus mgur mo in Myang smad was the original place from where the founder of rTa sga came.⁵⁷

The major event which marked the inception of his independent activity in mNga' ris smad was the grant of a plot for a *dgon pa* that he received from three local dignitaries in the Tshang 'dur valley, on which he founded lHa sdings dgon pa,⁵⁸ later frequented by the Bon po master Gru chen Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan (1251-1314).⁵⁹ This was Tshang 'dur ba's base from where he trained the people of *lho nub gung gsum*.⁶⁰

Tshang 'dur, the place where he built a monastery and derived his appellative from, must be searched for to the north of sKyid grong and south of rDzong dkar. *Deb ther dmar po* says that the estate, donated to him by three *yon bdag*-s and on which he built Tshang 'dur dgon pa, was located in the area of Brag dkar rta so. The name of this famous rje btsun Mid la's

57. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 lines 5-9): "rTa gar byon nas Sangs rgyas Tshal pa dang/ mkhan po sPrug gcer ba gnyis las dge slong mdzad/ rDzong drug dang sPang rgyan gangs kyi ra ba dang/ dBang po'i brag rnam su bsgrub pa mthar phyin pa mdzad cing/ sNang sgom ras pa'i gdung khang mtho brgyad ma cig Tshong 'dus 'gur mor bzhengs/ phyi rten sku 'bum bzhengs//"; "Having gone to rTa sga, he took the *dge slong* vow from both Sang rgyas Tshal pa and mkhan po sPrug gcer ba. He brought his meditation to the ultimate at the *rdzong drug*, sPang rgyan gangs kyi ra ba and dBang po'i brag. He built sNang sgom ras pa's *gdung khang*, eight *mtho* in height, at Tshong 'dus 'gur mo. As for the *phyi rten*, he built a *sku 'bum*".

58. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 lines 10-12): "dBen gnas Brag dkar la sbyong kin bzhugs dus/ Khal glang mi/ g.Yog mgon po/ ston pa Be chung/ khong yon bdag gsum gyis Tshang 'dur gyi lung pa de phul/ dgon pa btav/ dgon pa'i ming yang lHa sdings su btags//"; "When [Tshang 'dur ba] stayed at dben gnas Brag dkar in order to practise the power of meditation, the men of Kha glang, g.yog mGon po and ston pa Be chung, altogether three *yon bdag*, offered him the land of Tshang 'dur. He founded a *dgon pa* [here]. He gave the name of lHa sdings to the *dgon pa*".

59. In his life activity, Tshang 'dur ba focused on Byang thang and mNga' ris, Gru chen Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, who belonged to the eclectic tradition of the rMa masters, also was at lHa sdings, the monastery at Tshang 'dur from which Tshang 'dur ba derived his name (*Gru chen gyi rnam thar* p.445 lines 1-2). Gru chen in the years after wood monkey 1284 (when Gru chen was aged thirty-four) (ibid. p.443 line 6) and before either iron tiger 1290 or iron hare 1291, when he was aged respectively fifty-one or fifty-two (ibid. p.445 line 6, see my *A short history of Mustang* where these dates are elaborated on cross-checking the Bon po material against Buddhist chronological evidence). As to Gru chen Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, he received teachings from dBuil ston Khyung rgod rtsal at sPyi (see above n.46) and then went to Zhu ber dgon pa, and subsequently to lHa sdings, and still later, on drang srong bDe ba 'bum's invitation, to Dol po. From there he moved to Ta rab, and finally went to Ka rag in Glo bo stod (ibid. p.444 line 5-p.445 line 5, where his destinations are given in sequence).

60. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 lines 13-15): "sPyan ras gzigs dngos yin lung bstan la rten nas sNang sgom zhig po zhes par grags/ lHo Nub Gung gsum/ jo bo sKu rgyal gyi sa cha yan chad gdul bya'i mthil du gyur//"; "Since a prophecy said that he was a true sPyan ras gzigs, [Tshang 'dur ba] became known as sNang sgom zhig po. He became the main [master] of the people in need of training in the heart of *lho nub gung gsum* up to the place [under the control] of jo bo sKu rgyal (i.e. sKyid grong ruled by this lord, see below p.59)".

holy place is given in the passage as Brag dkar but in the brief résumé of Tshang 'dur ba's life at the end of his biography contained in the same source, the locality is identified as Brag dkar rta so, where both texts say that he performed meditation.⁶¹ Hence Tshang 'dur dgon pa must have been in the area where the 'Or ma gorge is located, this being the gorge joining Gung thang in the north to Mang yul in the south, and onto which the side valley of Brag dkar rta so opens up.

Following his foundation of Tshang 'dur, he remained in Mang yul, the land which *Deb ther dmar po* defines as the one of the Jo bo pa (i.e. the people of the sKyid grong Jo bo, see n.64), and took over 'Phags pa Wa ti'i lha khang.⁶² He gave needed impulse to agriculture in sKyid grong in order to be able to pursue philanthropic activities such as the distribution of *thug pa*, and established the recitation of Ma ni. The fact that he took over 'Phags pa Wa ti'i lha khang, well known to be connected with the cult of sPyan ras gzigs, has the sense of a consequential move given his eagerness to diffuse the practice of reciting Ma ni and thus by means of devotion towards the sKyid grong Jo bo. Tshang 'dur ba's jurisdiction over the temple is proved by the fact that he appointed its *dkon gnyer* on a rotating basis.⁶³ He then extended his sphere of

61. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.145 lines 10-12): “dGon pa Brag dkar rta so dBu ma rdzong/ sMan khang/ Go bo tsha rnams su bsgrub pa mdzad cing/ Byang chub sems dpa'i nram thar gyis sems can gyi don dpag tu med pa mdzad/””; “He meditated at dgon pa Brag dkar rta so dbu ma rdzong, sMan khang and Go bo tsha. He did a lot for the benefit of sentient beings, [which can be read about] in the biography of [this] *Byang chub sems dpa'-s*”.

62. I deal with Tshang 'dur ba chen po in this book of mine rather than in my article “Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)”, although he spent most of his life activity in the area of sKyid grong. In that article, I concentrate on the historical evidence on this place derived from local sources, hence I have focused on the 'Jam pa gling pa and Byang chub glin pa families. I deal here with the diffusion of several bKa' brgyud pa masters who came to localities of mNga' ris in order to put into practice the school's policy of spreading its teachings on a larger size.

63. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 lines 15-23): “Gro don dang 'phrin las dpag tu med pa la brten nas/ Kyi rong du Jo bo'i drung du byon dus btsun pa rnams Wa 'di yi 'gram la gro 'debs/ ngan long snying rje ba/ zar med gos med rnams la snying rje skyes nas jo bo pa'i dpon rgyud la/ nga Jo bo pa'i drung 'dir tshug na thug tshul cig 'dzugs/ ma tshug na phye khal bcu drug yod pa 'dis dzam drug cig thug pa cig btang ba'i khyed kyi sa cha cig g.yar btang bar zhus zhu pas/ khong gi thug tshul gyi sa cha rnams phul nas/ dus de nas bzung ji srid 'khor ba ma stong gi bar du thug tshul dang/ ma ni'i rgyun tshugs/ Jo bo'i dkon gnyer la bstun pa re re bzhag//; “[Tshang 'dur ba] exhibited uncountable deeds for the benefit of sentient beings. So when he went to see the Jo bo in Kyi rong (spelled so). He advised the monks to plant wheat near Wa 'di (spelled so, i.e. 'Phags pa Wa ti). Feeling compassion for the disabled and those with no food or clothing, he begged the Jo bo pa'i *dpon rgyud* (i.e. the ruling lineage of the people of sKyid grong, the people of Phags pa Wa ti): “I wish to introduce a system of *thug pa* distribution in the land of the Jo bo pa. If this is not possible, I wish to distribute *thug pa* made with my sixteen *khal* of *tsam pa*, and thus I would like to hire a place for this purpose”. He was granted a place for the distribution of *thug pa*, so that the distribution of *thug pa* and the recitation of Ma ni were introduced [in order to last] till the destruction of the present world. He set up a monk to be the *dkon gnyer* of Jo bo [Wa ti] on a turn by turn basis”.

influence to Byang sprin,⁶⁴ the twin temple of 'Phags pa Wa ti lha khang, provided for its maintenance and introduced the practice of the recitation of Ma ni there, too.⁶⁵

sKyid grong was made an area under Tshal pa influence around the third quarter of the 12th century by 'Jam dbyangs chen po, who was a disciple of Zhang g. Yu brag pa and the Tshal pa member of the local 'Jam pa gling pa family.⁶⁶ He may have been responsible for paving the way to Tshang 'dur ba chen po's ascendancy *in loco*.

The pattern that Tshang 'dur ba adopted in order to diffuse the school teachings was two-pronged. He took over the main ancient temples of Mang yul—'Phags pa Wa ti'i lha khang

64. Byams sprin is defined as *rlung gi kha gnon* (the temple "[meant] to suppress the element wind") in *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 line 23-p.144 line 1). It was built by Srong btsan sgam po and is included by the sources among the *yang 'dul* (see Aris, *Bhutan* p.30; and Vitali, "The narrative of Srong btsan sgam po's subjugation of the demoness: schemes and historicity" in my *Essays on the history of Tibet*).

65. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.143 line 23-p.144 line 5): "De nas Byams sprin rlung gi kha gnon (p.144) du byin nas/ Byams sprin gnyer pa'i gzhis phul nas/ ma ni'i thun btsugs/ de nas yang/ sPang zhing bcu dpon gyi 'go byas pa'i sPang zhing phul rnam dang/ yon bdag sGar pa rnam kyis Zhog phug gi dgon pa sa gzhis phul nas dgon pa btab/ 'Jam dpal dang ma ni'i thun btsugs/ Bal sding gi bla ma rGyal ba shes rab kyis chos kyang mang du zhus//"; "After going to Byams sprin rlung gi kha gnon (spelled so) (p.144) and having offered an estate to maintain Byams sprin, he established sessions of Ma ni recitation. Then again, since the people of sPang zhing, yon bdag sGar pa and sPang zhing *bcu dpon* who were the headmen, offered him land for the *dgon [pa]* of Zhog phug and for an estate, he built the *dgon pa* [there]. He introduced sessions of 'Jam dpal and Ma ni recitation. rGyal ba shes rab, the *bla ma* of Bal lding, obtained many teachings [from him]".

66. On 'Jam dbyangs chen po and the activities of the 'Jam pa gling pa family from sKyid grong, to which he belonged, see Vitali, "Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)". One cannot avoid wondering what the sectarian affiliation of the old temples of sKyid grong was before the Tshal pa took them over.

It is not clear what prior religious orientation was popular there. One should, for instance, consider Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan's frequentation of the 'Phags pa Wa ti statue, which may imply that *bsnyung gnas* was not entirely unknown in sKyid grong before the Tshal pa set foot there, also given that his disciple Nyid phu pa met him there. Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (vol. II p.329 lines 2-4). The statue spoke to Zla ba rgyal mtshan twice. On one occasion, Jo bo 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po spoke to Zla ba rgyal mtshan directly and, on the other, he talked indirectly about him because he told Ong po lo tsa ba that Zla ba rgyal mtshan was such a great master that there was no difference between him and sPyan ras gzigs. *'Phags pa Wa ti'i rnam thar* (f.16a lines 2-4) reads: "'Di nyid gsung byon pa yang/ sKyid mi grong ba boyn la gong du bshad pa ltar gsung lhugs par gngang la/ Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan pa/byas pa med pa'i yus ma che/ lha khang brgya rtsa brgyad bzhengs pa sogs dang/ Ong po lo tsa ba la/ Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan 'Phags pa yin no//"; "With regard to ['Phags pa Wa ti's] speeches, concerning the flow of words he said, in a way similar to the case, mentioned above, of ['Phags pa Wa ti] talking to the seven families of sKyid [grong] men (sKyid mi grong bdun), [he told] Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan: "Do not be proud. You did not do anything [special]". [Following this statement, Zla ba rgyal mtshan] built 108 *lha khang*-s. [Wa ti] told Ong po lo tsa ba: "Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan is a noble person".

and Byang sprin—and built his own ones. In line with this pattern of religious control, Tshang ’dur ba chen po founded a *dgon pa* at Zhogs phug, a locality offered to him by the sPang zhing people, headed by sPang zhing *bcu dpon* and yon bdag sGar pa. sPang zhing is where Byang sprin was built during the time of Srong btsan sgam po.

In those years, Tshang ’dur ba was active in many places which need to be identified. For instance, he introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation at sGang; in Lar, the yon bdag rGun pa Shag mun offered estates for a *dgon pa*, lands, grass and wood; he received a plot from gSang ma and built a great *ka ni ’i mchod rten* at rGyun mda’.⁶⁷

Following those events, yon bdag Rin chen mgon invited Tshang ’dur ba chen po to Gung thang and offered him the *gtsug lag khang* of Srad thang, while sNyams yon bdag bSam grub offered him Brag Shug gseb, where he built a monastery.⁶⁸ The names of these donors, if combined with those in Mang yul, help to shed a dim light on the secular conditions in these two regions when Mang yul, and especially Gung thang, had not yet become strongholds of Sa skya’s authority.

At a time when Sa skya had still not reached the height of its power, the local Mang yul Gung thang elite extended its patronage to the Tshal pa. Although it seems that Tshang ’dur ba was not directly sponsored by the royal family of Gung thang. This was the case in Mang yul; but in Gung thang he could in any event count on another sponsor.

67. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.144 lines 5-15): “Khong rang gi lHo skal gyi sGang du ma ni’i thun btsugs/ lar na yon bdag rGun pa Shag mun rnams kyis dgon gzhis/ lung pa rtsa shing rnams phul/ dgon pa dmun pa/ yon bdag cig gi ma ni’i thun btsugs/ gSang ma nas gzhis phul nas dgon par ma ni’i thun btsugs/ sNgags lding nas yon bdag gcig gis gzhis phul nas ma ni’i thun btsugs/ dgun bzhug gi ring la thug tshul nar mar btsugs/ dgun bzhug thon pa’i rjes la grwa pa thams cad kun mchod du ’dus nas/ rGyal ’bring rnam gsum/ sKyabs ’gro Sems skyed/ Yi ge brgya pa/ ’Jam dpal/ rNam ’joms/ sGrol ma/ ma ni’i mhun kha mang po btsugs nas zhag nyi shu tsam re thun mo che byed/ rGyun mdar Ka ni’i mchod rten chen po bzhengs/”; “He (Tshang ’dur ba) introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation at sGang. In Lar, the yon bdag rGun pa Shag mun and others (*rnams*) offered estates for the *dgon pa*, lands, grass and wood. dGon pa dMun pa introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation for the sake of the *yon bdag*. After a plot was received from gSang ma, sessions of Ma ni recitation were introduced at [this] *dgon pa*. One *yon bdag* from sNgags lding offered a piece of land, and sessions of Ma ni recitation were introduced. Regular distributions of *thug pa* were made at the end of winter. All monks gathered for *kun mchod* (“daily ceremonies”) at the end of winter. Great recitations of [*Yum*] in its long (*rgyal* sic for *rgyas*), middle and short version; *sKyabs ’gro*; *Sems skyed*; *Yi ge brgya pa*; ’Jam dpal; rNam ’joms; sGrol ma; and sessions of Ma ni were performed many times for a period of twenty days. [Tshang ’dur ba] built a great *ka ni ’i mchod rten* at rGyun mda’”.

68. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.144 lines 15-18): “Gung thang du yon bdag Rin chen mgon gyis gdan drangs nas/ Srad thang gi gtsug lag khang phul/ gzhis kyi ma ni’i thun btsug/ sNyams yon bdag bSam grub kyis gdan drangs/ Brag sgug gseb phul nas dgon pa btab ma ni’i thun btsugs/”; “Yon bdag Rin chen mgon invited [Tshang ’dur ba chen po] to Gung thang and offered him the *gtsug lag khang* of Srad thang. He introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation at the estate [here]. sNyams yon bdag bSam grub invited him. After he offered him Brag Shug gseb, he built a monastery there, and introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation”.

The information that Tshang 'dur ba entertained *yon mchod* with the royalty in Mang yul but not in Gung thang seems to imply that Mang yul and Gung thang were controlled by different local powers some time before the first Ya rtse Gung thang war which took place between 1235 and 1239. This is a small step forward towards understanding the secular situation prevailing in sKyid grong during that period.

Deb ther dmar po documents that sKyid grong was ruled by a chieftain, an offspring of the sKyid grong lord, namely jo bo sKu rgyal (*Deb ther dmar po* p.143 lines 14-15), at the time of Tshang 'dur ba chen po's frequentation of this locality, which may have taken place, in the absence of dates, during the first or second quarter of the 13th century.

rTen gsum bzhengs pa 'i dkar chag, written by Blo gros chos 'phel (1665-1727?), mentions rgyal bu Jo sras as the ruler of sKyid grong and sponsor of Man ston Sangs rgyas, a master from the 'Jam dpal gling pa family from Grwa in Mang yul. The period in which rgyal bu Jo sras ruled sKyid grong was around the mid 12th century, for Man ston was the uncle of 'Jam dbyangs chen po, who in turn was the disciple of bla ma Zhang g. Yu brag pa. rGyal bu Jo sras was an earlier local ruler in sKyid grong than jo bo sKu rgyal, given that 'Jam dbyangs chen po was a disciple of bla ma Zhang, while Tshang 'dur ba chen po was a disciple of lHa phyug mkhar pa, in his turn a disciple of bla ma Zhang. The sequence would be that rgyal bu Jo sras was followed—not necessarily as his immediate successor—by jo bo sKu rgyal and then by the latter's offspring. It cannot be ascertained with some confidence whether those two belonged to the same ruling house.

After staying in Gung thang, Tshang 'dur ba founded a monastery, known as Khyu ri, at the locality of Phyi in the area of 'Brong pa (see above n.46), after the Mang dkar ba invited him there.⁶⁹

He then concentrated his attention on the "mother" *dgon pa*, rTa sga, which he expanded considerably by building Tshes dben bla brang, a *kun mchod* room ("for daily ceremonies"), a *dkar phibs* ("entrance hall"?), and a religious throne at rTa sga Bla yer. He also added portrait statues, presumably of Tshal pa masters related to the monastery, but their identity is not indicated.⁷⁰

69. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.144 lines 18-19): "gTsang du yon bdag Blo gros kyis gdan drangs nas sBo khung gi gzhis phul/ ma ni'i thun btsugs/ Phyi yul du Mang dkar ba rnam kyis gdan drangs nas yon bdag gis mthil byas/ Khyu ri dgon pa btav/ ma ni'i thun btsugs//"; "Yon bdag Blo gros invited [Tshang 'dur ba chen po] to gTsang, and offered him the estate at sBo khung. There he introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation. After the Mang dkar ba invited him to Phyi yul (see above n.46) and became his main sponsors, he founded Khyu ri dgon pa. He introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation".

70. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.144 line 21-p.145 line 1): "rTa sga Tshes bcu bla brang brtsig/Sangs rgyas Tshal pa'i mchod pa zla ba byung ngo cog dang/ tshes bcu nar mar btsugs/ rTa sga'i kun mchod ka ba bzhi rtsigs/ dkar phig phub/ (p.145) rTa sga Bla yer chos khri brtsigs/ sku 'dra bzhengs//"; "[Tshang 'dur ba chen po] built Tshes dben bla brang at rTa sga. Here he introduced the monthly ritual in commemoration of Sangs rgyas Tshal pa and the *tshes bcu* ("ceremony held regularly on the tenth of the month"). He built the *kun mchod* [room] of rTa sga with four pillars

The last events of his life took him to various other places of Tshal pa influence. He was at sPrug gcer where he completed the *phyi rten* of mkhan po sPrug gcer ba, who had given him the *dge slong* vow; and founded Byang chub gling dgon pa upon the invitation of the *yon bdag* of the Dros pa.⁷¹ He was eventually active in Ku thang, where he founded a monastery at sProg to fulfil the request of yon bdag rGyal.⁷² He also built a great *khag ni mchod rten* at 'Or ma'i Sa 'gag (the “area with an obstruction”, i.e. its gorge), the defile leading to sKyiid grong to its south. I wonder whether there was a custom of building *mchod rten*-s there, for an unnamed disciple of Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba is recorded in the sources as the builder of a *stupa* at the gorge,⁷³ unless this unnamed disciple was Tshang 'dur ba himself, but he is nowhere identified as a follower of Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba.

Tshang 'dur ba's dates are nowhere given in the sources. All one comes to know is that he died when he was seventy years old. This void affects the whole of his micro-chronology, so that the foundation years of his many monasteries cannot be assessed, unless the *rnam thar* of him cited in *Deb ther dmar po* is found and contains dates.⁷⁴

and a *dkar phyig* (an alternative spelling of *dkar phibs*, “a roofed structure?”). (p.145) He built a *chos khri* (i.e the throne from which a *bla ma* gives teachings) at rTa sga Bla yer. He made portrait statues [of the rTa sga masters?].

71. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.145 lines 2-6): “sPrug gcer du mkhan po'i phyi rten ma grub par 'dug pa'i phyi rten gyi 'bum pa bzhengs nas phul/ Dros pa'i yon bdag nams kyis gdan drangs nas Byang chub gling gi dgon pa btab/ chos khri thang la chos gsungs/ yon bdag nams kyis gzhis phul nas 'Jam dpal dang ma ni'i thun btsugs/ yon mchod nams kyi tsha tsha nyi ma lnga re re 'debs pa'i dge srol btsugs/””; “As the *phyi rten* of mkhan po [sPrug gcer ba] at sPrug gcer was not yet completed, he had the 'bum pa of the *phyi rten* made and offered it [there]. Invited by the *yon bdag* of the Dros pa [to do so], he founded Byang chub gling gi dgon pa. He gave religious instructions at Chos khri thang. As the *yon bdag* offered him an estate for a *dgon pa*, he introduced sessions of 'Jam dpal and Ma ni recitation. The *yon mchod* (i.e. the *bla ma* and patron) introduced the virtuous custom of moulding *tsha tsha* for five days at a time”.

72. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.145 lines 6-10): “sKu thang du yon bdag rGyal gyis gdan drangs nas sProg tu dgon pa btab/ ma ni'i rgyun btsugs Sa ga la Ka ni chen po bzhengs/ Sum rje rTsom gling du ban nag gis gdan drangs nas dPag rkyen gyis dgon pg gzhis phul/ dgon pa btab/””; “Yon bdag rGyal invited him to sKu thang (spelled so) and [Tshang 'dur ba] built a *dgon pa* at sProg. He introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation. He built a *ka ni chen po* at Sa ga. He was invited by Ban nag (“the black monk”) to Sum rje rtsom gling, [where] dPag rkyen offered him an estate for a *dgon pa*. He built a *dgon pa* and introduced sessions of Ma ni recitation”.

73. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.147 lines 11-13) and *Gung thang gi dkar chag* (f.26b line 6-f.27a line 1): “sKyiid rong du 'Jam dpal gling/ Rin chen spungs pa dang gnyis kyi dgon pa btab nas 'Or ma'i sa 'gag la ka ni'i mchod rten bzhengs/””; “In sKyiid grong, [the disciple of Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba] founded both the monastery of 'Jam dpal gling (f.27a) and Rin po che sPungs pa, and built a *khag ni'i mchod rten* at 'Or ma'i sa 'gag (“'Or ma gorge”)

74. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.145 lines 10-13): “dGon pa dang Brag dkar rta so dbu ma rdzong/ sMan khang/ Go bo tsha nams su bsgrub pa mdzad cing/ Byang chub sems dpa'i rnam thar gyis sems can gyi don dpag tu med pa mdzad/ dgung lo bdun cu I steng du sku gshegs/””; “He meditated at

▪ bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po

Little is known of the other Tshal pa, bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po, summoned to rTa sga by Sangs rgyas Tshal pa when he founded the monastery. The extremely brief biographical notes about him do not allow a more profuse knowledge than that he founded two monasteries; one of them remains unidentified. The other, called bSam gtan rdzong pa, from which he derived his appellative, was built by him in Glo bo, the sphere of activity to which he was assigned from the head monastery rTa sga.⁷⁵ Whereas the sources document a conspicuous number of monasteries founded by Tshang 'dur ba in *lho nub gung gsum*, but failed to provide chronological references that could be used for dating his activities, there is a clue which helps to approximate the years in which bSam gtan rdzong was established by bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po.

Chos legs kyi rnam thar (f.10b lines 1-3) says that two *dgon pa* built in Mustang are named Yang brag and bSam in this biography, where the Tshal pa gained a hold. The existence of these two monasteries has been forgotten in present-day Glo bo. The same passage adds that in southern Byang thang the monasteries Byang Chos lung and dGon go gsum were established as the main centres of the Tshal pa. These *dgon pa*-s were donated to Dharma bsod nams by the king of Pu hrang, who was healed by him *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* (f.10a line 5-f.10b line 3).

Although no reference is made to a date for the construction of the monasteries in lower Byang thang and Mustang during the time when Dharma bsod nams was abbot of rTa sga, a sound chronological framework for the foundation of these *dgon pa*-s is around the end of the 12th century or at the beginning of the 13th. If the bSam monastery given to Dharma bsod nams, the second rTa sga *gdan sa*, was bSam gtan rdzong dgon pa, as it seems, then one cannot rule out the possibility that its foundation predates the grant to Dharma bsod nams of the temples located in various areas of sTod including those in Glo bo—Yang brag and

the *dgon pa*, Brag dkar rta so dbu ma rdzong, sMan khang and Go bo tsha. He did a lot for the benefit of sentient beings, [which can be read] in the biography of [this] Byang chub sems dpa'. He died when he was seventy years old".

Following Tshang 'dur ba chen po's death, *Deb ther dmar po* (p.145 lines 21-22) says: "Bla ma dPon gyi 'dab phyi rten dang nang rten bzhengs pa dang/ mchod pa 'jugs pa grwa pa bu slob rnam kyi skyong bran mdzad//"; "Bla ma dPon made the [*sku*] 'dab (an image of the deceased), a *phyi rten* and *nang rten* [for Tshang 'dur ba], and introduced a ritual to be performed by the monks and disciples".

75. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.147 lines 15-17): "bSam gtan rdzong dgon btab nas bshad nyan dang sgom bsgrub kyi gdul bya bskyangs//"; "[bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po] founded this monastery of bSam gtan rdzong dgon [in Glo bo], and protected the people in need of training who received teachings and practised meditation".

Gung thang gi dkar chag (f.27a line 2) is written in a similar formulation: "bSam gtan rdzong pa chen pos Glo bor bSam gtan rdzong gi dgon pa de btab nas bshad nyan sgom gsum kyis gdul bya bskyangs//"; "After bSam gtan rdzong pa chen po went to Glo bo and founded this bSam gtan rdzong gi dgon pa, he protected the people in need of training by [introducing] preaching, learning and meditating [there]".

bSam—by the Pu hrang *jo bo* of that period (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.396-397 and n.646).⁷⁶ It is likely that the foundation of bSam gtan rdzong dgon pa was roughly contemporaneous with that of rTa sga, but not earlier, and thus took place before the end of the 12th century, given the date of the Tshal pa head monastery rTa sga and that Dharma bsod nams's enthronement as its *gdan sa* soon after its establishment (ibid. p.395 and n.643).

Since Yang brag and bSam gtan rdzong are associated in the passage of *Chos legs kyi rnam thar*, their foundations must have occurred at approximately the same time or at a brief distance from one another but during Dharma bsod nams's tenure as *gdan sa*.

The sources add that, on various occasions, bSam gtan rdzong pa sent offerings to lHa phyug mkhar and sGom sde. They were acts part of the Tshal pa routine, and this statement is useful to reiterate the dependence of the sTod Tshal pa from lHa phyug mkhar.⁷⁷

It thus appears that the Tshal pa held religious control over a vast and homogeneous stretch of lands in both mNga' ris stod, bar and smad. The sphere of influence of each of Sangs rgyas Tshal pa's three followers was neatly subdivided. bSam gtan rdzong pa's land was Mustang; Tshang 'dur ba chen po's was Mang yul, lower Byang thang, and Gung thang. Dharma bsod nams extended his jurisdiction over the territories where the presence of rTa sga was felt, and mainly operated from rTa sga, being the abbot of the Tshal pa's main monastery in mNga' ris. He thus supervised the Pu hrang Tshal pa, bSam gtan rdzong pa in Mustang, and Tshang 'dur ba chen po in *lho nub gung gsum*.

Hence the sphere of influence of the main rTa sga ba masters was based on precise territorial divisions. It is not easy to say whether these divisions were engendered by the land control of the various local powers, but it is obvious that the individual spheres of competence of the various rTa sga Tshal pa envisaged a fragmentation of the region of mNga' ris into three main areas: Pu hrang and some lands in lower Byang thang, such as Gro shod; the *lho nub gung gsum* (Gung thang, Mang yul and Men Zhang's 'Brong pa); and, finally, Glo bo.

A slightly different classification of the lands is made in *Chos legs kyi rnam thar*, in which the Tshal pa rTa sga ba came to own monasteries donated to them by the Pu hrang jo bo sTag

76. This identification has a further consequence with regard to the Tshal pa organisation in mNga' ris. Evidently bSam gtan rdzong pa acknowledged Dharma bsod nams's authority over the entire Tshal pa network, after his companion, who travelled with him to rTa sga in accordance with Sangs rgyas Tshal pa's instructions, had been chosen as the second abbot of rTa sga.

77. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.147 lines 17-18): "lHa phyug sgom sde gnyis su 'bul ba ba rim bzhin bskyal dga' / gdan sa'i zhen pa mos gus chen po'i 'gro don dang 'phrin las mdzad 'dug/'"; "[bSam gtan rdzong pa] sent offerings in succession to both lHa phyug and sGom sde. Being greatly devoted to the *gdan sa*, he performed deeds to benefit sentient beings".

Gung thang gi dkar chag (f.27a lines 2-3) once again is derivative from *Deb ther dmar po*: "lHa phyug sGom sde gnyis su 'bul ba rim bzhin bskyal nas tshogs brlabs po che bsags/ gdan sa zhen pa mos gus chen pos 'gro don dang 'phrin las mdzad/'"; "Since he sent offerings on various occasions to both lHa phyug and sGom sde, he put together a great illumination [of merit]. Being devoted to the *gdan sa*, he performed deeds to benefit sentient beings".

tsha Khri 'bar in a vast tract of lands. These temples were situated in three areas corresponding to Pu hrang stod, the area comprising both Gro shod and Pra dum, and Mustang.⁷⁸

Further 'Bri gung pa departures to the lands on the "upper side"

The next phase in the history of the 'Bri gung pa frequentation of Gangs Ti se continued to be marked by a different strategy from the one adopted by the Tshal pa, who had sent relatively unknown or unimportant members to mNga' ris. The 'Bri gung pa who went to the lands on the "upper side" were some of the disciples of 'Jig rten mgon po who had been previously assigned the task of checking the feasibility of opening the "door" to the holy places in the west. These 'Bri gung pa were among the major proponents of their school belonging to the generation after 'Jig rten mgon po's, and this shows how crucial sKyob pa rin po che still considered the message they had to bring to these areas.

There was, however, a major change from the strategy adopted by 'Jig rten mgon po at Gangs Ti se in 1191. The next 'Bri gung pa expedition revised the task of exploring the feasibility of opening the "door" to the pilgrimages into an attempt to establish contacts with local authorities. Earlier this was not possible owing to the power vacuum in mNga' ris resulting from the 1193-1194 invasion of these lands. Hence the involvement of these 'Bri gung pa masters marks another development in 'Jig rten mgon po's policy fostering relations with the secular powers of his time.

gNyos lHa nang pa bZi brjid dpal (1164-1224)⁷⁹ and grub chen Seng ge ye shes (1181-

78. *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* (f.10a line 5-f.10b line 3): "Khong pa Gangs mtsho bskor ba'i zhor la/ Pu rangs su dpon slob shas cig gis bsod snyoms la pyon pas de dus Pu rangs kyi rgyal po'i snyan khung du bab la zhugs nas/ yun ring po'i bar du bsnung zug che zhing 'grongs thug pa yod pa la/ dbang cig gngang ba tsam gyis bab la/ (f.10b) phyir thon nas bsnung ba las grol bas rgyal po mos ste/ Pu rangs su sa cha mang po phul/ chu thags rang yang bcu bdun tsam gyi sbad phul skad/ de la sogs te Phyi 'Brog gi dgon pa Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs dang Chos lung la sogs pa dGon go gsum dang/ Glo bo nang gi Yang brag bSam gnyis la sogs pa'i dgon sde phal cher/ mTshal pa'i 'og tu gtogs par byas/ ding sang rTa sga ba sTod mTshal gyi dpon yin zer ba'i rgyu mtshan yang de ltar yin pa 'dug/'", "When he (Dharma bsod nams), on his way for the pilgrimage to the mountain and lakes, the master and a few disciples, went to Pu rangs for alms, at that time, this came to the notice of the Pu rangs king who was very sick and in great pain for a long time, almost to the point of dying. After [Dharma bsod nams] bestowed a *dbang* [upon the king], (f.10b) which gave him relief, he was healed of the disease. Faith was born in the king. He (Dharma bsod nams) was offered many places in Pu rangs. It is said that he was also offered the ownership (*sbad* sic for *rbad*) of about seventeen of their own water mills, these ones, and most of the monastic centres (*dgon sde*) [including] Phyi 'Brog dgon pa Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs and Chos lung, dGon go gsum, and Yang brag and bSam in Glo bo, altogether two. All these are the possessions of the Tshal pa. Similarly, this is also the reason why the rTa sga ba are known at present as the sTod Tshal *dpon* ("chieftains")."

79. gNyos chen po gZi brjid dpal owes his sobriquet of lHa nang pa to his foundation of lHa nang *dgon pa* in the region of gNyan chen thang lha in the borderland between dBus and Byang thang,

1255), also known by the sobriquet of Ri khrod dBang phyug, “lord of the hermitage”, due to his meditation career in retreats, were the few ’Bri gung pa personalities who dominated events in the decades to come. They left a mark of their deeds in Pu hrang and Gangs Ti se, and thus I will focus on them to discuss their activity in other territories on the “upper side”.

Another disciple of ’Jig rten mgon po deserving particular attention is ’Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa (1180-1240), whose extraordinary life included a few eventful episodes in mNga’ ris. They were influential with their charisma on the state of affairs in the lands on the “upper side” and the developments concerning the internal situation among the ’Bri gung pa.

Chos sdings pa (called bSod nams ’bum at birth, gZhon nu rdo rje after taking vows, and ’Gar Dam pa more colloquially) was a native of dMe’ dor in the area where sDe dge was established long thereafter.⁸⁰ He was another Khams pa among the many who left a mark in the history of the bKa’ brgyud pa in an early period of their existence. He belonged to one of the greatest clans in the history of Tibet, for one only needs to mention that he was a ’Gar like sTong btsan yul bzung, the minister of Srong btsan sgam po celebrated for the marriages he brokered for this king and his military achievements. He paved the way for his progeny’s control of the Tibetan empire in the second half of the 7th century before Dus srong mang po rje reestablished the *lha sras btsan po*’s right to rule.

The division of the ’Gar clan into four branches is of great interest per se and needs to be treated in a brief digression which I confine to the next note,⁸¹ and a genealogical chart at the

described at some length in *gNyos lHa nang pa’i rnam thar* (p.102 line 4-p.104 line 8). In *’Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a lines 2-3) the location of lHa nang is wrongly identified as being at Gangs Ti se, which has led Western Tibetologists to accept this identification (see, for example, Petech, “The ’Bri-gung-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh” p.317).

80. It is more than coincidental that ’Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa’s life span was sixty-one years (he was born in iron rat 1180 (*IHo rong chos ’byung* p.427 lines 15-16) and died in iron rat 1240 (ibid. p.439 lines 9-18)), other masters having died at the same age. *gNyos lHa nang pa*, too, lived for sixty-one years (1164-1224) as did Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110-1170). The tradition considers living the span of a sexagenary cycle especially auspicious.

81. *Chos sdings pa’i rnam thar* (p.415 lines 2-3): “’Gar la’ang rgyud pa bzhi’ ste/ lHa rje dPal byams kyi chos rgyud/ Sungs btsan yul bzung gi ’phrul rgyud/ bTsan pa Dred po’i dpa’ rgyud/ Nye rang Pha mdzug gi kal rgyud/ dang bzhi’o/ ’phrul rgyud ni/ dBus rTsang/ Mon/ Dol po tshun la byung/ dpa’ rgyud ni rGya ’Jang nas/ Sa mdar rnams su/ kal rgyud ni Brag ra Gling chen/ Mu nyag stod smad/ chos rgyud ni Yangs pa can nas/ Dol zor nas/ Li yul kun la byung/”; “The lineages in the ’Gar [clan] are four: the religious lineage (*chos rgyud*) of lHa rje dPal byams; the miraculous lineage (*’phrul rgyud*) of Sungs btsan (spelled so) yul bzung; the heroic lineage (*dpa’ rgyud*) of bTsan pa Dred po; and the *kal rgyud* (?) of Nye rang Pha mdzug. They are altogether four. The *’phrul rgyud* existed in dBus rTsang [and] Mon up to Dol po. The *dpa’ rgyud* [came] from rGya ’Jang in *sa mda’* (the “lower (i.e. eastern) lands”), and elsewhere (*rnams su*). The *kal rgyud* came from Brag ra Gling chen, Mu nyag (spelled so for Mi nyag) stod smad, all of them. The *chos rgyud* came from Yangs pa can, Dol zor and Li yul”.

sPo bo’i lo rgyus interprets the fourth branch of the ’Gar clan, cryptically named *kal rgyud*, as a scribal corruption of bKa’ brgyud pa (ibid. p.10 line 21-p.11 line 4): “Yang dBra la dKar Nag

end of this book of mine, but here I pass to trace the main events in the early life of 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa.

In wood tiger 1194, when he was aged fifteen, 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa went from Khams to 'Bri gung to meet 'Jig rten mgon po, the master fated to be his *bla ma*, but not before receiving a formal education in Khams and a no less formal recognition of this young man's importance. On his way to Central Tibet he was awarded lands in sPo bo, where he would subsequently build one of its main monasteries.⁸²

Khra gsum gyi gdung rgyud nang nas dBra dkar (p.11) dwags ma'i mGar zhes pa la lHa rje dPal byams kyi chos rgyud dang/ Srong btsan yul bzung gi 'phrul rgyud/ bTsan la drag gi dpa' rgyud/ Nye rang phag 'jug gi bKa' brgyud bcas gdung rgyud bzhi la gyes 'dug/'"; "Also, among the lineages of the dKar, Nag and Khra, altogether three, belonging to the dBra, (p.11) there is the pure (*dwags ma*) mGar. Among [the mGar], there were the *chos rgyud* of lHa rje dPal byams, the '*phrul rgyud* of Srong btsan yul bzung, the *dpa' rgyud* of bTsan la drag and the bKa' rgyud (spelled as) of Nye rang phag 'jug. There were four lineages which branched off".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.426 line 14-p.427 line 13) opts for the spelling *bkal* ("reliable, trustworthy"): "'Gar dam pa'i lo rgyus ni dBra dkar kyi nan tshan 'Gar la rigs bzhir phye ste/ Srong btsan yul bzung gi 'phrul rgyud ni dBus gTsang kun tu byung/ btsan la dred po'i dpe rgyud ni 'Jang dang Sa mthar byung/ sNye rang phag mjug gi kKal rgyud ni Brag ra dang Me nyag stod smad du byung/ lHa rje dPal byams kyi chos rgyud ni bSam yas rgyal pos slob dpon Padma gdan drangs pa'i tshé Bod du slob ma mang du byon pa'i nang nas Gyal ba chos dbyangs/ 'Khon Klu'i Byang chub/ g.Yu sgra snying po gsum la gtugs pa'i lHa rje ni 'Bri rgyud kyi 'dan du byon nas sgrub (p.427) pa mdzad pas grub pa brnyes te dril bu ser po rta skad 'tsher ba dkrol bas lha tshogs thams cad 'du/ nag po Hum sgra srog pa dkrol ba'i tshé/ dgra sdang skad gcig gis mig thang la 'bud pa byung/ dgung lo brgyad cu gya bzhi la dril bu ser po bsnams nas lus de nyid mKha' spyod du gshegs/'"; "The history of 'Gar Dam pa. The 'Gar are divided into four lineages. They are part of the dBra dkar. Srong btsan yul bzung's '*phrul rgyud* ("miraculous lineage") existed in dBud gTsang. The *btsan la dred po'i dpe rgyud* (the "lineage exemplary for their wild might") appeared in 'Jang and Sa mthar. The *bkal rgyud* (the "trustworthy lineage") of sNye rang phag mjug appeared in Brag ra and Me nyag stod smad. The *chos rgyud* (the "religious lineage") of lHa rje dPal byams. When the king of bSam yas invited Padma [byung gnas], among the many disciples who came there were Gyal ba chos dbyangs, 'Khon Klu'i Byang chub and g.Yu sgra snying po, altogether three. lHa rje [dPal byams], who met them, went [then] to main seat of 'Bri rgyud (i.e. 'Bri klung). He meditated (p.427) and attained realisations. His golden bell emitted the neigh of a horse. He gathered all the *lha*-s. When he uttered the black mantra Hum, the hostile enemies happened to be cast away from his eyesight. At age eighty-four, he took his golden bell and went to mKha' spyod".

82. *sPo bo'i lo rgyus* (p.67 lines 7-16): "bSod nams 'bum ni shar Me dor byi ba lo'i Hor zla gsum pa'i tshes brgyad rgyal phur 'dzoms pa la sku ltams/ dgung lo bcu gnyis Thog 'bum phyogs au phebs pa'i yar lam Kis stod Brag rda ru yon bdag Brag rtsa A grags dang/ dBan cha Dam pa/ 'Dzin Kun dga' lHa 'dzin gSer 'bum dpon blon rnams kyis Kis stod Brag rda nyin dkar phyin chad 'U ta rdo zho man/ smad nas sPu bo Lung dmar yan chad phul bas/ chab srid bdag 'dzin byas so/ de nas gSer pa dpon la bcol gtam mdzad nas 'gyur ba med pa'i thel dang yi ge mdzad/ Khyung tho dge bsnyen dam la btags/ mtshan du Gangs dkar rDo rje bdud 'dul gsol/ dgung lo bco lnga la 'Bri gung du byon/ sKyob pa 'Jig rten sum gyi mgon po bla mar bstan/'"; "bSod nams 'bum (i.e. Chos sdings pa) was born at shar Me mdo on the eighth of the third month of the rat year (1180), a

He thus was a precocious youth who held secular post of importance in sPo bo and had already mastered several important teachings, but that training did not entirely please his guru 'Jig rten mgon po, who assigned him to study rDo rje 'Jigs byed, as well as gSangs ba 'dus pa, under gNyo s lHa nang pa. sKyob pa rim po che made this decision after he found out that Chos sdings pa had been trained in the tradition of this deity based on the system of Rwa lo tsa ba rDo rje grags (1016-?), which he considered to be *mu stegs pa* because Rwa lo tsa ba received it from Bha ro Phyag rdum.⁸³

Thursday under the conjunction of the star rGyal. When he was aged twelve (1191), on his way towards Thog 'bum, at Kis stod Brag rda, yon bdag Brag rtsa A grags, dBan cha Dam pa, 'Dzin Kun dga' and lHa 'dzin gSer 'bum, the *dpon* and his ministers, offered to him [the territories] from Kis stod Brag rda nyin dkar to 'U ta rdo zho; and, on the lower side, from sPu bo Lung dmar onwards. He was appointed holder of the secular power. Then, having made an agreement to entrust them to the gSer pa *dpon*, a document was prepared with a seal that there could not be any changes to it. He bound Khyung tho *dge bsnyen* to a vow. The name Gangs dkar rDo rje bdud 'dul was given to him. He went to 'Bri gung at the age of fifteen (1194). He attended upon sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po, who was his *bla ma*".

The length of his life was sixty-one years, in line with the bKa' brgyud predilection to have their masters' existence covering one *rab byung* exactly. Chos sdings pa eventually built Phu lung Chos sdings Rin chen spungs in sPo bo in iron rat 1240 soon before his death (*lHo rong chos 'byung* p.439 lines 9-18; and *sPo bo 'i lo rgyus* p.68 line 18-p.69 line 3).

83. *Cho sdings pa 'i rnam thar* (p.447 line 3-p.448 line 2): "Do mod zhugs me'i 'gram na/ chos rje'i zhal nas/ Dam pa khyod kyi 'Jig byed kyis rgyud pa gang yin gsungs nas/ nged kyis brgyud pa Ra lugs lags zhus pa la/ chos rje'i zhal nas/ don la khyad med de/ brgyud pa la khyad yod/ Ra lugs kyis phug na mu stegs kyis ston pa Bha ro lag rdum yod pas/ rgyud pa mi bza'/ gNyo s lugs la/ nang pa'i ban bhi ta bha zhig yin pas/ brgyud pa bzang bas/ khyod kyis brgyud pa de/ dge bshes gNyo s la bsbur dgos gsung nas/ chos rhes/ dge bshes gNyo s la dar yug dmar po cig gnang nas/ gNyo s dang/ Dam pa grogs mched ngos gsum mdzad nas/ chos la khyad med de/ brgyud pa khyod bzang bas/ 'Jigs byed rgyud gdams ngag/ las mkhan dang bcas pa khyos kho la legs par (p.448) ston cig gsung/ gNyo s kyis zhal nas/ khong rang nga bas yon tan lhag ste/ bla ma'i gsung sgrub pa'i phyir/ ngas khyod bla ma rin po cher bsgom nas/ zhabs togs su 'bul bas/ nang par nas byon cig/ gsung nas/ gSang 'dus rim lnga dang/ 'Jigs byed rgyud/ man ngag las mkhan dang bcas pa gnang/ grogs mched kyis nag du'ang dpon slob du gyur/ Dam pas kyang/ chos rje dang dge bshes gNyo s la/ khyad med tsam du dgongs pa yin gsung/"; "Sitting that night in front of the fire, the *chos rje* asked: "['Gar] Dam pa, what is your lineage of 'Jigs byed?". "Nged kyis brgyud pa Ra lugs lags zhus pa la/ chos rje'i zhal nas pa] answering: "My lineage is the system/tradition of Rwa [lo tsa ba]", the *chos rje* added: "There is no difference as for as the essence is concerned, but there is a difference as for as the lineage is. Since the *mu stegs* master Bha ro lag rdum belongs to the tradition of Rwa, this lineage is not acceptable. Given that only (*bha zhig*) Buddhist *ban bhi ta-s* (sic) belonged to the tradition of gNyo s, this being a noble lineage, you must change (*bsbur* sic for *bsgyur?*) to this lineage under dge bshes gNyo s". Since the *chos rje* gave a bundle of red silk to gNyo s, he made gNyo s and ['Gar] Dam pa truly become companions/friends. He told [gNyo s]: "There is no difference as for as the teachings are concerned. Since your lineage is noble, you must teach him in an excellent manner the *gdam ngag* of 'Jigs byed rGyud including its actualisation (*las mkhan*)". (p.448) gNyo s said: "His education is superior to mine, but in order to fulfil the words of [yourself], [my] *bla ma*, given that I meditate on you as my *bla ma rin po che*,

This was the first meeting between Chos sdings pa and gNyos lHa nang pa. The master and disciple then went to open the "door" of the Tsa ri pilgrimage together soon thereafter. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* adds that they were friends and that 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa respected him as his *guru* and a second 'Jig rten mgon po. Evidently, their relationship turned sour with the passing of the years and other adventures they shared which forged the way their relationship developed.

'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa was particularly dear to 'Jig rten mgon po, who saw in him uncommon qualities, ones which led him to give him the title of *dam pa* (the "noble one") when they met for the first time—and hence his name 'Gar dam pa (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.431 lines 1-2).

The particular esteem in which 'Jig rten mgon po held him is probably the main factor behind sending him along with gNyos chen po lHa nang pa and dPal chen Chos ye to Tsa ri to open the "door" of this holy place for good soon after Chos sdings pa had come to 'Bri gung. So much consideration is behind the fact that he was associated with his master gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos ye, two of the major 'Bri gung pa of those years despite being junior to them, a mere fifteen years old teenager.

The *dkar chag* to Tsa ri, attributed to sMyos lHa nang pa (spelled so in this text), carves out a major role for Chos sdings pa in recognising the sacredness of the places that compose

I offer [myself] for this service. He can come from tomorrow". Having said so, he imparted to him the *man ngag* and *las mkhan* of the *gSang 'dus rim pa lnga* ("five stages") and '*Jigs byed rGyud*. They became master and disciple in addition to being friends. ['Gar] Dam pa also said: "I think that there is no difference between the *chos rje* and *dge bshes gNyos*".

lHo rong chos 'byung (p.431 line 21-p.432 line 5): "bsTod pa gyer bas Dam pa (p.432) 'Jigs byed du gzigs/ Dam pa khyed kyi brgyud pa gang yin gsungs/ Ra lugs lags zhus pas chos la khyad med de/ brgyud pa la khyad yod gsungs te dge bshes gNyos la dar yug dmar po zhig gnang nas khyod kyi chos man ngag dang bcas pa kho la legs por ston gsungs pas gSang 'dus/ 'Jigs byed man ngag las mkhan dang bcas pa khong la rdzogs par zhus//"; "When [Chos sdins pa] recited the prayer, [the *chos rje*] saw the *dam pa* (p.432) as 'Jigs byed. He said: "*Dam pa*, what is your ['Jigs byed] lineage?", the latter answered: "[My lineage] is [according to] the Ra (spelled as) tradition.". [The master] added: "There is no difference in terms of religion, but there is a difference in terms of lineage". He gave a red silk flag to *dge bshes gNyos* and told him: "Impart to him all the secret instructions of [these] teachings in an excellent way". Therefore, he completely received the secret teachings and the *las mkhan* of *gSang 'dus* and '*Jigs byed*".

'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng (p.102 lines 12-18): "Khyad par du rDo rje 'Jigs byed la grub pa brnyes/ de skabs rje 'Jig rten mgon po'i zhal nas/ yi dam gyi lha rDo rje 'Jigs byed las lhag pa med kyang/ khyod kyi De bzhin Rwa lugs yin pas Rwa lo bla ma dang dam sel yod cing brgyud pa der mu stegs gyi pandi ta 'Bar ro lag rdum yang yod pas cung mi legs/ gNyos nas brgyud pa 'di brgyud pa rnam par dag pa yin pas khong nas zhus gsungs pa ltar mdzad//"; "In particular, ['Gar Dam pa] obtained the realisation of rDo rje 'Jigs byed. (line 13) At that time 'Jig rten mgon po said: "Although there is no [deity] more exalted than yi dam gyi lha rDo rje 'Jigs byed, your [empowerment] is according to the system of Rwa, and I have objections to the vow of Rwa lo bla ma. Since in this lineage there was the *mu stegs* pandi ta 'Bar ro lag rdum, it is to a certain extent not good". He told him: "This transmission of gNyos is a pure transmission. You should receive it from him". And he did so".

the geography of holy hermitage, only second, among the three 'Bri gung pa, to gNyo s lHa nang pa but superior to dPal chen Chos ye (sMyos lHa nang pa, *Tsa ri 'i dkar chag, passim*).

Chos sdings pa repaid 'Jig rten mgon po with extraordinary dedication, as narrated in two episodes that show well enough how much Chos sdings pa cared for his *bla ma*—a devotion that he manifested by means of miracles, an activity not uncommon among the disciples of the sKyob pa rin po che.⁸⁴ Both miracles took place at 'Bri gung.

The first happened when 'Jig rten mgon po gave teachings to Klu'i rgyal po Ma dros pa—an engagement in line with the fact that sKyob pa rin po che was considered to be the reincarnation of 'Phags pa Klu sgrub. He told his monks not to panic if they would hear horrifying noises that night. Those noises would mean that he was busy with Klu'i Ma dros pa. His instructions were passed on to everyone at 'Bri gung by his various *nye gnas*-s, all except Chos sdings pa who was in meditation inside a cave in the depth of the 'Bri gung mountain. This negligence on the part of the *nye gnas*-s depended on the thought that no noise could be heard at such a depth. During the night, Chos sdings pa, absorbed in meditation in the cave, did indeed hear frightening noises. Visualizing what was happening, he saw a huge snake encircling in its coils the whole of the monastery, its head poised to enter the gSer khang, the temple of his teacher 'Jig rten mgon po. He immediately transformed into a huge *khyung* and went in pursue of the snake. The signs of the battle between the *khyung* and the *klu*—won, as usual, by the *khyung*—were left everywhere on the rocks surrounding 'Bri gung.⁸⁵

84. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.91 line 21-p.92 line 2): “Khor nmams la thams cad kyis rdzu 'phrul sna re ston gsungs pas/ gNyo s chen pos rGya gar nas A su rar rlon pa blangs nas phul/ dpal chen po Chos kyi ye shes kyis/ nyid kyi thugs kar gnyis su med par thim/ 'Gar (p.92) Dam pas rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi sku bzhengs/ Ja ma sPo spo bKra shis seng ges chos gos dang ja tshags gzar bu nmams zer la bkal/”; “Since ['Jig rten mgon po] told all his retinue that each of them should display a miracle, gNyo s chen po offered fresh *a ru ra* (*myrobolan*) which he materialised from rGya gar; dPal chen Chos kyi ye shes dissolved into ['Jig rten mgon po's] heart as if they were not two; 'Gar (p.92) Dam pa created an image (*sku bzhengs*) of rDo rje 'Jigs byed; and Ja ma sPo spo bKra shis seng ge hung his robe, tea strainer and ladle on a sunbeam”.

85. bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.84 line 23-p.85 line 19): “Klu'i rgyal po Ma dros gzi can rang gzugs kyis chos nyan du yong bar mkhyen pas/ rdzu 'phrul thob pa nmams kyis Klu rgyal la (p.85) phar gnod kyi dogs pa dang/ ma thob pa nmams la Klu chos nyan par gnod sems med kyang kha rlangs kyi dug phog gi dogs nas do nub 'ur sdig gi sgra drag po ji lta byung yang sus kyang ma lta zhig ces nye gnas phrin skyel du btang bas/ gzhan ma thams cad la phrin bskyal rung/ grub thob mGar Dam pa Bla g.yel phug rigs su bzhugs pa/ Bla g.yel phyi sne sgo dang/ phug nyid gSer khang gi 'og tu yod pas phug shin tu ring bas gsan mi yong snyam pa nas btang snyoms su bzhag pas de nub thug choms kyi sgra chen po byung ba/ mGar Dam pas gsan nas/ ci yin snyam phyir byon nas gzigs pas/ sbrul sngo nag 'zigs su rung ba zhig gis Gling rin po cher lan gsum bskor te mgo gzim chung gSer khang gi bar snang gi thad der 'dug pa brtag par ma mdzad par/ khos nga'i bla ma rin po cher gnod pa byed pa yin 'dug dgongs nas/ khyung chen po zhig tu sprul te ded pa rol pa 'phrang gi mar zur pha bong chen po zhig zhig gi steng dusprul gyi rjes shin tu gsal ba 'jam zhing gzhan las sngo ba dang/ de nas sder mo mig tu pha bong chen po zhig gi steng du khyung babs pa'i rjes kyang shin tu gsal bar yod cing/ der ma zad khyung ngar

The other episode concerns 'Jig rten mgon po's request to Chos sdings pa to make a statue, the portrait of himself the *guru*. 'Gar Dam pa found a Chinese master artist—a fact quite significant in itself, for Chinese artists are otherwise not documented around 'Bri gung in the years after its foundation—and commissioned from him a portrait of his teacher sKyob pa rin po che. The statue was so beautiful and realistic that the monks afterwards had a hard time figuring out whether they were interacting with 'Jig rten mgon po or his replica. Years later, during the 'Bri gung *gling log* of iron tiger 1290, with the situation going from bad to worse for the monastery, the monks decided to bury the statue underground to prevent its destruction. After the Sa skya pa burnt the monastery down, the monks went searching for the statue, but could not find the spot where they had buried it. The statue shoved one of its arms above the ground and waved it to signal where it was.⁸⁶

rgal du chu 'gram du khyung dang sprul rjes mang du 'dug/'"; ["'Jig rten mgon po] having realised that the resplendent klu'i rgyal po Mal dro (sic) in his own form had come to listen to the teachings, fearing that those who had miraculous powers could harm the *klu rgyal* (p.85), although they did not intend to hurt the *klu* who was receiving teachings, and that those, who did not have any [miraculous power], could be contaminated by his breath, he sent a *nye gnas* to carry a message saying: "No one is allowed to check whatever terrifying sound of a evil noise may be heard tonight". Although the message was sent to everyone else, grub thob mGar (spelled so) Dam pa was inside the long cave of Bla g.yel. Given that the outer entrance of Bla g.yel and the cave itself are below the gSer khang, and the cave is extremely long, [the *nye gnas*] thought that [mGar dam pa] would not be able to hear, he left [the message] to him undelivered. That night, there was a big, horrifying (*thug* sic for *thugs*; *choms* from '*joms*) noise. mGar Dam pa hearing it, went out wondering what it was, and looked around. There was a huge, frightening dark blue snake encircling the precious *gling* (i.e. the *gling* of 'Bri gung) three times with the head towards (*bar snang gi thad*, lit. "in the space of the direction of") gSer khang, the bedroom (*gzim chung*) [of 'Jig rten mgon po]. Without pondering what it was, he thought: "He is harming my *bla ma rin po che*". He transformed into a big *khyung* and chased after it. At the corner of Rol pa 'phrang ("the dancing gorge"), above a boulder there are very clear imprints (*rjes*) of a snake that are smooth and bluer than anything else [nearby]. Then, there are very clear imprints (*rjes*) of the *khyung* landing above the boulder [where] its claws [got into] the eyes [of the snake]. Not only this, but there are also many [other] imprints of the *khyung* and snake at the bank of the river, where the *khyung* went back and forth".

86. bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.90 line 6-p.91 line 8): "Di skabs shig/ grub thob mGar Dam pa la/ khyod rang song la Sog zam khar sgang thob la/ klu la gtor ma zhig byin dang/ nor khyad par can zhig yong ba yod kyi song zhig/ gsungs pa ltar byon nas/ gtor ma gnang bas Klu'i rgyal po Sog ma med kyis Sangs rgyas kyi tsems mche ba bzhi pa dang/ nor bu khyad par can gsum yang phul te/ de yang Sangs rgyas kyi tshems mche ba bzhi las/ bzhi pa sgra sgrogs Klu'i rgyal pos mchod/ ces pa ni Klu'i rgyal po Sog ma med yin te/ Klu'i rgyal po chen po mams la rgyu pa'i sgo du ma zhing yong bas/ Klu'i rgyal po Sog ma med gtso cher rya gar Ma ga dhar gnas mod kyang/ rgyu ba'i sgo du ma zhig yong bas/ Klu'i rgyal po Sog zam kha yin pas der byon nas phul ba yin cing/ nor bu tsems dang bcas pa bsname nas rje 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgo po gyi drung du phyl bas/ nor bdag po la sprad pa legs/ 'on kyang khyod rgyu'i stobs can zhig yin pas kho bo'i 'dra 'bag cig gis la de'i nang du bzhugs shig ces gsungs pa ltar/ grub thob 'Gar gyis rGya nag gi bzo bo bos te/ Thel zhol du bzo thab btsugs nas chos rje rin po che'i sku bzhengs shing/ de'i nang du De bzhi gshegs pa'i tshems bzhugs/ rje nyid kyi rab gnas brgya rtsa

- The years in the life of grub chen Seng ge ye shes before mNga' ris stod In wood tiger 1194 when he met 'Jig rten mgon po for the first time, 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa took vows from him. In the same year, grub chen Seng ge ye shes took his own, but

sogs mdzad pas gSer khang chos rje nyid dang dbyer ma mchis pa'i rten khyad par can 'di nyid yin la/ gdan sa na rim phal cher dang sku gnyer (p.91) yang mang por gsung byon zhing/ lhag par sku gnyer Zla ba zhes pa zhig la Chos drug gi khrid kyang gngang/ gling log gi skabs dBu ru Bye gshongs su sbas pa/ physis Gling zhig gsos grub nas btsal bas ma rnyed pas/ nga 'dir yod gsungs nas phyag steng du brkyangs pa sogs ngo mtshar mtha' yas pa mnga' ba yin cig/ 'di skabs Dam pa 'Gar gyis rje nyid kyi sku 'dra mang du bzhengs par mdzad pas/ da lta Hor skur grags pa nrams yin cing/ bzo bo rGya yin kyang rgyal po Hor gyis byas pas Hor skur grags so// "; "On one occasion, ['Jig rten mgon po] told grub thob mGar Dam pa: "You go and pitch a camp at Sog zam kha ("the area of the Sog bridge"), and offer a *gtor ma* to the *klu*. You must go [there], because there are extraordinary gems that you will retrieve". He left in obeisance to his words, when he had offered the *gtor ma*, the king of the *klu*, Sog ma med, gave [him] the fourth canine of Sangs rgyas and also three extraordinary gems. Of the four canines of Sangs rgyas, it is said in this regard that the famous fourth canine was offered by a renowned *klu'i rgyal po*, who was *klu'i rgyal po* Sog ma med. There exist many doors for reaching the [several] *klu'i rgyal po chen po*, even if it seems that *klu rgyal Sog ma med* mainly resides at rGya gar Ma ga dha. Given that Sog zam kha is one such door for reaching him, [Chos sdings pa] went there and gave [him] offerings. He took the tooth and the gems and offered them to rje 'Jig rten gsum mgon. [He said]: "It is excellent that you gave the gems to their owner. Since you have very strong motivation, you should, however, make a portrait of me and place them inside it". According to what he had said, grub thob 'Gar summoned (*bos* for '*bod*') a Chinese artist. At the base of Thel, a furnace having been built to make it (*bzo thab*), the image of the *chos rje rin po che* was made. [Chos sdings pa] installed the tooth of the De bzhin gshegs pa inside it. Since the *rje* himself (i.e. sKyob pa rin po che) made its consecration 108 times, it was called the gSer khang *chos rje* and there was no difference between the extraordinary statue and the *rje* himself. It spoke to most of the successive *gdan sa*-s and (p.91) many *sku gnyer*. In particular, it gave the *khrid* of *Chos drug* to the *sku gnyer* namely Zla ba. At the time of the *gling log*, it was buried at dBu ru Bye gshongs ("sandy depression of dBu ru"). Subsequently, after the restoration of the destroyed *gling* was accomplished, [people] looked for it but could not find [it]. It had unlimited extraordinary [powers] such as [, at that time,] stretching a hand up and saying: "I am here". During that period, Dam pa 'Gar made many portrait statues of the *rje*, currently known as Hor *sku*-s. Although the artist was Chinese, since the *rgyal po* Hor was active (*byas pas*) [at that time], they are known as Hor *sku*".

Bye gshongs is the area of Tshal Gung thang where Chos 'khor gling and Chos khri grwa tshang were located. It was the place where the installation of the Tshal *dpon po* was held in the 13th century (see Sørensen-Hazod, *Rulers of the Celestial Plain* n.474 and p.601).

The events mentioned in this passage, although undated, have significant historical connotations. The comment on the origin of the name of the statues of 'Jig rten mgon po that Chos sdings pa commissioned is peculiar. Traditionally, Mongol activity in Tibet is accepted as having begun in 1240 with Dor ta's campaign, but the statement that those portrait statues were named Hor *sku* because of the active stance taken by the Mongol emperor in Tibet seems, in the light of sKyob pa rin po che's death date (1217), to be a residue of a different, forgotten vision of the Mongol period of Tibet. I plan to come back to this crucial issue in a forthcoming work of mine ("The Be ri ru ba, a tribe of Tibetan vagrants (with a focus on their brigandage and association with the Hor in the 13th century)") to show that Mongol pressure on Tibet predates the commonly accepted time.

this happened at Tshal rather than 'Bri gung.⁸⁷ The *mkhan po* in Seng ge ye shes's ordination was Yul zad pa Sangs rgyas ye shes, the interim abbot at 'Bri gung for one year when the *mkhan po rin po che* ('Jig rten mgon po) was not well. The *slob dpon* was the *gdan sa pa* of Zhang g.Yu brag pa's institution, Nyang ro ba Shakya ye shes (1147-1207, on the throne 1193-1207), the first abbot of Tshal Gung thang after bla ma Zhang (for his biography see *Deb ther dmar po* p.129 line 12-p.130 line 20). Seng ge ye shes was ordained on the third day of *rta zla ba* of the tiger year 1194.

The circumstances under which Seng ge ye shes took vows is just one of several cases that documents the close ties between the Tshal pa and the 'Bri gung pa at that early stage, or more precisely, the rather loose affiliation of these bKa' brgyud pa disciples especially during their formative years.

The various schools of the bKa' brgyud pa in the early period of their existence were remarkably close to one another, with disciples relying on their *rtsa ba'i bla ma* but also receiving teachings from those of other related religious institutions. The situation that ensued was that these bKa' brgyud pa interacted among themselves and shared common experiences. A symptomatic case was that of Ti shri ras pa Shes rab seng ge (1164-1236) whose teachers were 'Ba' rom pa Dar ma dbang phyug (1127-1199), Zhang g.Yu brag pa brTson 'grus grags pa, sTag lung thang pa bKra shis dpal (1142-1210) and sKyu ra 'Jig rten mgon po (see, e.g., his biography in *Khams stod lo rgyus stod cha* p.86 lines 2-7).

Grub chen Seng ge ye shes did not belong to the nobility like 'Gar Dam pa. He was born in Yar 'brog into a family especially devoted to religion,⁸⁸ and this fact may have helped his

87. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.434 lines 2-5): "Rab tu ghegs pa'i gnas ni Tshal Gung thang gnyis las Tshal du yin no/ mkhan po ni Yul zad pa yin/ mtshan yang Sangs rgyas ye shes bya ba yi 'Bri gung du yang mkhan po rin po che sku khams mi snyom pa'i dus su lo gcig mkhan po mdzad pa yin/ slob dpon ni Zhang g.Yu brag pa'i gdan sa pa yin/ yul Nyang ro ba yin/ mtshan Shakya ye shes bya ba yin/ sTag gi lo rta zla ba'i tshe gsum la rab tu gshegs pa dang/ dge tshul mdzad nas mtshan Sengge ye shes bya ba gsol lo/"; "As for the place where [Seng ge ye shes] took vows, of the two [places] Tshal [and] Gung thang, it was at Tshal. The *mkhan po* was Yul zad pa, whose other name was Sangs rgyas ye shes. He was the *mkhan po* at 'Bri gung for one year, when the *mkhan po rin po che* was not well. The *slob dpon* was the *gdan sa ba* ("abbot") of Zhang g.Yu brag pa. As for his land, he was a Nyang ro ba (i.e. from Nyang ro). His name was Shakya ye shes. [Seng ge ye shes] was ordained on the third day of *rta zla ba* of the tiger year (1194). Being a *dge tshul* ("novice"), he was given the name Sengge ye shes".

88. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.429 lines 1-5): "Yar 'brog do'i phyi skor yul gSer rgyud kyi grong sar zhes bya ba sku 'kgrungs so/ de yang dgung lo zhes bya yin pa la/ mes po Yang po dBang phyug dpal zhes bya ba la sras gnyis te/ gcen bTsun skyabs la sras gsum las thams cad rab tu byung/ che ba sgom pa Byang ye 'bring po slob dpon gTsang pa gcung ba slob dpon gTsang zhib yin te/ de ni chos rje'i bu chen yin no/ gcung po Thog pos btsun mo zhig bzhes pa la sras gcig byung ste/ de sge slong brTson 'grus seng ge yi/n btsun mo de 'gre che bar grags nas bor te/ rin po che yum gdung gNyan yin/ mtshan Dar ma rgyan zhes bya btsun mor bzhes pa dang/ de la lcam dral bzhi che ba sgom

acceptance by the 'Bri gung pa leadership in his early years.

Seng ge ye shes began his career on a remarkably different note from Chos sdings pa. He did not immediately become a major 'Bri gung pa disciple of sKyob pa rin po che the way 'Gar Dam pa did. Thus, he was not among his emissaries to the great holy places, but instead went to meditate at some minor hermitages of the school, like other 'Bri gung pa *ri pa*-s sent to taste the hermit experience typical of the followers of rje btsun Mid la.

Before going to meditate at secluded localities, Seng ge ye shes took an active part in the construction of the gSer khang which, together with Bla g.yel, was the oldest and most prestigious temple of 'Bri gung, especially favoured by 'Jig rten mgon po. Seng ge ye shes's biography provides the useful clue that 'Bri gung gSer khang was completed during the six-months meditation retreat of wood hare 1195. Seng ge ye shes, seized by a youthful enthusiasm, personally helped the workers enrolled in its making.⁸⁹

gZhon/ de'i 'og Rin chen skyid dang/ de'i 'og Hor skyid/ de nas sPyan snga ba nyid dang bzhi'o//"; "[Seng ge ye shes] was born at the *grong sa* of gSer rgyud ("the locality (*grong sa*) of the golden lineage"), which is [the area] surrounding (*phyi skor*) Yar 'brog do (spelled so for Yar 'brog mdo?). With regard to this, his clan is known as Lo. Concerning the two sons of mes po Yang po dBang phyug dpal, the elder bTsun skyabs had three sons. All of them took vows. The eldest was sgom pa Byang ye, the middle slob dpon gTsang pa, and the youngest slob dpon gTsang zhig. This one was a direct disciple of the *chos rje* ('Jig rten mgon po). The youngest brother Thog po married a woman and they had a son. He was dge slong brTson 'grus seng ge. This woman being considered a 'gre (sic for 'dre, "ghost"), he disowned her. The wife of the *rin po che* belonged to the gNyan clan. Her name was Dar ma rgyan. He took her as wife. They had four children. The eldest was sgom gZhon; after him, Rin chen skyid; after him, Hor skyid; then, sPyan snga ba (i.e. Ri khrod dBang phyug aka Seng ge ye shes), altogether four".

Ibid. (p.430 lines 1-5): "rGung lo drug cu rtsa bdun pa sku gshegs pa'i dus su yang 'jal la stsogs pa rtags bzang po mang po byung ba yin/ yum yang dud med kyi skyo thams cad dang bral zhing yon tan dang ldan pa dpal rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i rang bzhin du bzhugs pa yin te/ bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa Yar 'brog tu byon pa'i dus su/ ja lting la stsog pa'i bsten bkur dang 'bul ba mang po mdzad/ chos dang gdams ngag zhus/ physis chos rje 'Bri gung pa dang yang mjal nas chos dang gdams ngag zhus/ Ma jo Dad dge la yang chos gsan/ de'i sar bzhugs shing thugs dam la rgyun chad mi mang ba'i rNal 'byor ma de gras de kar rgung lo bdun cu rtsa lnga la bde ba nas bde bar sku gshegs pa yin no//"; "[The father, Thog po,] died aged sixty-seven amidst noble signs, such as a rainbow. The mother too was free of errors, meritorious and had the nature of a *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma*. When bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa went to Yar 'brog, many offerings and much reverence were offered to him [by her,] such as tea cups (*ja ting*). She received teachings and *gdams ngag*. Later, since she also met chos rje 'Bri gung pa, she received teachings and *gdams ngag* from him. She also obtained teachings from Ma jo Dad dge. She resided at his place. This *rnal 'byor ma* stayed continuously in uninterrupted meditation. She died when she was aged seventy-five at the monastic quarters of this locality".

89. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.439 lines 2-4): "Zla ba drug tu sku mtshams mdzad pa'i dus su gSer khang brtsigs pa yin/ de'i sa rdo dang las thams cad la spyen snga nas ma chag par byon/ thog 'bubs pa'i phyam 'drems pa'i dus su spyen snga nas phyam rnams shing bzo ba'i lag tu btang ste/ phyam de rnams 'drems pa la shing bzo ma gtogs pa gcig gis kyang reg pa med do//"; "The gSer khang was built

The first land to which Seng ge ye shes went to meditate was Ku thang in water pig 1203 (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar in bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.443 line 5-p.444 line 1). He also stayed at Brag skya rdo rje rdzong, one of rje btsun Mid la's *rdzong drug*, in 1204, after which he returned to 'Bri gung (ibid. p.444 lines 4-5). In 1205, he was back at Ku thang and returned to 'Bri gung after the summer of the same year. A passage describing his way back to the "mother" monastery offers an extremely pale trace of where Don mo ri, the well known bKa' brgyud pa monastery, was located.⁹⁰

during the six-month meditation [in wood hare 1195]. The *spyang snga* (i.e. Seng ge ye shes) went incessantly [to collect] earth and stones, and [took part] in all [other] work as well. When the rafters of the pagoda roof were being put in place, the *spyang snga* handed the rafters over into the hands of the carpenters. When the rafters were put in place, no one else touched them except the carpenter (the *shing bzo ba*, i.e. the chief architect of the building)".

Other bKa' brgyud pa masters are remembered for the physical in the construction work to build temples despite their status as young disciples destined to important roles in the hierarchy of their schools. For instance, Lus med rdo rje (1227-1292), a successor to Ti shri ras pa, involved himself physically in the construction of the temple of Nang so chen mo at Nang chen in Khams stod (*Khams stod lo rgyus smad cha* p.41 lines 12-14): "sGom sde lha khang chen mo brstegs pa'i las ka ba la sKu 'bum rtsar phebs ste/ dad pas kun nas bslangs pa'i lhag pa'i bsam pa rnam par dag pas lus srog la ltos ba med par lha khang gi la 'bad//"; "[Lus med rdo rje] went to sKu 'bum rTsa as a worker when sGom sde lha khang chen mo was in the process of been built. Since he worked hard at the construction of the *lha khang* without much regard for his own life due to his pure and superior thought arising from his pervasive faith, an extraordinary sign of his purity without stains was given".

90. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.447 lines 1-2): "Thar chung nas Bo dong bar la zhag bdun mdzad/ Don mo rir chos ston cig gsol/ gZhu' Nye mor byon//"; "It took him seven days from Thar chung up to Bo dong. At Don mo ri he held a religious ceremony. He then went to gZhu' sNye pa".

Don mo ri was originally founded by sKyo Shes rab rdo rje during *bstan pa phyi dar* and was part of the *tsho* system (see. e.g., Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* p.70 line 5).

For a reference to the existence of Don mo ri, a place which witnessed the early diffusion of 'Dul ba in dBus gTsang see bSod nams grags pa's 'Dul ba chos 'byung (p.56 line 14-p.57 line 1): "Zhang Zhi mdzes shes rab ste/ khong gis Don mo ri bzung nas bshad pa mdzad/ brDa 'Dul 'dzin gyis Brag dmar ba'i zhar chos pa'ang mdzad/ Brag dmar du rDo rje phur bu dang/ Don mo ri pa Zhang Zhi mdzes shes rab slob dpon gnyis/ La stod gTsang po'i sngags pa phod kha can (p.57) bco brgyad rab tu byung//"; "Zhang Zhi mdzes shes rab took control of Don mo ri. He gave expositions [on monastic observance]. Moreover, he was a practitioner. At Brag dmar were rDo rje phur bu and Don mo ri pa Zhang Zhi mdzes shes rab, the two *slob dpon*-s gave the *rab tu byung* vow to (p.57) eighteen La stod gTsang po *sngags pa*-s wearing a gown."

Ibid. (p.58 lines 3-12): "Klog skya dPal 'byor gyis Don mo ri bzung nas bshad pa byas/ zhar chos pa dge bshes sKyel gsum dang Zhang Shes rab 'od/ dpon po Khri brtan Sengge/ Shāka rDor dang bzhi byung/ sKyel dang Shāka rDor gnyis khong rang gi sngon la gshegs/ dge bshes gNyen Shāka grub snyems su sku gshegs rjes su Zhang Shes rab 'od kyis gdan sa bzung/ de nas dbon po Khri brtan Sengges bzung ste/ Chu mig 'Dal grā'i bshad pa yun ring du byung/ Zhang Shes rab 'od kyis slob ma Ma ling ston bSod nams grub bya bas mNog Bon gong du 'Dul ba'i bshad grā

Don mo ri was where Seng ge ye shes's main disciple resided and derived his name was between Bo dong and gZhu Nye mo, these two localities being separated by a vast expanse of land.

▪ The growth of the monastic community at 'Bri gung

gNyos lHa nang pa used to supply molasses (*bu ram*) to the assembly of the 'Bri gung monks—a percentage of which went to his teacher—and thus helped 'Jig rten mgon po with the sustenance of the monks. The biography of gNyos lHa nang pa notes that his distributions went on four times, one of them while 'Jig rten mgon po was visiting the Phag mo gru pa.⁹¹

btsugs so//"; "Moreover, Klog skya dPal 'byor took over Don mo ri. Moreover, those who gave expositions [on monastic observance] were dge bshes sKyel gsum, Zhang Shes rab 'od, dpon po Khri brtan Sengge and Shāka rDor, altogether four. sKyel and Shāka rDor, the two of them, died prematurely. After dge bshes gNyen Shāka grub snyems passed on, Chu mig 'Dal grā gave expositions [on monastic observance] for a long time. Then his nephew Khri brtan Sengge took control [of Don mo ri]. Chu mig 'Dal grā's expositions on [monastic observance] went on for a long time. Zhang Shes rab 'od's disciple Ma ling ston bSod nams grub established a 'Dul ba school at mNog Bon gong".

91. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.42 line 2-p.43 line 9): "Bla ma dge 'dun gyi zhabs tog ma yin pa thugs la mi dgongs te/ 'Bri gung gi tshogs chen po der bur ston che po gsum chos rje Phag mo gru na bzhugs pa'i dus su lan bzhi mdzad/ 'Bri gung du bur ston dang po mdzad pa'i dus su/ spyan snga ru mar dang bu ram mang du gtad nas/ dpon po 'Go rDo rje seng ge la sogs pa'i nye gnas rnams la/ nga'i rgyu cha 'di tsho tshogs kyi dge 'dun la/ bu ram khru kor re thongs che 'ong khyed kyi mgo thon pa zhig mdzad par zhu/ gsungs pas/ khong gis dge 'dun gyi tshogs che drag pas ma khyab kyis dogs nas/ mtho skor btang bas phyed lhag/ bla ma zhing dag kyang tshogs kyi dge 'dun la thugs brtse bar dgongs nas/ chos rje'i spyan sngar byon bas/ ngas dka' ba dpag tu med pas bsgrugs pa'i rgyu rtsa 'di tsam zhig chud gsan/ khyed slob dpon da res 'di mgo thon pa zhig mi mdzad pa/ bya ba la sogs pa'i smre sngags mang po yang dag la gton pas/ chos rje'i zhal nas bu ram lhag pa la dge 'dun ba'i gshes gnyen chen po de tsam thugs ngal mdzad mi 'tshal/ dge 'dun kyi zhabs tog du 'gro ba/ dge ba'i bshes gnyen pa'i tshogs rdzogs pa'i thabs kho bo yod gsungs nas/ 'Bri gung thang la byon te/ bu ram tsho mchod par btang nas/ bcu chos dge 'dun gyi tshogs chen por gnang skad/ de nas bcu chos tshogs su yang yang yon skad/ sngar phan cad mi bcu bcu la (p.43) chos gsungs pas bcu chos su grags/ de'i res la tshogs su byonn pas/ sngar ma thob pa mang po yod pa dang/ thob kyang blo la ma zin pa mang po yod pa dang/ bKa' rgya dam pas mched grogs phan tshun gleng ba med pa dang/ de'i dus su spyir byin pas phyin chad kyang tshogs su 'byon par 'ong snyam nas/ dge 'dun re re la bur ltang re re phul ba bas drin du gzo bar byung skad/ de'i dus su chos rje'i spyan sngas kyang/ bDe bar gshegs pa'i bka' Ratnas bzhegs pa dang/ snag tshal bzhengs pa la sogs pas thog drangs nas/ rta mchog dang gser g.yu la sogs pa/ dngos po rnam par dag pa bsam gyi mi khyab pa phul/ tshogs kyi mkhan slob dang nye gnas dang dbu che ba rnams kyang/ me tog gis mnyes par mdzad do//"; "[gNyos lHa nang pa] could not stay without thinking about rendering service to the *bla ma* and monks. He made [offerings of molasses] four times: three great offerings of molasses at this great assembly of 'Bri gung, [and once] when the *chos rje* was at Phag mo gru. When he made the first offering of molasses at 'Bri gung, having supplied much butter and molasses to the *spyan snga* (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po), [gNyos chen po] told the *nye gnas* of [dignitaries] such as dpon 'go (sic for *sgom [pa]*) rDo rje seng ge: "I request you to make sure that these provisions of mine are distributed at the rate of one *khru kor* of

Although *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* does not pay much attention to date the episodes of *gNyos chen po's* life, a few chronological attempts can be made. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas's *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* is useful to determine when these supplies of molasses took place. His biography of *sKyob pa rin po che* confirms that *gNyos chen po* offered these distributions but, more significantly, helps to approximate the years of these events, in vague terms though. One provision of molasses occurred at 'Bri gung—this biography says—after *sKyob pa rin po che* went to *rTa sgo* and before he tried unsuccessfully to meet *Kha che pan chen Shakya shri bhadra* because the Kashmiri master had proceeded elsewhere in *dBus gTsang*.⁹² *gNyos chen po's* first supply of molasses can be roughly fixed to

molasses to each [member] of the monastic assembly". Thinking that [what he had collected] was not enough, given that the monastic assembly was too large, he [actually] gave as much as one *mtho*, and half was left over. Thinking about the love he had for the *bla ma* who was in a sphere of purity and for the monks of the assembly, he went to see the *chos rje*. He said: "These provisions that I have accumulated with immense difficulty are going to waste. Do not you, *slob dpon*, take care of them yourself now?" Saying this, he expressed his regret justifiably. After the *chos rje* answered: "Do not worry so much, *dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po*, about the remaining molasses. I have a method to satisfy [you], *dge ba'i bshes gnyen po*, for rendering service to the monastic community", they went to 'Bri gung thang, and since the molasses were provided as an offering, it is said that they were given to the monastic assembly for the *bcu chos* ("teachings lasting for ten days"). It is said that [the monks] came again and again for the *bcu chos* gatherings. Since he had earlier preached teachings to groups of ten people each, (p.43) this was known as *bcu chos*. Despite the [monks] coming to the assembly on every occasion, there were still many who had not received [*bcu chos*] earlier, and many who did not keep [the teachings] in mind. Not to have discussions between fellow [monks] given that the order [to attend them] was binding, he made a general distribution [of molasses] on that occasion. Thinking to come to meet the assembly for the distribution in the future, he distributed molasses to each monk, and it is said that his kindness was appreciated. On that occasion, the *chos rje* too offered various inconceivable kinds of wealth, such as good horses, gold and turquoise, headed by the words of the By-gone Ones written with precious gem [ink] or written in black. The assembly's *mkhan slob-s*, *nye gnas-s* and great leaders, too, were pleased with these offerings".

92. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.113 lines 3-4): "De nas ni *rTa sgor la phod mDo rDo rje rgyal mtshan gyis gdan drangs nas byon no de'i rjes la dge bshes gNyos kyis bur ston mdzad cing bcu chos gsum chos mdzad de dge 'dun khri tsho gsum byung ngo de'i dus su pandi ta Shakya shri dang zhal mjal du bzhud pa la gshegs pa ni ma byung/''"; "Then, [*sKyob pa rin po che*] proceeded (*phod* spelled so for *phos*) to *rTa sgo*. *mDo rDo rje rgyal mtshan* invited him, and he went there. After that, *dge bshes gNyos* gave a banquet of molasses (*bur ston* shortened for *bu ram ston*), and gave a *bcu chos* and a *gsum chos*. Thirty thousand monks gathered. At that time, [*'Jig rten mgon po*] went to meet *pandi ta Shakya shri* but could not do so since [*Kha chen pan chen*] had left".*

Although not dated in the literature, the attempt of 'Jig rten mgon po to meet *Kha che pan chen* must have occurred during the four years (1208-1211) the Kashmiri master was in *dBus*. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.332 line 21-p.333 line 3) records: "gTsang du lo bzhi/ *dBus su lo bzhi/ yar lam gTsang dang mNga' ris su* (p.333) lo gnyis bzhugs pa'i ring du Byams chen dGa' ldan pho brang dang bcas pa legs por grub nas chu pho spre'u lo chu stod zla ba'i tshes gsum nas bcu'i bar du gnas pa'i cho ga thams cad rgyas par mzad/''"; "[*Kha che pan chen spent*] four years in *gTsang*, four

sometime after wood rat 1204, the year in which Kha che pan chen reached Central Tibet.

The same biography says that gNyo chen po's second distribution of molasses took place

years in dBus and on the way upwards (p.333) two years in gTsang and mNga' ris. During his stay [in gTsang] he completed Byams chen dGa' ldan pho brang in an excellent manner. After that in water male monkey 1212 on the third of the *chu stod* month he prolonged the *cho ga* for the locals up to the tenth day".

Anyway, the chronology of *lHo rong chos 'byung* has the weakness of compacting his sojourns in the regions of Central Tibet to single lots of four years. He spent an additional one year or around that amount of time in gTsang where he was involved in the making of Byams chen at Khro phu, which makes it impossible to fix with better precision his stay in dBus.

No much better precision can be derived from *Yar lung Jo bo chos 'byung* (p.178 line 8-p.179 line 2) which reads: "Gro mo'i la la byon/ shing pho byi ba'i lo la pan chen dgung lo drug cu rtsa lnga bzhes pa la/ Khro phur phyag phebs te dbyar gnas mdzad pa'i tshe/ zhing gNyan chung ma'i stengs su gtsug lag khang dGa' ldan gyi 'gram bting/ sa 'dul ba dang/ bar chad bsrung ba dang/ byin 'bebs pa thams cad bla ma pan chen pa nyid kyis mdzad/ de nas bzung nas gTsang du lo gcig/ dBus su lo (p.179) gcig/ mNga' ris su lo gnyis te/ spyir Bod du lo bcu tham pa bzhugs//; "[Kha che pan che] went to Gro mo. In wood male rat 1204 the *pan chen* went to Khro phu, having reached the age of sixty-five. At the time of the summer retreat he laid the foundation of the *gtsug lag khang* on the side of dGa' ldan at the field above gNyan chung ma. He tamed the ground. The *bla ma pan chen* guarded against obstacles and bestowed all blessings. Then in gTsang for one year, in dBus for one year, (p.179) in mNga' ris for two years, he spent ten years in Tibet".

The chronology of *Yar lung Jo bo chos 'byung* is confusing. Four years altogether (one in gTsang, one in dBus and two in mNga' ris) do not make the ten that the Kashmiri master stayed in Tibet. An interpretation is that Shakya Rin chen lde, the author of *Yar lung Jo bo chos 'byung*, calculates these years from the time of his work at the *gtsug lag khang* in Khro phu, which contained the Byams chen statue, onwards. If so, Kha che pan chen stayed one more year in dBus after its completion, which fell within the four ones he spent in the region and, on his way back towards Kashmir, he would have stayed one more year in gTsang and two in mNga' ris. This means that the extra one year each, which results from this chronology, should be deducted from the others in gTsang and dBus in order to make the canonical ten.

This chronology becomes partially explained in the next lines of the same text (ibid. p.179 lines 2-9): "bsTan pa dar bar mdzad/ chu pho spre'u'i lo la dpal Khro phu'i Byams chen khru bryad cu pa pho brang dang bcas pa tshar nas/ bre'i zla ba'i tshes gsum nas bcu bzhi bar du rab gnas mdzad/ de'i tshe Sing gha gling nas bgra bcom pas bskur ba'i me tog Byams chen gyi dbu la bshag cing De bzhin gshegs pa'i ring srel za ma tog dang bcas pa lotsa ba la gnang nas/ Byams chen thugs khar bzhugs su gsol/ lo de nyid la smin drug zla ba la pan chen 'khor dang bcas pa mNga' ris stod du gshegs/ chu mo bya'i lo la sPu rangs su bzhugs//"; "He contributed to expand the teachings. In water male monkey 1212, he completed the Byams chen of Khro phu, eighty *khru* in height including the *pho brang*. On the third of the *bre* month until the twelfth he performed the consecration. At that time, the *bgra bcom pa-s* from Sing gha gling let flowers fall on the head of Byams chen as [a sign of] reverence and a vase with relics of the De bzhin gshegs pa were offered to the *lotsa ba* who put them in the region of Byams chen's heart. That year the *pan chen* and retinue left for mNga' ris stod. They stayed in sPu rangs in water female bird 1213".

Kha che pan chen would have spent one year in gTsang when the work at Khro phu was completed in 1212. He then went to mNga' ris in 1213. This evidence does not help to place 'Jig rten mgon po's failed attempt to meet him anywhere in the ten years the Kashmiri master spent in Tibet.

when the 'Bri gung pa monastic community had grown to 55,525 members.⁹³ In this passage, 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas's *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* provides a better chronological indication since it says that gNyos lHa nang pa offered dispensations of molasses for eleven years. Hence, in view of the fact that the 'Bri gung pa monastic community had grown to the exorbitant number 52,525 by wood pig 1215 when *ri pa*-s were sent to each of rje btsun Mid la's three major pilgrimage places, those eleven years should be calculated retroactively from this date or sometime earlier. The two banquets of molasses offered by gNyos chen po thus did not occur at a short distance in time from one another, both preceding the 1215 departures.

One more important aspect of the passage in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* concerning his distributions of molasses is that it provides their doctrinal background. 'Jig rten mgon po decided to combine the offering with the preaching of some of his basic teachings to the monastic community of 'Bri gung, defined as *bcu chos* and *gsum chos* because these instructions were imparted to groups of monks, some bound to receive them for ten days and others for three days.

The third occasion of gNyos lHa nang pa's handing out molasses at 'Bri gung occurred after the death of 'Jig rten mgon po in fire ox 1217,⁹⁴ whereas it is unclear when the other one

93. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.116 lines 3-5): "De nas bur ston gnyis pa byas nas lo bcu gcig na dge bshes gNyos kyis tshe lnga la sogs pa brgya tshan bcu dgu phul dge 'dun la bur ston rgya chen po byas 'Bri gung thang du tshul du bzhuys pa la dge 'dun khri tsho lnga dang gnyis stong tsho lnga dang lnga brgya nyi shu rtsa lnga byung ste de rnam ni mdzad/"; "Then [concerning] the offering of the second banquet of molasses (*bur ston*), dge bshes gNyos provided them for eleven years to nineteen groups of one hundred [monks on occasions] such as the fifth day. He offered a huge banquet of molasses to the monks. [A total of] 52,525 (*khri tsho lnga dang gnyis stong tsho lnga dang lnga brgya nyi shu rtsa lnga sic for khri tsho lnga dang gnyis stong dang lnga brgya nyi shu rtsa lnga*) monks gathered at 'Bri gung thang".

bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.82 lines 4-6): "mNyes chen po rGyal ba lHa nang pas 'bul mo che dang/ bur 'gyed mdzad pa'i skabs 'dus pa lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyi shu rtsa lnga byung/"; "On the occasion of mNyes (sic for gNyos) chen po rGyal ba lHa nang pa's great offering and the distribution of molasses, 55,525 monks gathered".

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar (p.46 lines 2-5) adds that his teacher 'Jig rten mgon po did not forget to present gNyos lHa nang pa with a lavish gift on that occasion: "De nas chos rje 'Bri gung thang la byon/ phyag mjal mdzad Ratna'i 'khor rnam la/ sngar phyag rten rang la gser phyé khal gcig byung zhes grags so/"; "The *chos rje* then went to the plain of 'Bri gung. They exchanged greetings. Earlier he had given gold to the retinue of Ratna as a present, and [on that occasion] the smallest gift was one *zho* of gold. The fame [spread around] that one *khal* of gold powder was spent just for this [present] gift".

The episode shows that 'Jig rten mgon po could count on great resources, making gifts to him and 'Bri gung having become a constant preoccupation of the members of this school also in the following periods. Even the 'Bri gung pa who were oriented towards a hermit life tried to secure great quantities of gifts for their monastery, as will be shown *passim* in the rest of this volume.

94. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.51 lines 11-17): "De'i rjes la dbon po Ratnas gdan sa mdzad pa'i dus na yang/ dge 'dun gyi tshogs la bu ram khru skor ma mdzad/ rGya gar na Ye shes

of the four distributions that coincided with sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po's absence from 'Bri gung took place.

These dispensations are just one indication of the activity that flourished among most of the major 'Bri gung pa members, the one of collecting as much wealth as they could to contribute to the welfare of their monastery. Those of gNyos chen po are just one of several other instances of this policy adopted to support the 'Bri gung pa community.

Before the two occasions of proceeding to the retreats at the three great holy places that involved gNyos lHa nang pa, 'Jig rten mgon po made one more failed attempt to disperse another wave of *ri pa*-s to the mountains induced by the necessity to cope with the ever-growing monastic community at home. 'Jig rten mgon po's minor attempt to send out his monks happened in earth horse 1198. The episode is briefly described in the biography by his nephew 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas.⁹⁵ The modest outcome of this endeavour

kyi mkha' 'gro ma zhig gis phul ba'i/ stag gi lpags pa gzi dkar po dog dung lta bu la/ baidurya'i zhun mas bris pa lta bu'i 'dzum mang po yod pa/ stag gi lpags pa gzhan pas chu ring zhing zheng che ba gcig gis gtso byas nas/ stag gi brgya 'bul dang/ mkhan slob dang/ nye gnas dang/ dbu che ba rnam la yang mnyes bsam gyis mi khyab pa mdzad do//"; "Then, when dbon po Ratna was the *gdan sa* (hence after 'Jig rten mgon po's death), [gNyos lHa nang pa] made an offering of one *khru* of molasses to [each monk of] the assembly. Together with the tiger skin offered by one *ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro* from rGya gar, its background whitish in colour and with many stripes as if they were drawn with *baidurya* ink, whose size was bigger than any other tiger skin, as the main one, she gave an offering of one hundred tiger skins and made the *mkhan slob*-s, *nye gnas*-s and the great leaders inconceivably pleased".

The enormous skin of an albino tiger, let alone the gift of one hundred more tiger skins, underlines the need for a historian not to use the same yardstick to approach differences in the standards of different periods. Often, we think of the past as a time when life was run in greater symbiosis with nature. Although the exploitation of natural resources occurred on an extremely low scale, this does not apply to wildlife. Instances like the one dealt with in this note are a telling case that little concern for wildlife existed in 1217 'Bri gung, in contrasts with the *bla ma*-s' repeated condemnation of animal killing—wildlife in particular—that the Tibetan people pursued despite being Buddhists. The case here is worse. The slaughter took place in India but 'Bri gung, a great centre of the Noble Religion, accepted the gift.

95. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.110 lines 2-4): "De nas kyang ri khrod pa bkye bar bzhed nas dge 'dun gyi tshogs thams cad bsdu nas yang na khyed ri la song khyed mi 'gro spyan nga nyid nas bzhud pa yin gsungs pas dge 'dun rnam kyi bzhud par khas blangs tshan gsum du mdzad nas bcu chos thos tshad thams cad ri la bkye'o btsun chung chung bdun brgyad cu slob dpon Ti se ba la gtad de sKyi shod du song//"; "Then, having planned to disperse the *ri khrod pa* ("hermits"), he gathered the entire assembly and said: "Either you go to the mountains or, if you do not go, the *spyan snga* will go". The monks agreed to go. As he divided them into three groups, all those who had received at least the *bcu chos* ("teachings given during ten days") were dispersed to the mountains. Seventy or eighty little monks were entrusted to slob dpon Ti se ba. They went to sKyi (spelled so) shod".

This happened in earth horse 1198. Ibid. (p.110 lines 4-5): "Dus der dgung lo lnga bcu rtsa drug bzhes so//"; "At that time ['Jig rten mgon po] was fifty-six years old (1198)".

Slob dpon Ti se ba is mentioned in *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.414 line 3) as a mere name without any further treatment of his life and deeds.

was that some young monks went to a nearby retreat in sKyi shod for studies with a *ri pa* known as slob dpon Ti se ba. He probably was a member of the 1191 wave of hermits headed by Ngad phu pa, for otherwise his appellative would be rather inexplicable unless he had himself journeyed and resided at the mountain.

▪ The 1208 expedition

The next departure of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s took place in earth dragon 1208.⁹⁶ For its treatment, *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* and '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* are fundamentals of the literature. Chos sdings pa is respectively called Gar pa Byang stor and Gar pa Byang rdor in them.⁹⁷

96. 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas, '*Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po rnam thar* is again instrumental in fixing the date of this expedition. It says (p.388 line 2): "Dus der dgong lo drug bcu rtsa drug...", "At that time (in 1208) he ('Jig rten mgon po) was sixty-six...." and *ibid.* (p.390 line 5-p.391 line 1): "Bu slob tshogs skyong ba yang rnam pa drug byung ste/ stong ngam/ lnga brgya 'am/ brgya 'am/ lnga bcu 'am/ bcu'i skor yas chad skyong ba yang thar mi ngon no/ ri khrod pas ni sa chen po khyab ste/ U rgyan nam/ Dznya lan dha ra 'am/ Gan dha la/ Ti se 'am/ rDo rje gdan nam/ Bal yul lam/ (p.391) A su ra 'am/ La phyi 'am/ Chu bar ram/ Tsa ri lag pa gnas khyad par can rnam su/ Ti ser ni sum brgya re re/ Tsa rir ni brgya tsho re re/ La phyi Chu bar du brgya tsho re re//", "It happened that he took care of his disciples, [divided] into six groups in the following way: groups of one thousand, five hundred, one hundred, fifty, ten (one missing). These divisions, which he took care of, are not discussed [here]. The hermits were scattered to the great places of U rgyan, Dznya lan dha ra (spelled so for Dza lan dha ra), Gan dha la, Ti se, rDo rje gdan, Bal yul, A su ra, La phyi Chu bar, Tsa ri, to all these extraordinarily holy places. At Ti se [was a group of] three hundred, at Tsa ri a group of one hundred, at La phyi Chu bar a group of [another] one hundred".

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.26b line 1): "Bar pa la dge bshes gNyos chen po dang Gar pa Byang rdor la sogs pa Ti ser dgu brgya/ La phyr dgu brgya/ rTsa rir dgu brgya bcas brdzangs pa yin//", "The intermediate (i.e. second) time, nine hundred [*ri pa*-s] led by dge bshes gNyos chen po and Gar pa Byang rdor were sent to Ti se, nine hundred to La phyi, and nine hundred to rTsa ri (spelled so)".

'*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* (f.16b lines 3-6): "De nas kyang 'Bri gung Thel nyid du tshogs grangs je 'phel du song ste dge bshes gNyos chen pos dge 'dun la bur ston dang/ chos rjer brgya mtshan bcu bdun gyi 'bul ba byas pa'i skabs dpon Shes rab 'byung gis rtsis pas tshogs pa lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyis shu rtsa lnga byung/ de nas lo 'ga' zhis song nas ri pa bar pa bkye dus Ti se la dgu brgya/ La phyr dgu brgya/ rTsa rir dgu brgya bcas nyis stong bdun brgya ri la btang bar gnang pa 'di'i gras na kyang grub pa thob pa mang du byung//"; "Then again, at 'Bri gung Thel itself, the number of [monks composing] the congregation progressively increased. When dge bshes gNyos chen po offered a distribution of molasses to the monks and the seventeen division of one hundred [monks] made an offering to the *chos rje*, according to the calculation by dbon Shes rab 'byung, the congregation amounted to 55,525 [monks]. After a few years, when the [groups of] intermediate *ri pa* were dispatched, nine hundred were sent to Ti se, nine hundred to La phyi, and nine hundred to Tsa ri, altogether 2,700. There were many in those groups who acquired spiritual attainments".

97. There are reasons for 'Gar dam pa being known to both *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* and '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* under such a name (with different spellings) rather than his appellative Chos sdings pa. One is that he had not yet founded Chos sdings dgon pa when he went to Gangs

Another biography, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, has a crucial significance since it expresses 'Gar Dam pa's viewpoints of the events that occurred during the expedition, which involved both gNyang chen po and himself. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* provides different versions of the incidents recorded in *gNyang lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* and *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*. It also recounts events in which gNyang lHa nang pa was not involved. However, the biography of Chos sdings pa agrees with the other sources on one point, earth dragon 1208 as the date of the expedition to Gangs Ti se led by 'Gar dam pa and gNyang chen po lHa nang pa.⁹⁸

All the sources that deal with the expedition show that, on the occasion of the 1208 departure to Gangs Ti se, the three disciples of 'Jig rten mgon po who had gone to Tsa ri together (see above p.34-36) were reduced to two. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.421 lines 9-11) says that, at the time of their visit to Tsa ri, dPal chen Chos ye had lost faith in the daily secret Tantric practice of 'Gar dam pa and gNyang chen po, and left. He later returned to Tsa ri on a mission for the *dgon pa* without the company of the other two.⁹⁹ A disagreement between the

Ti se together with gNyang lHa nang pa. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.436 line 10) credits 'Gar Dam pa with an important foundation after the death of 'Jig rten mgon po (fire ox 1217): "Klung shod kyi Zu rir Chos sdng gi dgon btab//"; "['Gar dam pa] founded the monastery Chos sdng (spelled so) at Klung shod Zur ri".

sPo bo'i lo rgyus (p.67 lines 20-21) has a different chronology: "De nas dngung lo so drug la gdan sa dang po Zur ri Chos sdings kyi dgon pa phyag btabs//"; "When he was thirty-five (1215), ['Gar dam pa] founded his first *gdan sa*, the monastery of Zur ri (spelled so) Chos sdings".

Another reason is that, following their journey to Ti se, the relationship between gNyang lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa went into decline and thus the latter's life and activity is thereafter neglected in the former's biography. All this taken altogether explains why 'Gar dam pa is not mentioned under his appellative of Chos sdings pa by Dznya na badzra, gNyang lHa nang pa's biographer. An explanation why *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* uses the name Gar pa Byang rdor is that it is based on *gNyang lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*.

98. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.476 line 4) reads: "gNam lo chu po 'brug gi lo/ ces pa'i gsung/ bcaad rams kyang 'di'i dus su mdzad pa yin gsung//"; "It was the water male dragon year (*chu po* (spelled so) 'brug sic for earth male dragon 1208). He adds that the accounts were written at that time".

This date confirms the chronology of the second 'Bri gung pa expedition to Gangs Ti se found in *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*. It will be shown below that in his 1208 journey to the lands on the "upper side" he met the Pu hrang *jo bo*, sTag tsha Khri 'bar, and defeated a *gzhi bdag* of Zhang zhung called Lug ltim. And that the second wave of *ri pa-s* set out from 'Bri gung in the same year is indicated by the events that involved him on the way which I introduce here and in better detail below. Before reaching Pu hrang in 1208, Chos sdings pa received teachings from Sa skya pandi ta in Gung thang for one week, and then crossed Byang thang, where he did not stay for long because he had to flee from local people (the Nag 'dus Khri tsho) who wanted to rob him of his horses. He and the *ri pa-s* must have hastened on the way.

99. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.421 lines 8-13): "dPal chen Chos ye ni/ 'Jig rten mgon po'i gzim g.yog yun ring du mdzad cing sgrub pa mdzad de/ Tsa ri trar sngar byon dus gSang sngags kyi kun spyod gNyang dang mGar gnyis mdzad pa la ma dad pas dngos grub brnyes/ Tsa ri'i gnas phal cher gyi bdag po mdzad/ de'i rgyud pa phyogs phyogs nas sring/ da lta yang mang du byon bzhin yod//"; "dPal chen Chos ye was the bedroom assistant (*gzim g.yog*) of 'Jig rten mgon po for a long time. When he earlier went to Tsa ri tra, since he did not have faith in both gNyang and mGar's

'Bri gung pa heads of the expedition to Tsa ri is thus explicitly documented in the literature, and perhaps this was the reason why dPal chen Chos ye was sent back to Tsa ri rather than to Gangs Ti se in 1208 in the expedition headed by 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa and gNyos lHa nang pa.¹⁰⁰

There is some difficulty to find out the actual number of monks composing the 'Bri gung community at the time of the departures to the hermitages, but one method of estimating the actual dimensions of the new migratory wave to La phyi, Tsa ri and Gangs ri is by using the number of *ri pa*-s who left for those destinations as a bench mark. On the magnitude of the 1208 expeditions to the three main pilgrimage places, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.469 line 1) records the number of 'Gar dam pa's followers who went with him to the lands on the "upper side" quite different from the records in *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* and *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*.

While *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* talks of a group of nine hundred retreatants each sent to Gangs ri, La phyi and Tsa ri, *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* count them as seven hundred *ri pa*-s sent to Gangs Ti se and headed by gNyos chen po and 'Gar dam pa. It is not a matter of different ways of calculating these figures. One of the two figures is invalidated by the discrepancy with the other one. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* mentions that the group of 'Bri gung pa, composed by 'Gar dam pa and his disciples, numbered 121 individuals.¹⁰¹ The count in the biography of 'Gar Dam pa shows that the number of *ri pa*-s in the expedition was bigger, also adding the followers of gNyos lHa nang pa and others sent to the hermitages by 'Jig rten mgo po.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar says that 400 members of the 700 strong expedition turned back during the journey to the mountain due to vicissitudes on the way and scarcity of food. They returned to 'Bri gung. Only 300 *ri pa*-s reached Gangs Ti se, headed by gNyos lHa nang pa.¹⁰² The number of *ri pa*-s who went to Gangs Ti se and the other two major holy

secret Tantric practice, he left. He was again sent to Tsa ri and, since he meditated, obtained spiritual powers. He became the lord of most of the holy places of Tsa ri. His lineage expanded in all directions (*phyogs phyogs*). Still at present there are many who go [there]"

bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.101 line 17): "dpal chen po ni sngon du rTa 'chag tu rdzu 'phrul bstan las gzhan rnam thar ma thong//"; "As for dpal chen [Chos ye], I did not see any biographical material other than [that regarding] his miraculous display at rTa 'chag early [in his life]."

100. Hence gNyos chen po went to Tsa ri twice together with dPal chen Chos ye (1191 and 1194) and once with 'Gar dam pa (1194). The 1194 visit was the occasion on which they met gTsang pa rGya ras.

101. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* says that the 1208 expedition to mNga' ris stod numbered 121 *dpon slob*, with Chos sdings pa as their head and rest being his disciples.

102. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.40 lines 1-2): "gZhan yang mu ge chen po gcig la dpon g.yog bdun bryas Ti ser byon pa'i dus na/ lam du o bryal zhing//, "Also, when the *dpon* (gNyos

places of rje btsun Mid la is confirmed to have been three hundred by *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (see above n.96), which implies that the same number of hermits had originally left for the holy mountain of Pu hrang. Hence, there was no turning back of any large number of meditators before reaching Gangs Ti se.

The 121 members of the expedition associated with Chos sdings pa can be explained by assuming that they were exclusively his disciples, while the others making up the rest of the 300 *ri pa-s* who reached the destination were those of gNyos lHa nang pa.

▪ Vicissitudes on the way

Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar does not talk about the vicissitudes mentioned in the biography of gNyos lHa nang pa but recounts in detail at least one major ordeal suffered by 'Gar Dam pa and his people.

Proceeding in some order with the unfolding of the events, Chos sdings pa, together with gNyos chen po (?), is first recorded in his biography as having received teachings from Sa skya pandi ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251) in Gung thang,¹⁰³ and to have pleased the

lHa nang pa) and seven hundred followers went to Ti se, which coincided with the occurrence of a major famine, the journey was exhausting”.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar (p.94 lines 12-18): “sNgar ma yar byon pa'i shul lam du dpon g.yog bdun brgya tsam yod pa la/ mi gzhan la gnod kyis dogs nas/ rang rang gi rgyags la pris ma bcug ste/ dpon g.yog thams cad shin tu 'phong par byung pa'i dus na/ sdug bsngal de dag ngas lam du gtang pas/ lam du 'bras bu 'di rnams byung pa yin pas/ da dge 'dun rnams ci bde bar long spyod la 'o mi rgyal bar gyis gcig gsung nas/ dge 'dun sdug sran chung pa gyes pa lhag ma gsum brgya tsam la/ zas gos dang/ mi re la rta re byung ste/”, “Previously on the way up [to sTod], the *dpon* and 700 disciples, fearing that other people could be harmful to them, relied on their own supplies, which caused great suffering to the *dpon* and all his disciples. He said: “Given that I have not avoided these sufferings as they happened [to us] on our way, some [positive] events have to occur [on the rest of our] journey. [You] monks can do whatever is easy for you to do”. The monks who could bear little suffering went back. It happened that the remaining three hundred odd [received] food and clothes, and each man a horse”.

Yer pa'i rnam thar in *Bla ma Zhang rin po che'i bka' bum* (sic) *las dKar bgyud rnam thar* (p.406 lines 2-6) talks about a great famine: “On one occasion, [Yer pa ba] stayed eight months at Nam mkha' phug of Gar ba. A great famine broke out that year. Upon realising that the locals were inconsiderate in collecting grass and wood, while many people were hungry, and that a great *sngags pa* performed a *gtor ma*, [Yer pa ba] could not bear at all to see [the locals] eating the *gtor ma*. There is an account that he fed many hungry people with his food supply. He stayed at Zla ba phug of Yer pa for eighteen months feeding on a watery soup (*chu 'dag*) and without lighting a fire. On all the mountains and monasteries from rGyal and Rag ma'i spyi bo, such as Ze ze mo, up to Gye re'i phyi bo, people meditated feeding on garlic broth”.

The year, in which the famine told in this account occurred, is not given in *Yer pa ba'i rnam thar*. The famine recorded in the biography of this teacher of bla ma Zhang was not the same that the *ri pa-s* experienced when the 'Bri gung *ri pa-s* were dispersed to Tsa ri, La phyi and Gangs ri since Mal Yer pa ba Mon lam btsan (1105-1170) lived one generation before the event. Nonetheless, the account shows that, in the 12th century and the early 13th, Tibet was troubled by famines.

103. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.467 lines 4-6): “sTod phyogs yar byon bas/ lam du'ang 'bul ba rgya chen po byung/ Gung thang du ma cig Gung mo'i chos 'khor la/ mkhas pa chen po Sa skya

Sa skya pa master with his devotion to the point that Sa pan commended him to his Sa skya pa disciples as an example to be followed.¹⁰⁴

Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar records that the caravan from 'Bri gung narrowly escaped being looted by Byang thang bandits. No clues are available to say whether the two facts—scarcity of food and the bandits' menace—contributed, together, to make the journey difficult, or whether the decision of a large group of monks not to proceed farther, documented in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*, rested on the fear to be attacked.

Chos sdings pa's caravan came under the brigands' pressure after leaving Gung thang and reaching an unspecified area of southern Byang thang, where the episode of 'Gar dam pa being welcomed by the gathering of all the 'brog pa and their authorities with the absence of lHa phyug mkhar pa (see above p.46-47 and n.47) is staged in his biography. The place of the gathering was perhaps somewhere in the vast stretch of land between the area north of Nub ris/Nub ri and 'Brong pa.

Was the absence of lHa phyug mkhar pa at the ceremony greeting the 'Bri gung pa *ri pa-s* and their heads a sign of his disliking of the presence of potential rivals in mNga' ris, although belonging to the same bKa' brgyud pa school or else of some dubious personalities at the meeting in Byang thang?

lo tsa/ gral mgo' la gdan drangs pa dang/ dus mtshungs/ Sa skya lo tsha la/ gser gyi rdo rje cig/ zi pol rgya gang/ la ga chab yug cig dang gsum phul/ chos 'brel la 'Jam dpal blo 'phel zhus/ zab chos la/ bDe mchog lus dkyil dang/ slob dpon Dha Byang chub sems dpa'i dGyes rdor dpa' bo gcig pa la sogs ste/ chos sna dgu' tsam zhus/ zhag bdun tsam bzhugs gsungs//"; "Having left for sTod, they received extensive offerings on the way. At Gung thang, at ma gcig Gung mo's *chos skor*, mkhas pa chen po Sa skya lo tsa was invited [to sit] at the head of the row and, concurrently, Sa skya lo tsa was offered one golden *rdo rje*, a *zi pol rgya gang* ("about a *rgya ma*—over one pound—of *zi pol*, spelled so for *gzim spos?*, "incense?") and a *la ga chab yug* ("a bundle (*yug*) of sheep (*la ga*) felt"), altogether three. As for religious instructions (*chos 'brel*), [Chos sdings pa] received 'Jam dpal blo 'phel. As for profound teachings (*zhab chos*), he received *bDe mchog lus dkyil* and slob dpon Dha Byang chub sems dpa's *dGyes rdor dpa' bo gcig pa*. He was given nine different teachings. He said he stayed [with Sa pan] for seven days".

In 1208, years before 'gro mgon 'Phags pa's presence in Gung thang, which led to the established of the network of forts known as the *glang gi las thabs bcu gsum* by the Gung thang king 'Bum lde mgon (1253-1280), the region was already frequented by the Sa skya pa elite and therefore was a stronghold of the school.

104. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.469 lines 2-4): "Mang yul Gung thang gnas su ni/ mkhas pa Sa lo chen po la/ zab chos gdams ngag mang du zhus/ lo tsa chen pos thugs la btags/ mnyes pa'i bka' rtsa la mang du byon/ chos dang dam tshig srog du 'brel/ bla ma nyid kyis rdzang pa mdzad/ yon mchod 'khor la rjes gnang byon/ bsod nams chen po'ang gis song//"; "In the holy place Mang yul Gung thang, [Chos sdings pa] received profound teachings from mkhas pa Sa lo chen po. The *lo tsa chen po* was pleased (*thugs la btags*), and spoke at length about being pleased [with him]: "Teachings and *dam tshig* ("commitments") are binding for life". The *bla ma* himself bid him farewell, and authorised his followers to grant him *yon mchod*. Fame spread far and wide of his great merit".

The incident that occurred to Chos sdings pa and his followers, caused by a group of Byang thang bandits, is imputed in his biography to the jealousy nurtured by some local religious masters for Chos sdings pa. Such a huge movement of 'Bri gung pa headed by some of the most prestigious disciples of 'Jig rten mgon po did not miss to create a stir even in an area as isolated as southern Byang thang.

The local *bla ma*-s are named 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba¹⁰⁵ and Nag tsho lo tsa ba in *Chos sdng pa'i rnam thar*, and the head of the Nag 'dus Khri tsho bandits was Gra tsha Khri tsho, defined in the biography as the "black man" (*mi nag* and *nag po*). 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba and Nag tsho lo tsa ba lured Nag po Gra tsha Khri tsho into action, calling his attention to the horses of the expedition from 'Bri gung.¹⁰⁶

It is quite difficult to place both the *lo tsa ba*-s and the brigands into some context because their identity remains irretrievably obscure. *Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* does not say who the Khri tsho (the "Khri division") of southern Byang thang were. They are not mentioned in other sources.

Nag tsho lo tsa ba must have come from the same family and territorial division as Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul khriims rgyal ba (1011-?), the great disciple of Jo bo rje A ti sha, perhaps from Gung thang IHa gdong like the *pha spun* of his most illustrious predecessor. The famous episode of Jo bo rje's reaction upon seeing the horsemen sent by Iha bla ma Byang chub 'od to welcome him took place at Gung thang IHa gdong, the religious place of Nag tsho lo tsa ba's family (mChims Nam mkha' grags's *Jo bo dpal ldan A ti sha'i rnam thar rgyas pa* f.123 line 3).

The group of Nag 'dus Khri tsho bandits, who tried to take the horses away from the 'Bri gung pa, may have had local ties with the treacherous Nag tsho lo tsa ba active in southern

105. The spelling 'Ghur mo of 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba is an archaic form which refers to [Tshong 'dus] mGur mo, the well known place in Nyang smad of gTsang, from where some sTod Tshal pa seem to have come. However, the mere fact that 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba may have been from this locality does not allow one to infer that he was a Tshal pa, and that his hostility was a sign of Tshal pa dislike for the presence of the 'Bri gung pa in that area.

106. *Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* (p.469 line 5-p.470 line 1): "sGom chen pa yin pas 'ud ni che/ mthu dang nus pa byin rlabs ni med pa cig/ 'dir 'ong zer ba grags pa chen po cig byung ba dang/ 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba dang/ Nag tsho lo tsa ba bya ba gnyis kyis/ bla ma chen po de 'dra ba 'dir byung na/ 'o skol gnyis kyi bsod nams (p.470) la gnod zer nas 'brag dog byas pas/ Gra tsha Khri tsho bya ba'i mi nag thun po 'jing can yod pa bskul nas/ bla ma 'di la rta gser zad pa med pa yod/ 'di bsad pa la gnad ni med/ nor tsho zos bas chog zer/"; "[Falsely spreading] a great rumour that someone who boasted, with much exaggeration ('ud ni che), of being a great meditator but was without the power of *mthu* and [spiritual] blessing was coming there, both 'Ghur mo lo tsa ba and Nag tsho lo tsa ba told [one another]: "If such a great *bla ma* comes, (p.470) he will harm the subsistence (*bsod nams*) of both of us", and were jealous [of Chos sdings pa]. Hence, they instigated a bad man (*mi nag*), namely Gra tsha Khri tsho and their associate (*thun po 'jing can*, *thun po* spelled so for *mthun po* "sympathetic", *'jing can* "associated [in the conspiracy]" see *Tshig mdzod chen mo*; or "cruel [and] arrogant" (*thun po* spelled so for *gtum po*, *'jing can* "arrogant, lit. "with a neck"), who was there. Telling him: "This *bla ma* has an inexhaustible (*zad pa med pa*) quantity of horses and gold. Killing him would not be a crime. You may take away (lit. *zos ba*, "to eat") his belongings".

Byang thang. Bonds of kinship cannot be ruled out, especially if Nag is not an epithet of the felony of these brigands but a clan affiliation.¹⁰⁷ Were the association between this Nag tsho lo tsa ba and Nag 'dus Khri tsho derivative from a similar territorial provenance, the gathering of religious exponents organised to welcome 'Gar Dam pa may have taken place at an early stage of the 'Bri gung pa *ri pa-s'* journey to the west.

The collusion of local *bla ma-s* with the bandits was uncommon elsewhere in Tibet at any time. More often, religious masters who were *bla ma-s* of *jag pa-s* warned them not to cause damage to religious institutions and their members. Rather than having troubled relations with bandits, as often was the case in Tibetan history, their religious masters had close ties with the brigands to the point that they indicated potential prey to them. Byang thang was familiar grounds to looting activities owing to its isolation and the paucity of routes that crossed it, where close encounters were possible.

The Nag 'dus Khri tsho did not attack the 'Bri gung pa caravan directly, as happened in the best tradition of Tibetan brigandage; the bandits tried to attract 'Gar dam pa into a trap, but he did not fall into it.¹⁰⁸ No words are spent on whether, as it seems likely, gNyo s lHa

107. An improbable alternative to approximate the provenance of Nag 'dus Khri tsho is that the original territory of these bandits could have been the area of Dwang ra g.yu mtsho and the rTa sgo range. But this hypothesis has an insurmountable weakness. Any association should be dismissed, for the only point of contact is Nag tshang, a later name of the region, which does not go back, therefore, to the early 13th century.

108. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.470 lines 2-6): "Bla ma gdan 'dren mkhan mi gsum rta drug sbyin/ bla ma'i sku la bsdo' mkhan la/ bla ma'i chibs de dang/ rta lnga bzhin par byas nas/ bla ma yab sras/ lung pa gcig gi nang du bzhugs pa la/ yon bdag drag shos 'dra ba rkya mi gsum byug nas/ nged kyi mi gces pa gsum bcu' tsam/ Byan g.yag rngon sar Byang g.yag smyon pas brtibbs/ de'i dge ba ched po byed dgos pas/ rta nyi shu/ ser srang bcwo lnga/ phyug ma bdun cu tsam 'bul rgyu yod pas/ khyed bla ma grags pa can du 'dug/ cis kyang 'byon par zhu zer pa la/ Dam pa de mkhyen pas/ mnyes pa skad gsung/ yon bdag kun shi ba ni ma legs/ khyed shul na yod pa rnams kyis dge ba bzang po byed pa ni stang bzag bas/ khyed rang rnams song la gral gyis/ nge das thag ring po nas 'ong ong bas thang cad/ 'dir nyi ma cig gnyis bcag ma byed/ de nas yar 'ong/ khyed kyi 'dod chos kyang byed/'bul ba'ang len gsung pa dang/ khong rnams dga' nas song/ dmag bsdus nas tshag byas lo/"; "Three [men] with six horses went to invite the *bla ma*. Their [own secret] proposal was to give the *bla ma's* horse plus five [other] horses to the person who would make an attempt on the *bla ma's* life. As soon as the *bla ma yab sras* entered a valley, three men [resembling] excellent lay (*rkya* spelled so for *skya*) sponsors appeared, and said: "Some thirty beloved men of ours were killed by Byang's mad *g.yag-s* in the hunting place of the Byang *g.yag-s*. Since we need to perform their funerary rites (*dge ba ched po*), we have twenty horses, fifteen *srang* of gold and some seventy head of female cattle to offer [to you]. You are a famous *bla ma*. We request [you] to come by all means". Since ['Gar] Dam pa realised [that this was a slanderous proposal], he pretended to be pleased: "It is upsetting that all the sponsors have died. It is quite noble that you, who have survived (*shul yod pa rnams*), are planning to perform their funerary rites. You go ahead and make preparations (*gral*). Since we have come from a distant place, we are tired. We plan to take a rest (*bcag ma*) of one or two days here. Then we will come up [and] perform the rites of your wish. We will also accept your offerings". Having spoken thus, [the bandits] were pleased and left. Since [the bandits] had collected troops, [the 'Bri gung pa *ri pa-s*] kept alert (*tshag* spelled so for *tshags*)".

nang pa, too, was involved in the ordeal like 'Gar dam pa who managed to avoid the snare of the Nag 'dus Khri tsho by making circuitous deviations and by travelling at nighttime.¹⁰⁹

The episode marks one of the first recorded cases in which *jag pa*-s were active in southern Byang thang, called Byang in textual passages during the early 13th century (see e.g. n.108). Brigandage spanned the Tibetan plateau from one corner to the other and was practised since greater antiquity. Bandits habitually moved swiftly on the caravan routes to find their preys but the episode concerns a group of bandits who were settled in Byang thang and adjoining regions in the course of the centuries rather than searching convoys in other territories.¹¹⁰

109. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.470 line 6-p.471 line 4): “Dam pas/ dro thon pa dang/ kal khol gsung ba dang/ phu na yar lam yod pa lam bzhud nas/ mda' na phyir bzhud gra pa rnam na re/ 'o skol gyi bla ma 'di/ mi lam la mi 'gro/ gla srang la mi 'drim nas/ mis 'bul ba byed zer sa na (p.471) mi 'gro/ grogs nyin mo na yod na kha srib mo na gyu/ mda' na phyir 'gro zer nas/ 'bar srag mang du byas so/ mda' na phyir 'gro zer nas/ 'bar srag mang du byas so/ nyin tshan gsum/ la skor lung skor byas nas/ song bas/ nyin dros chen tsa/ 'brog pa cig gi sar slebs skad/ yon bdag pho mo thams cad brgyug nas byung/ su yin su yin zer/ nged 'di tsug 'di bzhin byas tsa/ khyed Nag po Gra tshas ma rums pa byas zer tsa/ mi bden zin/ go bcad zer/ 'bod mi byung ste nged ma songs gsung bas/ khyed la mngon shes yod zin zer nas rga rgyabs/ 'bul ba ched po byas/ dka' bros mang du byung pa ni ma khrid gsung/ Khra tshas dmag dang bcas pas nged pas ma sleb nas/ bla ma gzhan mi dra ba'i mngon shes yod pa/ Sangs rgyas cig yin/ khyed gnyis kyis nged la thon zer lo/ lo tsa ba gnyis kyis/ Nag 'dus la chad pa 'jal rgos reng skad//”; After lunch, ['Gar] Dam pa told [his followers] to load the pack animals. After taking the road which is the upper road in the higher part of the valley, he exited from its lower part. The monks said: “This *bla ma* of ours is not going by the normal route. Since he did not go across the junction (*gla srang*), he did not go by the places where people say that they will give offerings (*mis 'bul ba byed zer sa na mi 'gro*). (p.471) Although there could have been assistance during the daytime, we travel in obscurity”. Saying to advance on the lower side [of the way], they expressed [their] displeasure (*'bar srag*) many times. After going for three days and nights around passes and valleys (*la skor lung skor*), it is said that, when the sun was hot, they arrived at a place of *'brog pa*-s. All the male and female sponsors came rushing [to him]. They asked: “Who are you? Who are you?”. “When I said that I was such and such a person”, they exclaimed: “Rumours came that you [suffered because of] the criminal acts [committed] by Nag po Gra tsha, but this proves that they are not true. This is excellent (*go bcad*)”. When I said: “People came to call us, but we did not go”, they exclaimed: “This proves that you have prophetic knowledge”, and were pleased. They made great offerings. They had numerous consultations, but he said that he could not take them along. Since the warriors [sent] by Gra tsha chased him but could not arrive [to catch him], [Gra tsha] said: “The *bla ma* who has a prophetic knowledge unlike anyone else is a real Sangs rgyas. The two of you (i.e. the two *lo tsa ba*) pressed me to catch him”. It is said that the two *lo tsa ba* were obliged to disburse a penalty to the Nag 'dus”.

110. Despite the setback they suffered in 1208 (see the next note), references to the Gra tsho still in the 15th century are found in *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* which proves that the members of this clan were still active in the Himalayan range pursuing a bellicose agenda. The biography (f.31b lines 1-2) talks in the following terms of the ordeal faced by a young btsun pa Chos legs (1437-1521) and his brother to escape the Gra tsho miscreants sent by Glo bo to arrest them: “Nyung ma thebs dang 'Om blo'i Kha stod tshong 'dus dang/ Zha'i rtse bya ba la sogs pa'i sa cha brtsan por bros nas bsdad/ ston nyung ma bsdud du 'ongs bas/ Gra tsho rNam rgyal bya bas mgo byas pa'i dmag sum brgya tsam gyis nged dang Hor 'dra ba'i tshang brdungs//”; “As we fled to 'Om blo (in the

▪ Another invasion of the "upper side"

A twofold retribution befell the Byang thang brigands for the threat to the caravan of the 'Bri gung pa hermits. Immediately after the plan of looting the expedition since they failed to summon 'Gar Dam pa to their camp (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.469 line 5-p.474 line 3), an internal strife subverted the order adopted by Nag po Gra tsha Khri tsho with a loss of lives in their ranks. This was followed by another major blow to his Nag 'dus Khri tsho because, at roughly the same time, they were attacked, massacred and annihilated by people said to have been Sog po by *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*.¹¹¹

area of Sle mi) Kha stod tshong 'dus ("the market in the upper area of 'Om blo") to plant turnips and to Zha'i rtse, which were safe places, we stayed there. During the autumn [of 1451], as we came to collect the turnips, all of a sudden three hundred soldiers led by Gra tsho rNam rgyal attacked us and [our] contingent of Hor 'dra ba ("guards").

Chos legs kyi rnam thar (f.31b line 5-f.32a line 3) continues telling episodes in the dire situation that the Gra tsho imposed upon the two young men: "dByar de sngar gyi mkhyud kyi Gra tsho'i grong la 'khris nas/ Khu phu dang rong Sle sogs su bsdad/ dbyar smad rong Sle nas rtsas mi brda ba tsam la/ Gra tsho pā'i che grong la kham byas nas bu gnyis bzung/ rta sum bcu tsam (f.32a) 'bri g.yag brgya tsam/ lug mang po dang bcas pa khyer nas rGya'i rong la zhugs pas/ de dus Gra tsho rNam rgyal Mu khum gyi tshong dpon la yod pa/ Mu khum pa dang dang khong rang gi 'brog pa dag bcas pa sku nas rab mda' byas pas/ sngar gyi Tshong sa zer ba der non nas nged kyi mi gnyis tsam bsad/ gsum bzhi rmas/ Gra tsho rang gi bu gnyis po nor gang yod dang bcas pa shor/ de'i dgun de rGya ru bsdad//"; "In summer [of 1452], secretly as before, we were taken to the settlement of the Gra tsho, and stayed at Khu phu and rong Sle [mi]. In late summer, around the time when harvesters were harvesting at rong Sle, since negotiations were held at the big settlement of the Gra tsho pā, we, the two boys, were arrested. After taking away thirty horses, (f.32a), one hundred 'bri and g.yag as well as many sheep, we stayed at rGya'i rong. At that time, Gra tsho rNam rgyal was with the chief trader from Mu khum. The Mu khum pa and his own 'brog pa-s having been incited [to do so], they chased us. They caught us at Tshong gsa. They killed two men, three or four were injured and Gra tsho took away all the possessions of ourselves the two boys. We spent that winter (1452-1453) at rGya".

111. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.473 lines 3-6): "De nas physis Nag po Gra tsha nang 'thab byung bas mang du shi/ de ma dul bar Sog po'i dmag byung bas/ sku labsdo' zer mkhan kun gsal shing la bskyon/ snying phyungs/ dgra brub byas skad/rdzun 'bodbyed mkhan gsum khog stod smad byas nas/ khog stod gsum lam gnyar bzhag/khog smad gsum lam 'og tu bzhag/ drag shos gnyis brgya gsum brgya' tsam thar ba ma gtogs pa/ Nag 'dus thams cad bsad khyer byas skad do/ gzhan rgyus yong rnam na re/ Gra tsha la gnam khol bu chung ngu rdib/ bla ma de 'dra ba la las ka de 'dra babshams/ rnam sbyin de bas 'ong mal med zer skad do//"; "Then, some time later, an internal strife affected Nag po Gra tsha, and many [of his people] died. Those being tamed, the Sog po troops came. It is said that, of the ones who had not been subjugated, all those who proposed to harm him (*sku*, i.e. 'Gar dam pa) were [punished] by being impaled on thorny trees or their hearts scooped out. Or else the enemy made them captive (*dgra brub byas*; same as *do dam byed pa*, see *Tshig mdzod*). The three who had extended the treacherous invitation had the stomachs slit into an upper and lower [part]. The upper part of the stomachs of these three was left on the upper road; the lower part of the stomachs of these three was left on the lower road. Apart from two or three hundred high-ranking people who were able to escape, it is said that all the Nag 'dus were killed or deported. It is said that others who were acquainted [with the events] reported: "The sky fell on the Gra tsha in small pieces (*gnam khol bu chung ngu rdib*). They plotted such an affair

Pu hrang was not affected by this invasion, as proved by *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* which does not hide that unspecified difficulties occurred on the way (see n.102) and by the follow-up in Chos sdings pa's biography to 'Gar dam pa's adventures in the lands on the "upper side". The 'Bri gung ri pa-s safely reached destination at the court of the Pu hrang jo bo. Hence the Sog po inroad was restricted to an area only comprising the nomadic lands of southern Byang thang east of the Ma yum la. The invaders could have hardly been Mongols (more often called Hor than Sog po during that period). Lack of geographical contiguity seems to rule out the possibility that those Sog po were Mongols or Turkestani Muslims who had uprooted Gu ge Pu hrang on several occasions altogether in the course of the previous centuries.

The localisation of the invasion points to Muslims from northern India as the candidates responsible for destruction and death in southern Byang thang in that eventful 1208. The period was one of great turmoil in the Gangetic plain, where Buddhist universities were situated.¹¹² Inroads into lower Byang thang coincided with the Muslim takeover of the Gangetic plain. Immediately after the change in ownership of this land, it was almost inevitable that the dramatic subversion of the status quo in the plains of Northern India created ripples to neighbouring territories although separated by the Himalayan range and that the Muslims invaders applied pressure on the population of the hills and farther up. In the aftermath of these events, groups of marauders trespassed onto Tibetan territory and caused havoc as far as southern Byang thang, but it is difficult to find out the precise identity of those groups of invaders.

In the span of some thirty-five years Byang thang faced at least three invasions,¹¹³ probably all undertaken by Muslims not to count, subsequently, the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war,

against such a *bla ma*. People said they deserved no less retribution (*rnam smyin* spelled so for *rnam smin*)”.

In *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* frequent use of the archaic *yata* is made as in this passage of the biography, which indicates, along with the often recurring *'drags*, that ancient spellings were still in vogue during the 13th century. This scriptural/linguistic solution is also found in Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od'd *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chn mo*, a text from the "upper side".

112. That time of turmoil, testified to by the decision of Kha che pan chen Shakya shri to leave East India for Tibet in 1204, is exemplified by one account in *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* according to which Kha che pan chen had hardly reached his destination in Tibet, thus acceding to the invitation of Khro phu lo tsa ba, when rDo rje gdan was raided by the Muslims (ibid. p.519 lines 3-5): “Khro phur phebs te zla ba drug tsam du bzhugs/ yo byad thams cad lHa sar mchod pa skyel du btang/ Bod tha dad nas spyen 'dren pa zad pa med kyang rDo rje gdan la Gar log gi dmad yong ba zlog dogs gsungs/”; “[Kha che pan chen] reached Khro phu and stayed there for about six months. He sent all [sort] of implements to lHa sa for the worship [of its holy places]. His invitation was not even exhausted—Tibet is a different [country]—that the troops of the Gar log came to rDo rje gdan. He said: “They must be repulsed”.”.

113. The subsequent invasion of Byang thang recorded in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* for the year 1224 (see below n.230) lends a tone of consistency to the disruptive activity on the plateau on the part of Muslims from India. The extermination of the Nag 'dus Khri tsho brigands, which must be added to the 1193-1194 invasion and the subsequent one of 1224, shows that lower Byang thang was a weak territory in mNga' ris, prone to foreign invasions.

during which Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge was a witness of the presence of Muslim mercenaries in the ranks of Ya rtse troops.

A few episodes of foreign invasions into Byang (Southern Byang thang) in the few decades of the turn of the century between the 12th and the first quarter of the 13th are proof of the Islamic interest in the territory beyond the Himalayan range.

Besides the destructive 1193-1194 Muslim invasion, another inroad that dates to years after the 1208 episode, the wood monkey 1224 raid of Hor Bu mo (see below n.230), a chieftain whose origin is not specified, must have come from the southern border owing to the same reasons adduced for the trap to 'Gar Dam pa. This reinforces the concept that the Tibetan highlands were affected by Muslim splinter groups who ventured onto the plateau once they accomplished the conquest of the Gangetic plain. This is a point contrary to the view held by scholars who work on the basis of non-Tibetan sources.

The Sog po strategical choice to target Byang thang is a sign that the Byang thang nomads were the weak ring in the chain of populations and kingdoms of Upper West Tibet during that period. The safe status of Pu hrang, the strongest regional power of those years, was partially due to the rise to preeminence of Ya rtse, an ally of Pu hrang at the time and a major political entity in the area. Ya rtse contributed to Pu hrang's peace and stability by creating a buffer zone that protected the kingdom to its immediate north. Pu hrang was ruled in those years by jo bo sTag tsha Khri 'bar gung and his offspring, whose wise rule perfected, through the collaboration of the 'Bri gung, strategical alliances with the Hor and Ya rtse. The combined secular and religious status they provided to the kingdom secures their fortunes.

▪ Chos sdings pa's ascendancy over the Pu hrang *jo bo*

The next great event recorded in the account of Chos sdings pa's journey was his meeting and frequentation of the Pu hrang *jo bo*.¹¹⁴ The get together of the heads of the 'Bri gung *ri pa-s* and the local ruler—or rulers—is the first of a few such episodes recounted in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* and *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* in different ways, despite referring to the same activities. The differences in these accounts help to gauge the atmosphere prevailing among the 'Bri gung pa and to ascertain a few historical facts.

114. sTag tsha Khri 'bar has been recognised as the incarnation of Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan, who introduced *bsnyung gnas* in Tibet after receiving the fasting technique of dge slong ma dPal mo from Bal po dPe nya ba (see Vitali, "The transmission of *bsnyung gnas* in India, the Kathmandu Valley and Tibet (10th-12th centuries)", where I deal with Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan at some length).

mNga'ris rgyal rabs (p.69 lines 13-15) reads: "Yab bla chen mdzad pa'i tshan (sic for mtshan) bla chen sTag tshar grags/ Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan gyi sprul par grags so//"; "The name under which the father was well known, having become a *bla chen*, was sTag tsha. He was recognised as the incarnation of Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan".

It is realistic to think that sTag tsha was the immediate rebirth of Zla ba rgyal mtshan, despite the latter's dates not being available, given that Nyid phug pa Chos kyi grags pa, a disciple of the *Byang sems*, was born in 1094 and died in 1186, and sTag tsha Khri 'bar was a mature Pu hrang *jo bo* in 1208.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar does not make a secret of the fact that Chos sdings pa's attitude and activity seriously hampered gNyos chen po's relations with sTag tsha Khri 'bar. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* talks at some length about the interaction between sTag tsha and 'Gar dam pa, but ignores the presence of gNyos lHa nang pa entirely, to the point that one cannot even glean that gNyos was a member of the expedition but its head.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* and *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* all three concur the notion that gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar dam pa met sTag tsha Khri 'bar on the throne of Pu hrang. Hence, in 1208 he was the Pu hrang *jo bo*. This is consistent with the sequence of rulers of Pu hrang during that period, for Ngam Klu rgyal, the previous Pu hrang *jo bo*, was reigning around 1200 (see above p.43).

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar also mentions that one of the Pu hrang *ra dza*-s wished to receive teachings from gNyos cen po, but Gar pa Byang stor's (i.e. Chos sdings pa's) jealousy prevented this bestowal.¹¹⁵ Personal grudges between the heads of the 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s apart, the passage is helpful to show that sTag tsha had co-opted one of his sons to the throne, the elder dNgos grub mgon. It proves, too, the circumstances of both the appointment of dNgos grub mgon and that of rNam lde mgon, aka A tig or A tig sman.

The treatment of the meeting between 'Gar Dam pa and sTag tsha Khri 'bar in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* is useful to approximate when the Pu hrang *jo bo* took the robe. The biography of the 'Bri gung pa master addresses sTag tsha in his 1208 meeting with Chos sdings pa four times as *mnga' bdag*, a classic secular title of royalty (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p. 471 line 6, p.472 line 6, p.473 line 1 and p.473 line 2).¹¹⁶ Hence, he had not yet taken monastic vows.

115. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.40 lines 2-3): "Pu rangs su Gar pa Byang stor gyis 'phra dog byas zhing/ rgyal po sTag tshas zhabs spyi bor len pa rtsa bkag/", "In Pu rangs, Gar pa Byang stor (sic for Byang rdor) was jealous of [gNyos lHa nang pa]. rGyal po sTag tsha ceased putting his (gNyos lHa nang pa's) feet on the crown of his head".

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar (p.94 line 18-p.95 line 4) says again: "dPon g.yog rtsos Pu (p.95) rangs su byon/ Ra dza 'khor bcas kyis kyang sna len byas/ ra dza gcig dbang zhu bar 'dod pas/ Gar pa Byang stor gyis rtsa bkag pas/ ra dza phyis shin tu 'gyod par gyur nas/ Rad na'i slob ma Jo sras lHo brag pa la gSang ba 'dus pa'i dbang zhus rgyud bsnyan skad/", "The *dpon* and his disciples arrived in Pu rangs. The *raja* and his court received them [well]. One *raja* wished to receive empowerments [but] Gar pa Byang stor objected. The king later repented, and it is said that he received Tantric teachings and the empowerment of *gSang ba 'dus pa* from Rad na's (i.e. gNyos lHa nang pa's) disciple Jo sras lHo brag pa".

The same strained relations between the two heads of the 'Bri gung pa expedition are briefly recorded in *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a lines 2-4).

116. For instance, Ye shes 'od is never called *mnga' bdag* after he took religious vows; rTse lde is commonly called *mnga' bdag* in the sources because he did not become a monk. By contrast, when lHa lde was on the secular throne of Gu ge Pu hrang after Ye shes 'od abdicated and his father Khor re also took monastic vows, he is called *bla chen po* in *Rin chen bzang po rnam thar 'bring po* (p.21 line 21, p.22 line 3 and line 7). It is hardly possible that Chos sdings pa would have addressed sTag tsha "Khri bar as *mnga' bdag* had he taken religious vows.

sTag tsha Khri 'bar's acts of royalty led him to coopt his elder son dNgos grub mgon not later than 1208 and the younger one, rNam lde mgon aka A tig or A tig sman, at the same time or soon thereafter. Symptomatic of this state of affairs is that *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* talks about more than one Pu hrang *ra dza* (see above n.115).

sTag tsha Khri 'bar then left the throne to dNgos grub mgon in the years between 1208 and 1215 (*mNga'ris rgyal rabs* p.69 line 13). sTag tsha entered religion sometime between the same span of few years. Soon after but not later than 1215, dNgos grub mgon left the Pu hrang throne to his younger brother rNam lde mgon, the second of these two dates works as the *terminus ante quem* for rNam lde mgon's being coopted to the throne by the ruling *jo bo*, his father sTag stha Khri 'bar, according to *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.27b line 6-f.28a line 2, see n.175).

A few episodes in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* describe the deep impression that 'Gar dam pa left on sTag tsha 'Khri bar. The first time was when the news that Chos sdings pa had been able to outwit the Nag 'dus Khri tsho and avoid their threat reached the ears of the king, which indicates that those bandits had gained some fame as dangerous marauders even in the view of the Pu hrang *jo bo*. sTag tsha Khri 'bar was impressed by Chos sdings pa's escape from the bandits on the way to Pu hrang and by the absence of ill feelings towards them in the 'Bri gung pa master.¹¹⁷

A reason for sTag tsha Khri 'bar's neglect of gNyos lHa nang pa was that Chos sdings pa left another indelible mark on him, since he healed him from a serious disease that tormented the Pu hrang *jo bo*.¹¹⁸ Recovery from illness contributed to increase 'Gar dam pa's reputation

117. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.471 lines 4-6): "De nas Dam pa dpon slob mnga' bdag sTag tsha'i drung du byon pa dang/ mnga' bdag gi zhal nas/ khyed Nag 'dus Khri tshos/ 'o brgyal du bcug zer ba brag/ thugs bral chen po skyes pa yin ba la/ mi bden zin/ di ring bas dga' ba ma byung gsung lo/ da 'o skol nram pa/ ngan pa de tsho la mthu cig mdzad rgos gsung pa la/ Dam pa'i zhal nas/ nga rang gi nyams len yang yin/ gzhan po' dmang la phog pa yin/ blo sbyongs yang dus rgyun du sems bskyed 'di la byed la lags pas/ mthu mi byed/ nga'i nor la ni bdag po bzang po yod pas/ 'brag dog 'dra ba ni 'ong srid gsungs//"; "Then, ['Gar] Dam pa *dpon slob* went to see mnga' bdag sTag tsha. The *mnga' bdag* said: "A rumour has been spread that you suffered at the hands of the Nag 'dus Khri tsho. This has caused [me] great worry, but [fortunately] it was not true. I have never been happier than today". He added: "Now you should perform a *mthu*' (spelled so) against those bad characters". ['Gar] Dam pa having said: "My spiritual practice is to give teachings to others. Since [my] self-cultivation consists of developing *sems bskyed (bodhicitta*, "thought of enlightenment") continuously, I will not perform a *mthu*. There is a noble lord/protector of my wealth. This might have given rise to some jealousy"."

118. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.472 line 6-p.473 line 3): "De nas mnga' bdag phyag shin tu 'dar nas/ bzhes pa zhal du nye gnas kyis 'bul (p.473) dgos pa la/ Dam pa'i zhal nas/ mnga' bdag chen po phyag 'di ltar 'dar ba de/ ched du bzhed pa lags sam gsungs/ ga la zhis 'dod pa ma yin te/ 'di 'dra ba cig byung bas/ khyed 'dra ba dag bzhugs pa'i dus na/ shin tu 'tsher bar byung gsung ngo/ 'o na 'di la phan pa'i dmigs pa 'dra ba yod ba 'bul na bzhed nam/ gsungs pas/ de na ni shin tu yang thugs la btags/ bka' drin gus pas mno'/ gsung skad/ mnga' bdag mu tra karma bsten pas rtsa rlung gi gnad yin par dgongs nas/ gegs sel gnad bas/ zhag bdun reng pa na gegs sol//"; "Then,

in the eyes of the Pu hrang *jo bo*, who received teachings together with his family and court, and reserved for Chos sdings pa a special performance at his court, in which 'Gar Dam pa gladly participated. He contributed to the performance with several songs.¹¹⁹

since the *mnga' bdag's* hands were very shaky, so that the *nye gnas's* duty had to put food in his mouth, (p.473) the *dam pa* asked: "*mNga' bdag chen po*, what is the reason your hands are so shaky?". He replied: "This is not intentional at all. It happens just like this. With people like you around, I am very emotional". Since ['Gar Dam pa] proposed: "If this is so, there is a specific remedy (*dmigs pa*) which could be beneficial. If I gave it [to you], would you accept [to try] it (*bzhed dam*)?". It is said that [the king] exclaimed: "Certainly, I am extremely [eager] to accept it. I am overwhelmed by devotion to your graciousness". ['Gar Dam pa] said that, the *mnga' bdag* being used to practise *mu tra karma*, he thought that this was harmful to his *nadi* system. He gave him [the remedy] to remove the obstruction. He said that, after seven days, the obstruction was removed and [the *mnga' bdag's*] hands became normal".

'Gar Dam pa was an *am chi*, too!

119. *Chos sdng pa'i rnam thar* (p.471 line 6-p.472 line 6): "mNga' bdag gi zhal nas (p.472) a ma khyed ni Byang chub sems dpa' chen po lags par 'dug/ thugs bskyed zhu dgos gsung nas/ g.yur dngul gzhong gang la 'thor nas mdzad nas/ khong rang gis thugs bskyed zhus/ de nas gur kum dngul gzhong gang la 'thor nas mdzad pas/ sras po dang/ sras mo dang/ btsun mo dang bcas pas thugs bskyed zhus/ de nas sman kun 'tshogs pa dngul gzhong ba la 'thor nas mdzad pas/ blon po rnams dang bcas pas thugs bskyed zhus/ de nas 'bras la 'thor nas mdzad pas/ mi sde dang bcas pa kun la 'bul rgya chen po dang/ bcas par thugs bskyed zhu pa'i bkas gnang mdzad/ de nas de rnams thams cad rims kyi s'thar ba dang/ thogs kyi 'khor lo rgya chen po mdzad nas/ gdam ngag du zhus/ de'i gral du khyed Byang chub sems dpa' chen po 'dug/ mthu' ni mi dzad zin/ gyer ma re re tsam mdzad par zhu/ ngad kyi yang gyer 'di kun las gsan par zhu/ gsung nas/ sras mo rnams kyi rnga leb re re dang/ rnga gyer rnams legs par phul ba yin gsung/ Dam pa'i zhal nas kyang/ nyan pa zil gnon bya ba dang/ gtum chen rngam ring bya ba dang/ ye ring ye thung bya ba dang/ nyer chen nyer chung bya ba dang dril chen sgra sgrogs bya ba dang/ Hum ring Hum thung bya ba sogs pa'i/ gyer rnams mdzad pa yin gsung/ mnga' bdag kyang shin tu mnyes skad do//"; "The *mnga' bdag* said: (p.472) "*A ma!* You are a great Byang chub sems dpa'. I need to receive *thugs bskyed* ("the development of the wish of enlightenment"). Having thrown turquoise from a silver bowl [as an offering], he received *thugs bskyed*. Then, having thrown saffron from a silver bowl [as an offering], his sons, his daughters and his queen/wife received *thugs bskyed*. Then, having thrown various herbal medicines from a silver bowl [as an offering], the ministers received *thugs bskyed*. Then, having thrown rice, he ordered all his lay communities (*mi sde*) to receive *thugs bskyed* upon making an extensive offering. After they completed to receive it one after the other, an extensive *tshogs kyi 'khor lo* having then been performed, they received *gdam* (sic for *gdams*) *ngag-s*. [The king] told him: "In terms of status, you are a great Byang chub sems dpa'. This is proved [by the fact that you] did not perform a *mthu'* (spelled so). I request [permission] for each [of us] to perform *gyer ma-s* ("songs, chants"). I request [you] to listen to all our *rnga gyer* ("songs accompanied by drums"). He added: "[My] daughters, with one *rnga leb* ("flat drum") each, will excellently perform their *rnga gyer-s*". ['Gar] Dam pa said: "I will perform *gyer rta* ("melody with words") such as *snyan pa zil gnon* ("enchanting sound"), *gtum chen rngam rings* ("greatly wrathful, awesome and prolonged"), *ye ring* ("long beginning") and *ye thung* ("short beginning"), *nyer chen* ("[song] of great affliction") and *nyer chung* ("[song of] little affliction") and *dril chen sgra sgrogs* ("big resounding bells"), as well as *Hum ring* ("long Hum") and *Hum thung* ("short Hum")". It is said that the *mnga' bdag* was extremely pleased".

Chos sdings pa imparted teachings three times to sTag tsha Khri 'bar, the members of his family and his ministers,¹²⁰ but his sojourn at the Pu hrang court was probably not very long.

Types:

rnga gyer ("songs accompanied by drums")

with *rnga leb* ("flat drum") they will excellently perform their *rnga gyer*-s

gyer rta ("melody with words"):

snyan pa zil gnon ("enchanting sound pleasant to the ears"),

gtum chen rngam rings ("greatly wrathful, awesome and prolonged"),

ye ring ("long intro" or a "[melody that has] a long continuous tune",

ye thung ("short intro" or a "[melody that has] a long continuous tune",

nyer chen ("[loud roar melody]",

nyer chung ("[soft roar melody]",

dril chen sgra sgrogs (a "[song sang] with a big resounding bell"),

Hum ring ("long Hum"),

Hum thung ("short Hum"). About this *mantra*—two of 'Gar Dam pa's songs perform it—a passage of Don dam sMra ba'i seng ge's *bShad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu* mentioned by Ellingson (*The Mandala of Sound* p.384) associates Hum with the *phur pa* and is said to be meant to summon mGon po and other wrathful deities.

Unlike the hybrid association of *gyer/gyer ma* to Bon when practised by a Buddhist, as R. Stain stresses in "La langue Zhang zhung du Bon organisé" (p.238-240), the way the term is used in the biography of 'Gar Dam pa documents a more general sense of the word, not linked to religious practice either Bon po or Buddhist. *Gyer/gyer ma*-s were sung in a secular context at the court of sTag tsha. The episode in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* shows that *gyer/gyer ma* refers to a "song sang with the accompaniment of a drum" (*rnga gyer*), further explaining that the drum was a flat one (*rnga leb*) at least in the way it was used in the early 13th century Pu hrang, without ruling out different interpretations in other contexts.

rTa that is associated with *gyer* in the case of 'Gar Dam pa's songs corresponds to one of the three divisions of the way of chanting, which shows that Chos sdings pa was trained, as for his singing, in a monastic milieu, although also practised in secular singing.

Ellingson, *The Mandala of Sound* (p.532) writes: "Rta includes strophic repeating "melodies" of various degrees of intonational complexity, composed mainly of discretely separate pitch levels and regular rhythmic units. Rta rise gradually and continuously in pitch, with constant but irregular changes in the interval relationship of pitch levels". He adds (ibid. p.532): "In ... rta, the instruments (my note: cymbals and drums) usually play simple, standardized beat patterns based on syllabic and verse structures". Elsewhere (p.412) Ellingson defines *rta* as "melodic chant" whereas those defined as *dbyangs* are to be considered more beautiful melodies than those of *rta*. Ellingson (p.415-416) also says that to western ears *dbyangs*-s may sound more monotonous and those of *rta* more brilliant, which is the opposite of Tibetan evaluation.

The episode indicates that, during the time of sTag tsha Khri 'bar, the musical tradition of mNga' ris skor gsum was still being practised at the Pu hrang court although, being performed in a secular milieu, it was quite different from the religious songs popular with the most important masters of *bstan pa phyi dar* active in Upper West Tibet. See below (n.169) for at least one more occasion on which Chos sdings pa sang a song.

120. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.474 lines 1-3): "mNga' bdag sTag tsha'i drung du byon/ sprul sku chen po sTag tsha des Dus gsum rgyal ba bskyed pa'i yum/ thugs bskyed gsum 'brel rdzogs par

The treatment of his stay in the biography conveys a sense of short duration. Despite being chosen as the *bla ma* of the king, 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa was involved in other adventures soon afterwards.

Like Dharma bsod nams, the second abbot of rTa sga, Chos sdings pa was appointed to the important religious post at court, *bla mchod*, by the Pu hrang *jo bo* after he was healed by him (see *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* f.10a line 4-f.10b line 3 cited above in n.78). It could be that the same event is attributed to both of them by the related literary material, but some differences exist in the way the episode is dealt with rather than its contents. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* is specific on the issue, for it says that the Pu hrang ruler healed by 'Gar dam pa during his visit to Pu hrang was sTag tsha Khri 'bar, and that the *jo bo* suffered from a tremor in his hands that the king imputed to some nervousness upon meeting the distinguished masters who visited his court.

The healing of a Pu hrang *jo bo* by the Tshal pa master Dharma bsod nams is obscure and therefore more difficult to interpret. No details are given in *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* about the identity of the *jo bo* whose health was restored by the Tshal pa master, although the probability that the king of Pu hrang healed by Dharma bsod nams was sTag tsha Khri 'bar is quite high but he could have been Ngam Klu rgyal.

The point in time in which this healing took place—1208 according to *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*; some unspecified year according to the Tshal pa documents but sometime after 1200, given Dharma bsod nams' period of abbotship—suits sTag tsha as the Pu hrang *jo bo* affected by a disease also in the case the cures were provided by Dharma bsod nams. I would not rule out that both the bKa' brgyud pa masters cured him. In the typical hagiographical style, not exclusive to the biographical literature, both are credited with the success in healing the king.

Dharma bsod nams was rewarded with several localities and properties by the Pu hrang *jo bo* for his help, whereas Chos sdings pa was not. The approach of the Tshal pa and 'Bri gung pa in mNga' ris made the difference. It was lasting in the case of the Tshal pa who was a resident of Pu hrang; temporary in that of the 'Bri gung pa.

The leadership of the 'Bri gung pa expedition exercised by 'Gar dam pa at the Pu hrang court, although he was gNyos chen po's disciple and seventeen years younger than him, may indicate the preeminence of certain clans in the 'Bri gung pa organisation due to their origin. Both belonged to noble clans. Among the four divisions of the 'Gar clan, Chos sdings pa was

ni/ bskyar zhing bskyar zhing lan gsum zhus/ dbang dang gdam ngag mang du zhus/ ras phrug gser dngul sman la soggs/ 'bul ba chen mo phul byas te/ mnga' bdag chen po'i bla mar gyur/ rje Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar la/ Nag 'dus Khri tsho btul ba dang/ mnga' bdag sTag tsha dang mjal ba'i skabs ste/ bcu gsum pa'o/"; "He went to see mnga' bdag sTag tsha. This great sprul sku sTag tsha perfected *thugs bskyed gsum 'brel*, which is the mother of Victorious Ones of the Three Times, as follows. He received it again and again, three times. He received many *dbang* and *gdams ngag*. He made a great offering of cotton, woollen cloth, gold, silver and medicinal plants. ['Gar Dam pa] became the *bla ma* of the *mnga' bdag chen po*. This is the thirteenth episode in *rje Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, when he vanquished the Nag 'dus Khri tsho and met mnga' bdag sTag tsha".

from the lineage devoted to religion (*chos rgyud*), whose ancestor was the great minister sTong btsan yul zung. Within the gNyos clan, lHa nang pa belonged to the Kha rag family. But 'Gar dam pa was a Khams pa from dMe 'dor and Khams pa masters, as is well known, had a dominant position in the hierarchy of 'Bri gung at an early stage of its history. They had a place of preeminence in the bKa' brgyud pa schools in general, for most of Dwags po lHa rje's disciples were from Khams and their disciples were Khams pa too.

Following the sojourn at the Pu hrang court, gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdng pa parted ways. No further event in Pu hrang and neighbouring lands that involved gNyos chen po is found in his biography, whereas the next adventure of Chos sdngs pa in these lands is profusely described in his *rnam thar*.

▪ 'Gar Dam pa beyond the limits of the plateau in the west

'Gar dam pa left Pu hrang and its court, and travelled to a locality situated in the territory defined as Zhang zhung in his biography, whose identification is particularly intriguing. The *rnam thar* names his destination three times. It calls it Shri na ga the le (*Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* p.474 line 3, see n.121) [Shri] na ghar in the next sentence (ibid. p.474 line 4), and Shri na ga dPal gyi ri bo a few folios thereafter (ibid. p.476 line 6).

The three alternative spellings of this place name in the biography of Chos sdngs pa need to be reconducted to a unitary, coherent reading. The spelling Shri na ga/[Shri] na ghar stands for the capital of Kashmir obviously, whereas The le and dPal gyi ri bo need a closer consideration. The le is a geographical notion that accompanies the place name Srinagar. Given that The le is a scribal error for Thel, the next step is to correct the name overall into Shri na ga/ghar thel to address the capital of the Kashmir Valley. This is all the more so because the text of *Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* abounds in various spellings of the term similar to The le, i.e. *thel* and *thil* rather than *mthel* and *'thel*, or *mthil* and *'thil*.¹²¹

Srinagar, the centre (*thel*) of Kashmir, is more commonly called Kha che Khri brtan in the Tibetan literature.¹²² The use of Shri na ga/[Shri] na ghar in the biography rather than Kha che Khri brtan highlights the fact that Chos sdngs pa had a personal awareness of the place which he called by its local name and did not rely on its literary Tibetan rendition, owing to his frequentation of the locality.

121. *Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* (p.474 line 3): "De nas yang Shri Na ga the ler byon/"; "Then he again went to Shri Na ga the le (i.e. the "centre of Shrinagar)".

For the spelling *thel* or *mthel* see *Chos sdngs pa'i rnam thar* (p.488 line 4) where it is 'Bri gung gi thel and ibid. (p.430 line 4) which reads 'Bri gung thil, (p.514 lines 2) for Thel rin po che. Other sources also spell *thel* (e.g. *lHo rong chos 'byung* p.423 line 8: 'Bri gung thel), bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.90 line 20, and *'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* f.15a line 2: 'Bri gung thel). The spelling *thil* is also found in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.80 line 14), and thus *thel/thil* was prevalent in 13th-14th century Tibet when the two biographies were written.

122. It is called Kha che Na ger in *Rin chen bzang po'i rnam thar bdus pa* (p.249 lines 1-2) which says: "Nyi ma dros kyi bar du byon nas/ Kha che Na ger gyi Ka la pa ta bya ba'i grong khyer du sleb/"; "Since [Rin chen bzang po] left before (*bar*) the sun was warm, he reached the town called Ka la pa ta of Kha che Na ger".

▪ dPal gyi ri bo

The Tibetan tradition knows several dPal gyi ri in India. Those that can be more readily or most famously recognised are two in the Indo-Iranic borderlands—Shrinagar and U rgyan, see the note immediately below—another is near rDo rje gdan, then the mountain by this name in present-day Orissa and one more in South India.

A passage in *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* is enlightening, for it says that India recognises ten dPal gyi ri in the lands of the subcontinent.¹²³ The same source brings the concept of dPal gyi ri to an extreme application. It says that even Gangs Ti se is a dPal gyi ri.¹²⁴

Besides the direct evidence of *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, which identifies the location of Shri na ga/Shri na ghar by means of its context, some early literary notions indicate that the dPal gyi ri bo in question should be identified as a place well inside the Kashmir Valley.

dPal gyi ri and Srinagar are mentioned by the Tibetan literature in a group of prophecies given by the first Karma Zhwa nag pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa aka bla ma dBu se (1110-1193), celebrated for his prophetic skill to read in the three times. These prophecies are found in the most ancient extant biography of this master, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar gSer gling ma* in eighteen chapters written by his direct disciple sGang lo tsa ba. They were issued at a late stage of Dus gsum mkhyen pa's life, and thus are examples of this identification that date back to a period close to Chos sdings pa's visit to Shri na ga dPal gyi ri. These prophecies are also associated with the first Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa, by later sources which deal with him.

A useful contribution of *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar gSer gling ma's* to ascertain the identity of Shri na ga dPal gyi ri bo concerns the reincarnation of lHo brag Mar pa as a *rnal 'byor pa* at dPal gyi ri and nearby Shri na ga ra, both said to be in the south (*lho phyogs*).¹²⁵ The expression “in the south” does not refer to South India. The biography of the first Karma pa places Dza lan dha ra, too, in the south (*lho phyogs*, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar gSer gling ma* p.110 line 4). Hence the locations of dPal gyi ri “in the south”, near Shri na ga ra, and that of Dza lan dha ra, too, are based on a concept of relative geographical location—every point of the compass is relative to another—which, in their case, is seen from the

123. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.7a,4): “dPal gyi ri bcu yod pa la/ O rgyan de na rtsa ba yin skad//”; “Among the ten dPal gyi ri that exists, people say that the one of O rgyan is the main”.

124. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.2a lines 2-3): “sPos dang ldan pa dang nye ba gangs can dPal gyi ri/ 'jig rten na Ti se zhes grags pa de yod//”: “Near sPos dang ldan pa (i.e. sPos ri ngad ldan) is gangs can dPal gyi ri, known as Ti se in the worldly realm”.

125. *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar gSer gling ma* has this to say in chapter fourteen, which deals with rebirths (p.95 lines 2-3): “Bla ma Mar pa lho phyogs kyi dPal gyi ri la nye ba'i Shri nā ga ra'i grong khyer du la pandi tar sku 'khrungs//”; “Bla ma Mar pa was reborn taking the incarnation (*sku khrungs*) as a *pandi ta* in the town (*grong khyer*) of Shri nā ga ra, near dPal gi ri in the south (*lho phyogs*)”.

northern direction. Therefore, the geography of India—that of Srinagar and Dza lan da ra in this case—is southern from the Tibetan vantage point of view. Hence, the expression “in the south” does not imply that the places in question are in South India.

The same matter is treated in *mKhas pa'i dga'ston*. In one of his prophecies, bla ma dBu se says that, at that time, Mar pa was a *rnal 'byor pa* living at dPal gyi ri and at the nearby town of Shri na ga ra.¹²⁶

Two biographies of the second Karma Zhwa nag pa, Karma Pakshi (1204 or 1206 or 1210-1283) (Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Pakshi'i rnam thar* in his *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng*; and Karma Nges don bstan rgyas, *Karma Pakshi'i rnam thar* in *rNam thar dpag bsam khri shag*) contribute evidence that supports the same view. They say that Karma Pakshi went to Karti ka, O rgyan and dPal gyi ri.¹²⁷ mKha' spyod dbang po's *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* defines the first of three localities as the town Karti ka to the northeast of O rgyan, localities and territories to which Srinagar belongs.¹²⁸ Although Karma Pakshi went there in

126. *mKhas pa'i dga'ston* (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* in the *Karma Kam tshang* section p.867 lines 20-22): “gZhan gyi da lta ba mkhyen pa dpag tu med pa cing khyad par rje Mar pa dPal gyi ri dang nye ba Shri nā ga ra'i grong na pandi ta zhig tu nzhugs rnal 'byor pa mdzad de 'gro don dpag med mdzad//”; “[Dus gsum mkhyen pa could tell about] uncountable incarnations of other people at that point in time. In particular, rje Mar pa was living [then] as a *pandi ta* at dPal gyi ri and the nearby town of Shri Na ga ra. The latter was a *rnal 'byor pa* who was rendering uncountable services for the benefit of sentient beings”.

127. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Pakshi'i rnam thar* in his *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* (p.101 line 1): “De'i dus su Karti ka/ O rgyan dang/ dPal gyi ri la sogs pa gnas mang po gcig tu phyon//”, “At that time, [Karma Pakshi] went concomitantly to many holy places, such as Karti ka, O rgyan and dPal gyi ri”. Karma Nges don bstan rgyas, *rNam thar dpag bsam khri shag* (*Karma Pakshi'i rnam thar* p.86 lines 1-2): “gNas mang po/ Karti ka/ O rgyan dang/ dPal gyi ri la sogs pa byon//”; “[Karma Pakshi] went to many holy places such as Karti ka, O rgyan and dPal gyi ri”.

128. mKha' spyod dbang po, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (p.500 lines 4-5): “Yang bla ma rin po che sku skye ba phyi ma gang du 'gro don mdzad zhus pas/ rje btsun zjhal nas/ rGya gar nub phyogs su O rgyan gyi byang shar mtshams Karti ka'i grong khyer du/ yab Darmā sidhi/ yum Ma hā pradnya shī la'i sras/ Ratna sidhi zhes bya ba'i rnal 'byor pa cig tu sky skye ba bzhes/ sems can dpag tu med pa la phan thogs gsung//”; “Again, [Dus gsum mkhyen pa] was asked where *bla ma rin po che* would benefit sentient beings in his next lives. The *rje btsun* said: “I will take rebirth as a *rnal 'byor pa* called Ratna sidhi, the son of father Darma sidhi and mother Ma ha pradnya shi la at the town Karti ka at the north-eastern border of O rgyan in West India. I will be of use to uncountable sentient beings”.

Also see *mKhas pa'i dga'ston* (p.868 lines 18-23), which has a similar account: “Yon bdag dGon pa ba 'di skye ba gsum nas lam rnal ma la tshud par 'gyur gsung ba sogs pa dang/ nyid phyi ma gar 'khrungs zhus pa O rgyan gyi byang shar Karti ka' r rnal 'byor pa Ratna siddhi zhe par byas te yul de'i rgyal po 'dul/ bla ma lHa rje dang yang mjal/ yon bdag dGon pa ba 'di sngags pa zhig tu gyur te kho bo la rab tu 'byung//”; “Yon bdag dGon pa ba, three incarnations after this one, will be reborn to enter the path [leading] to the ultimate truth (*lam rnal mar tshud*). As he was asked: “Where will you be born next?”, [Dus gsum mkhyen pa answered]: “At Karti ka, to the north-east of O rgyan, I will be born as a *rnal 'byor pa* by the name of Ratna siddhi and will tame the king of that country. I will also meet bla ma lHa rje. This yon bdag dGon pa ba will be reborn as a *sngags pa* and will take vows from me”.”.

a mystical flight, the association of dPal gyi ri with O rgyan and Karti ka is not a direct prove that this dPal gyi ri is near Shri na ga/ghar but refers to the mountain by the same name in U rgyan like *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* says. Still, its location is transferred in the milieu of the Indo-Iranic borderlands.

The biography of Chos sdings pa uses the names Zhang chung and Bon to indicate the territory and the religious cults practised there (see n.130). They are expression that offer a wide ranging reading of the lands in the west the disciple of 'Jig rten mgon po headed to. The kingdom of Zhang chung was extensive and included lands of subsequent mNga' ris skor gsum from where Chos sdings pa came. The erstwhile Zhang chung kingdom did not comprise Kha che—a sign of this inclusion is nowhere found in the literature—but encompassed nearby territories situated in the Himalayan range of the Indian Northwest. It thus somewhat reflects the status of the affairs of a much deeper past in a vague and unprecise manner.¹²⁹

These geographical notations at least ascertain that Chos sdings pa had left behind the complex of regions in the western side of the plateau on the way to Kashmir—either choosing the route Pu hrang, Gu ge, Pi ti, Gar sha, Kistwar or the one that takes to sPi ti Gar sha Zangs dkar, Su ru—to proceed farther in the same direction.

The reason for Chos sdings pa's visit to the centre of Kashmir is explained soon thereafter in his biography. A few passages of hagiographical nature follow before the biography gets into the heart of the matter—the invitation of the locals who begged him to stay there, to become their *bla ma* and to accept all their wealth. These statements are equally garbed in eulogy. It is doubtful that the people of Srinagar were followers of Tibetan Buddhism, as the biography opts to hint. It is more probable that Chos sdings pa reached Kashmir out of his will than owing to the desire of the locals.

The account of his activities in Srinagar is one more occasion for Chos sdings pa's biographer, his nephew U rgyan pa, to embellish them with a heroic dimension. They were:

129. Kha che is never considered to be part of Zhang chung in related Bon po or Buddhist documents, too, neither in those from Tun-huang nor in the later ones. Kha che is not included, too, in the lands that that are ascribed to Tag gzig. The literature that deals with the travels of Tibetan pilgrims in the west composed in the period successive to Chos sdings pa's life, like his *rnam thar*, does not consider Kashmir a part of Zhang chung. This exclusion is all the more significant since Zhang chung is treated as a geographical notion quite commonly comprehensive of a number of territories of mNga' ris stod even well after its disappearance as a kingdom.

For instance, sTag gzig is used in reference to the area of Dzwa la mu khi in Bu ston rin po che's *bDe mchog rtsa rgyud* (p.55 lines 1-3) and in A mes zhabs's *bDe mchog lo rgyus* (p.405 line 1), and thus it also refers to places such as Dza lan dha ra and nearby Na ga ra gro tre, i.e. Nagarkot, ancient Kangra (see bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.63 lines 4-5: “Dza lan rda ra zhes pa'i gnas chen der byon te/ de nas shri Na ka ra kro tre zhes bya'i grong khyer chen po yod//”; “[U rgyan pa] went to the great holy place Dza lan rda ra. Then he was at the great town shri Na ka ra kro tre”. It is spelled Shri Na ga ra ke te in another edition of the same biography found in Tucci, *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley* p.93 line 12).

Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar extends the comprehensive notion attributed to Zhang chung in the later literature to Kha che, a choice not found in other works.

- Chos sdings pa's subjugation of Lug stim, a local deity said to be a Bon po *lha*, together with his acolytes, who had caused great harm to the local *dge bshes*-s. This account implies that Chos sdings pa supported a side—most likely Buddhist—in the dispute with people of another religion.

Contentions between exponents of different religions were not uncommon in Kashmir. They took place during the reigns of kings of Kashmir at different junctures of the Valley's history, recorded in the various *Rājatarāṅgīnī*. It seems that one of them, Lug stim the Bon po, was transferred to Chos sdings pa's sojourn in Srinagar and given a Tibetan touch. Or else the way the events are described, if taken ad litteram, gives an Indo-Iranic dimension to the adventure in Kashmir whose description coincides with the concomitant g.Yung drung formulation taken by Bon on the plateau.

- The grant of a Kashmiri *dgon pa* by local people. Chos sdings pa refused the proposal to stay at an unidentified old monastery the inhabitants of Kashmir offered him.¹³⁰ He had different plans for the future, as biography of him amply proves. Another option behind his refusal is that the monastery must have belonged to a religious tradition, although Buddhist, not related to his own.

The account of the events that led Chos sdings pa to take action in Srinagar are so succinctly described in his *rnam thar* that they remain largely obscure, in particular one:

- A new *dgon pa* was built by unidentified *dge bshes*-s. A monastery was founded at Shri na ga dPal gi ri prior to 'Gar dam pa's arrival, and this should not be confused with the old monastery that the locals had offered him. If the account is genuine, the construction of the *dgon pa* by some *dge bshes*-s indicates that the monastery must have been established by Tibetan monks who had travelled to the Indo-Iranic borderlands from the plateau. In the Tibetan tradition, the term *dge bshes* does not refer to Indian masters; other terms do so, hence the account propounds for a Tibetan origin of those who purportedly built the monastery.

The foundation of a *dgon pa* by those *dge bshes*-s implies that Chos sdings pa was preceded in Kashmir by other Tibetan religious masters during those years. Their work would have already made of Kha che Khri brtan a holy place chosen by the Tibetans as one historical

130. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.474 lines 4-6): "Yul de Na ghar gyi mi/ tshan chen po yod pas/ dbu' rgyan don gsum du tshar ba'i rgya chen po phul nas/ khyed byon rgyud de byon/ byon sar byon/ da 'dir bzhugs par zhu/ nged nams kyi mi nor kun gyi bdag po yin/ nged nams kun gyi bla ma mdzad zhu/ zer nas dgon cig kyang phul bas/ Dam pas/ yul der ni mi zhugs nas/ Zhang zhung gi gzhi' bdag Bon lha Lug stim bya ba/ ban dhe la gnod pa skyel/ Bon po'i lha lnga byed/ sems can gyi srog za ba'i drag rtsal can cig yod pa de/ btub bzhed pas/ dgon rnying der ma bzhugs/'"; "The Na ghar (spelled so) men of that land, who were the local great families, made an extensive offering to him, enough [to obtain] the three benefits "crown of the head", and said: "You moved here with a reason to come (*khyed byon rgyu de byon*). You came to the place [where] to come to (*byon sar byon*). We request you to remain here. You will be the lord of all our people and wealth. We request you to be the *bla ma* of us all". So saying, they also offered one *dgon [pa]* to him. ['Gar] Dam pa said: "I will not stay in this land. I plan to subdue the *gzhi'* (sic) *bdag* of Zhang zhung, the Bon *lha* called Lug ltim who creates harm to the *ban dhe*, [and] the five Bon po'i *lha* who are wrathful and able to take the life of sentient beings, but I will not stay at this ancient monastery".".

locality where to expand the presence of the *rDo rje theg pa* outside the limit of the plateau. However, the biography does not provide any indication of the school those *dge bshes*-s would have belonged to.

All in all, the impression communicated by the interpretation of the events during Chos sdings pa's sojourn in Srinagar shows that a transfer of incidents typical of Kashmir to an unwarranted Tibetan dimension has taken place. Anyhow, Chos sdings pa would have been witness of them and would have been in some minor amount even part of them.

Kha che was a magnet for *bstan pa phyi dar* Tibetans, especially those from mNga' ris skor gsum. Among all instances, the life experience of lo chen Rin chen bzang po is a telling case of studies in the Indian Northwest that he expanded with his religious activity especially focused on translations of Indian classics.

However, no reference is made anywhere to any foundation of a religious institution by Tibetans in Kashmir during *bstan pa phyi dar* or in any other period. Hence, the narrative, in an improper manner though, makes sense in saying that those *dge bshes*-s involved in the construction of the temple met with local hostility, for they would have been a religious import that would have not fallen within the customs of the land. They would have died a violent death, indicative of a religious dispute that turned bitter. They were killed by knives or lightning, mundane and supernatural ways of dying which hint at an opinion maintained in the *rnam thar* that local people and supernatural intervention concurred in the need to eliminate the unwanted presence. Their death is imputed to the wrath of the Bon *lha* Lug stim, the local god, and other deities belonging to Bon. Chos sdings pa had come to settle the scores, which is a first case, if reliable, showing that his mission in the lands on the "upper side" was not entirely spiritual but also guided by worldly concerns.

To set matters straight, Chos sdings pa would have adopted simple but effective tactics according to the biography of him. The *rnam thar* says that 'Gar Dam pa planned to found a new monastery in the proximity of his enemies. He thus excited their ire with his intrusion. This was an occasion for the local *lha*-s (i.e. a hostile faction) to combat the unwanted presence—and he sought an open confrontation to defeat them. It was a punitive action rather than a de facto takeover of dPal gyi ri. No record is left in his biography that he completed the *dgon pa*. Chos sdings pa himself stated that he did not plan to build a monastery to convert the local forces to the bKa' brgyud pa school or a form of Buddhism practiced in Kashmir.¹³¹ Still, his biography says that he laid indeed the foundations of a *dgon pa* there.

131. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.474 line 6-p.475 line 2): "Lug stim gyi zhol du dgon sa mdzad pas/ yul pa kun na re/ dgon 'dir mi mdzad par zhu/ sngon yang (p.475) 'dis bzang zer/ dgon pa btap pas/ dge' bshes mang po/ thog drir shi zer skad/ Dam pa'i zhal nas/ a'u tsi/ dge' bshes yin yin dge' bshes men/ da dgon byed 'dod pa men/ ngan pa 'di sma cig dbab 'dod pa yin/ gsung nas/ dgon sa bsdings pas/ de'i nub mo lha 'dres thog bsreg pa gsan/"; "[Chos sdings pa] chose land for a monastery below [the place of] Lug ltim. All the locals pleaded: "We request you not to build a *dgon [pa]* here. (p.475) Since, earlier, this was considered to be a good place, it is said that, after a monastery was built, many *dge'* (spelled so) *bshes* died [hit] by lightning or knives (*dri* sic for *gri*)". ['Gar] Dam pa replied; "So what? (*a'u tsi*). There are different *dge bshes*-s. I am not a *dge*

The subjugation of Lug stim and his alleged Bon po retinue is described in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* in suggestive and slightly epic terms, reminiscent of the classical literature of ancient India.¹³²

Can Chos sdings pa's antagonists be identified with better precision? The text says that they were Bon po, and it is strange to find Bon po-s in Kashmir at the beginning of the 13th century, for they had largely driven away from mNga' ris centuries earlier, but the name Lug stim (lit. "dissolving into a sheep") can help to interpret the nature of the local cult. Perhaps a deity with the head or the form of a sheep was the object of local worship.¹³³ A local deity and a local cult. Hence, Bon is considered in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* as a popular religion not having much to do with the Bon known from the school's literature.

The episode is concluded in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* with a résumé which does not add an *iota* to the understanding of the episode, except for the reference to Shri na ga, which makes 'Gar Dam pa's visit uncommon, and to establish dPal gyi ri as part of the local geography centred on Kha che Khri brtan.¹³⁴

bshes [like them]. I do not wish to build a *dgon pa* here now. My wish is to humiliate (*sma*) and subdue (*dbab*) these evils". Having spoken thus, he laid the foundations of the monastery, and that night he heard the *lha 'dre* igniting thunderbolts".

132. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.475 lines 2-5): "Nam nangs pa dang/ Bon po sngo thul gyon/ ra skyes zhon ba/ bdun cus thog gsum khyer nas/ sting gi nam mkha' la thal ba gzigs pa dang/ gra pa rnam la sgom cig phog pas mal der bzhag/ khong rang lha 'dre gnas pa'i ri de'i mdun der bzhugs pas/ ri de la gzigs pa na/ bus mgo/ snying ka/ spyi bo gsum du rtags dang bcas pa gda'/ skad/ de nas lha 'dre de shin tu' khros nas/ thog gsum de Dam pa'i dbu la gzas nas/ snga dro/ nyin byed/ dgongs mo gsum du mar 'phangs bas/ Dam pas bsdig 'dzub kyi rtse blang zhing/ lha 'dre gnam ba'i ri de'i/ pus mo/ snying ka/ spyi bo gsum du brgyab pas/ me lhab lhab byung/ lha dre de nus bzad/"; "The following morning, he saw that seventy Bon po, who wore blue robes and rode on goats, crossed the sky carrying three thunderbolts. And having set the monks to meditate, he left them on their [meditation] couches. It is said that [Chos sdings pa], by himself, stood in front of the mountain inhabited by the *lha 'dre*. Upon looking at that mountain, [he saw that] it was in the shape of kneecaps, a heart and a head, altogether three. Then the *lha 'dre-s*, being extremely angry, threw the three thunderbolts on the *dam pa's* head. They threw them in the morning, noon and evening, altogether three, and ['Gar] Dam pa took them on the tip of his index finger and bounced them back onto the knee-caps, heart and head, altogether three, of that mountain inhabited by the *lha 'dre-s*. A blazing fire broke out (*lhab lhab*). The might of the *lha 'dre-s* being dispelled, the *lha 'dre-s* fell down in front [of him] instantly (*hral gyis* spelled so for '*phral gyis*). It is said that they told him: "You dispelled all our might. You interrupted [our] retinue's sleep. You seized [our] places. [Our] life organs being on the verge of ceasing to exist, we beg you not to use such insolence. We will follow whatever orders you will give. He [thus] took away the might of the *lha 'dre-s*".

133. The name Lug stim does not appear, not even in its components, in works dedicated to the Bon po lexicon, such as Pasar Tsultrim Tenzin, Changru Tritsuk Namdak Nyima and Gatsa Lodro Rabsal's *A Lexicon of Zhangzhung and Bonpo Terms* or Dagkar Namgyal Nyima's *Zhangzhung-Tibetan-English Contextual Dictionary*. This makes its belonging to the lexical milieu of Bon less possible, but it cannot be ruled out that it is a Tibetan rendition from a local language.

134. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.476 line 4-p.477 line 1): "sPrul pa'i'i skur ston 'gro ba'i mgon/ chos rje'i nye gnas Dam pa rje/ tshad med bzhi'i 'gros stabs kyis/ 'gro ba mang po smin

The account of these events, whose conciseness is difficult to elaborate, is important for another reason. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* says that it was written at the time when events were unfolding, and the year in which they happened is given as water dragon 1232.¹³⁵ The water dragon year of these events is one of several instances of wrong chronological calculation in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, extracted, as they must be, from biographical material regarding 'Gar Dam pa originally based on the duodenary cycle and transferred to the *rab byung* cycle with wrong assessments of the years. Already in the previous dragon year, 1220, Chos sdings pa was far away from mNga' ris and the Indo-Iranic borderlands; his adventures in the lands on the "upper side" were long and forever in the past. The correct dragon year when he was in Upper West Tibet and beyond it was not water dragon 1220, but earth dragon 1208. The accuracy of this date is reinforced by the chronological evidence provided by 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas's *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po rnam thar* (p.388 line 2 and p.390 line 5-p.391 line 1 and n.96).

The assertion that the account of Chos sdings pa's deeds at Shri na ga dPal gyi ri was written at the time of their happening in 1208 shows that a record of Chos sdings pa's life was being kept at the time of its unfolding, and that the author of his biography, his nephew U rgyan pa aka Nub gling ston pa (1229-1313), drew material from records written down on the spot to be included in the biography later on when it was composed in full.

Not much is known about the secular situation of Kashmir during the historical period to which Chos sdings pa's visit belongs. His visit falls after the final years dealt with by Kalḥaṇa in his *Rājataranginī* which extends until 1149-1150 (A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini* vol.1 p.129), but is taken into consideration in Jonarāja's *Rājataranginī* which is not, however, profuse on the events that occurred in Kashmir during the late part of the 12th century and early 13th.

grol mdzad/ 'gyur med rdo rje'i lta stangs kyis/ ma rung gdug pa'i dbal zer can/ nag po Bon lha Lugs bstim btul/ thog dang nad kyi char pa rnams/ skad cig nyid la sprin bzhin dings/ gnod pa mi byed dam la btags/ yul khams dkar po'i chos la bkod/ sku bsod chen po'i 'ur chen byung/ rje Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar la/ Shri na ga dPal gyi ri bo la (p.477) dgon pa mdzad/ Bon lha Lugs bstim btul ba'i skabs ste/ bcu bzhi'o//; "The protector of sentient beings, who took the body of an incarnation, the *chos rje*'s ('Jig rten mgon po's) nye gnas ['Gar] Dam pa rje liberated many sentient beings due to the swift pace of his incommensurable four [kinds of knowledge]. With his indestructible *rdo rje* views, he subdued the mischievous evil nag po Bon *lha* Lugs bstim (spelled so), who held the *dbal zer* ("radiating dBal (blade)", i.e. Bon po style). The lightning and shower of diseases were cleared away instantly (*skad cig*) like clouds. [Lug stim] was bound to a vow not to cause any harm. [Chos sdings pa] set the country onto the authentic religion. Great fame of his massive merit spread. This is the fourteenth episode in *rje Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, when, at Shri na ga dPal gyi ri bo, (p.477) he built a *dgon pa* and subdued the Bon lha Lugs bstim (spelled so).

135. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.476 line 4): "gNam lo chu bo 'brug gi lo/ ces pa'i gsung/ bcaid rnams kyang 'di'i dus su mdzad pa yin gsung//"; "He said that it was the year (*gnam lo*) of water male dragon (1232, sic for earth male dragon 1208). He said that these accounts were written at that time".

Jagadeva was the king of Kashmir at the time of Chos sdings pa's sojourn (J.C. Dutt transl., *Rajatarangini of Jonaraja* p.8-9). He was able to claim the throne of Kashmir in 1168 with the help of his good minister Guṇakarāhula. Jonarāja, who is almost invariably apologetic when treating the kings who succeeded one another, spends words of praise for Jagadeva in particular, whom he considers a good king. Contrary to the events described in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*, he managed to pacify the kingdom, for there is no hint that intrigues and strife, phenomena that recurred often during the rule of other kings of Kashmir, marred his reign. However, the relatively peaceful times in which he reigned came to an end in 1213 with his assassination by poisoning at the hands of Padma, the lord of Dvāra, so that his son Rājadeva (1213-1236) had serious problems in ascending the throne, for he had to overcome Padma's antagonism.

bKa' brgyud pa benefited from the relatively peaceful status of Kha che brokered by Jagadeva. Chos sdings pa travelled there in 1208, before the assassination of Jagadeva plunged the kingdom into another period of turmoil. 'Gar Dam pa's ordeal in challenging an opposite faction betrays the unsettled conditions the kept existing in the Kashmir Valley even in time of peace.

▪ Kha che pan chen Shākya śrī bhadra

To add to the legend of the Pu hrang jo bo sTag tsha Khri 'bar as an enlightened ruler is the one year spent by Kha che pan chen as *bla mchod* of this king in water bird 1213.¹³⁶

The account in *Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po'i rnam par thar pa* on Kha che pan chen's visit to Pu hrang is crucial to reduce to a minimum the delta of years when the local *jo bo* took the robe. This biography defines sTag tsha as *chos kyi rgyal po* in the year of his meeting with the great Kashmiri master. Hence sTag tsha Khri 'bar must have taken the monastic vows in the next year wood dog 1214, since his son dNgos grub mgon was sitting on the throne of Pu rang in 1215.

sTag tsha availed of the religious wisdom of the great master at a time when the bKa' brgyud pa, the Tshal pa and the 'Bri gung pa in particular, had established steadfast contacts with him. A biography of Khro phu lo tsa ba stresses the closeness of this Tibetan master with Kha che pan chen to the extent of reminding the reader that Byams pa'i dpal accompanied his Kashmiri teacher all the way between Gung thang and Glo bo (ibid. p.336 line 7) and wished to escort him to Pu hrang but the master refused (ibid. p.338 line 7). The rationale behind this decision is not explicated in the biography and cannot be imputed to an influence upon him, exercised by dPyal lo tsa ba Chos kyi bzang po (1163-1230), the other great disciple of Kha che pan chen who had an interaction with him since the time Shākya śrī bhadra was still in

136. *Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po'i rnam par thar pa* (p.340 lines 2-3): "De nas chu mo bya ba'i lo la Pu rangs su bzhugs nas chos kyi rgyal po sTag tsha'i bla ma mdzad/"; "Then [Kha che pan chen] stayed in Pu rangs the water female bird year 1213 and was the *bla ma* of chos kyi rgyal po sTag tsha". This was the last great event in thTobetan sojourn of the great Kashmiri pandi ta before reaching his native land.

rGya gar. Given sTag tsha Khri 'bar's leaning towards the bKa' brgyud pa while the dPyal clan was not markedly affiliated to this school like Khro phu lo tsa ba but had a looser and comprehensive religious disposition, dPyal Chos bzang's role in influencing his teacher to stop in Pu hrang on the way home must have been insignificant. The biography of Khro phu lo tsa ba does not add anything on Kha che pan chen's sojourn in Pu hrang since Khro phu lo tsa ba was not together with his teacher nor adds anything on his further journey back to his homeland Kashmir except that he met bandits twice on the way who did not harm, for he had no gold.¹³⁷ Hence, he did not have to subdue them, as often happened when other religious masters had to face this kind of encounters.

▪ rGod tshang pa

In several biographies of rGod tshang pa, a dialogue takes place in the area of Dril bu ri in Gar zha between this sTod 'Brug master and a local resident, the bKa' brgyud pa by the name dge bshes 'Gar lo tsa ba, obviously a different person from 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa although they belonged to the same clan.¹³⁸

137. *Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po'i rnam par thar pa* (p.340 lines 3-4): "De nas rim gyis Kha che Grib brtan tu gshes te yang nga ba'i lam gnyis su 'jag pa byung yang ngas ni snga nyid du dgra yangs pa yin gsung ste gser med pas sku la gnod pa ma byung//"; "Then he went to Kha che Grib brtan in stages but bandits appeared on two dangerous routes. He said: "I was set free from the enemies quickly". Not having gold [with him], they do not cause any damage to his person".

138. See, for instance, Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdo rje, *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.73 line 4-p.74 line 2): "De nas Gar shar byon pas/ de na Ri bo Gan dho la la bya ba na/ ri dpag tshad gcig yod pa/ ri de'i rtse mo na Dharma mu tra bya ba mchod rten gyi chu dang shing dang byung zhig bzhugs pa/ phyogs bzhi na dngos grub kyi chu dang shing yod pa/ dpa' bo dang mkha' 'gro rnam kyis byin gyis brlabs pa'i gnas/ grub pa thob pa'i rnal 'byor pho mo mang du bzhugs pa/ gzhan las khyad par du 'phags pa'i gnas shig 'dug pas/ der dgun gcig bzhugs dgongs pa la/ kha ba che bas dgun phug thub pa tsam mi 'dug cing/ dgun phug thub ba 'ga' yang 'dug ste/ sgom chen pa 'ga' yis bzung bas der bzhugs sa ma byung/ grong lhag cig na dgon pa 'dra 'dug ste der bzhugs snying ma 'dod nas/ 'Gar lo ts ba'i gam du byon nas Dzā lan dha rar 'byon pa'i lo rgyus gsungs pas/ khyed phyin pas mi yong 'tsho ba yang dkon/ skad yang mi shes/ lam na Shi skyid kyi jag pa mang po yod cing/ brgya la thon kyang dur khrod du mi ma yin gyi bar chad la 'chor zer bas/ der 'tsho ba dkon pa dang dgra la ro snyoms byed/ bar chad byung yang na tsha (p.74) shi chad kyis thub pa min nas byas/ da lab tu ma btub bya ba yin gyis gsungs nas song zhig zer//"; "Then [rGod tshang pa] went to Gar sha. Here, at ri bo Gan dho la, there is a mountain which is one *dpag tshad* high. On the peak of this mountain there is a self-originated *mchod rten* called Dharma mu tra. In the four directions there are water sources and trees of spiritual accomplishment. This is the holy place blessed by *dpa' bo-s* and *mkha' 'gro-s*. Many male and female *rnal 'byor* who have attained *siddhi* reside [here]. Since it is an especially saintly place more than any other, he thought to stay there one winter, but, due to heavy snow, it was almost impossible to [find] a winter cave. Although it was possible [to stay in] a few winter caves, they were occupied by some meditators. Hence there was no place [for him] to stay. Above the village there was something like a *dgon pa* but, since he did not feel like staying there, he approached 'Gar lo tsa ba who gave him a report of the journey to Dzā lan dha ra and advised: "You should not go; food on the way is scarce. You also do not know the language. On the way, there are many

bandits around Shi skyid. Even if you overcome [these dangers] (*brgya la thon* sic for *rgyal thon*), the *mi ma yin* at the cemetery will create obstacles". He replied: "I am equanimous (i.e. indifferent) towards scarcity of food and enemies. Even if there are obstacles, will sickness (p.74) or death be able to prevent [me from trying]?", and [’Gar lo tsa ba] exclaimed: "Now, since what I am saying is not appropriate to tell, you should go".

The same dialogue is reported in *Chos rje rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje’i rnam par thar pa* (p.469 line 6-p.497 line 2) which is shorter but substantially the same: "dGe bshes ’Gar lo tsa ba bya ba la bab ste de Dza lan rda rar ’gro ba yin byas pas/ khyed phyin pas mi ’ong/ ’tsho ba yang dkon/ skad yang mi shes lam na Shi skyid kyi (p.497) jag pa yod/ rgyal thon kyang dur khrod du mi ma yin bar chad la ’tshor zer/ der ’tsho ba dkon pa dang/ dgra gnyis la ro snyom byed/ bar chad byung yang shi tshad kyis thub min nam byas pas/ da lab tu ma thub kyis song gcig zer?"; "He came across dge bshes ’Gar lo tsa ba who, at [his] question: "Should I go to Dza lan rda ra (spelled so)?", replied: "If you go, you will not come back. Food is scarce. You also do not know the language. On the way, there are (p.497) the bandits of Shi skyid. Even if you overcome [these dangers], at the cemetery, the *mi ma yin* will harass you [with obstacles]". [rGod tshang pa] proclaimed: "I will show my equanimous indifference to both scarcity of food and enemies. Even if obstacles arise, will sickness or death be able to prevent [me from trying]?". [’Gar lo tsa ba] replied: "Given that I cannot add anything [anymore], you should go".

Mon rtse pa, *rGod tshang pa’i rnam thar (dKar brgyud gser phreng* p.304 line 7-p.305 line 3) provides a few different details that stress the condition in rGod tshang pa’s life as a *bya btang ba* but with an escort of high rank provided by the king of Chamba: "De nas dge bshes Ghar lo tsa ba dang mjal na khong gi Dza lan dha ra’i sngags pa mang po bshad pas/ nged kyang der ’gro ba yin byas pas/ de mi grag mtsho’ ba dkon pa/ skad mi go ba/ lam (p305) yang ’jigs pa che/ dur khrod snyan pas bar chad kyang ’ong zer/ mtsho’ ba dkon pa dang dgra la ro snyoms byed/ bar chad byung na shi bas lo yongs byas pas/ lab rgyu zad pa bya ba yin/ gser ’tra yod na skad mkhan la byin nas lo tsha ’tshol dgos zer/ gser yod na dar Gangs Ti rtse la sgom gyin sdod te gsungs pas/ der khong gis rgyags skur lo tsha cig kyang btang te/ Ca bhe rgyal po’i glon po Su du bya ba cig slebs nas byon//"; "[rGod tshang pa went to] see dge bshes Ghar (spelled so) lo tsa ba. As they spoke much about Dza lan dha ra, [rGod tshang pa] added: "I am also going there". The other replied: "This is not advisable (*mi grag* sic for *mi drag*). Food is scarce. [You] do not understand the language. The road (p.305) is also very dangerous. Obstructions will occur since the cemeteries are tricky (*mnyan pa* sic for *gnyan pa*)". [rGod tshang pa] replied: "I will have an equanimous approach towards scarcity of food and enemies. Even if obstructions occur, they will not cause [my] death". The topics of [the other’s] speech (*lab rgyu*) did not dissuade him [from going]. [Ghar lo tsa ba] said: "If you have gold, give it to an interpreter and hire him as *lo tsa*". [rGod tshang pa] replied: "If I had gold, I would still be meditating at Gangs Te tse (spelled so) at present", so that [Ghar lo tsa ba] provided him with provisions and sent a translator [along with him]. He left together with Su du, the minister (*glon po* sic for *blon po*) of the Ca bhe king".

The minister of the kingdom of Chamba for companion in the journey, an opportunity seemingly arranged by ’Gar lo tsa ba, indicates that he, through the lo tsa ba, had established relations with the non-Tibetan secular powers from states near Gar sha in line with the bKa’ brgyud pa policy. He was a *bya btang ba* keen to rely on diplomacy with the local power houses.

rGod tshang pa’s statement that, had he possessed some gold, he would have remained at Gangs Ti se is also most peculiar. It implies that asceticism was not the only key to stay at the holy mountain. rGod tshang pa left the area of the mountain and lakes in favour of Gar sha, driven by the difficulty of survival that was locally secured if an ascetic had wealth, something not completely

The episode is meaningful inasmuch as it shows that the pilgrimage to Dza lan dha ra (the area of Kangra in antiquity rather than present-day Jalandhar situated farther south in Punjab) had already been institutionalised by Tibetans before rGod tshang pa went to Dril bu ri in late 1216 and then to Dza lan dha ra and Chamba in 1217.

rGod tshang pa's venturing to Dza lan dha ra was not an isolated event; it was part of a wave of pilgrims to the lands on the "upper side" among the bKa' brgyud pa that went back to a time before his own journey. The report that dge bshes 'Gar lo tsa ba gave rGod tshang pa indicates that he was acquainted with the journey and its difficulties.

Destinations of the Tibetans to the lands in the west beyond the plateau were contiguous, nonetheless different. One itinerary brought them to Kha che. Slightly less towards the north, another destination brought them to Chamba and farther southwest to Dza lan dha ra.

Historical records show that 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa was one of the earliest recorded bKa' brgyud pa to reach the Indo-Iranic borderlands (Kashmir) ahead of rGod tshang pa who headed towards the other destination. The 'Brug pa master set out to Dza lan dha ra only almost ten years after. However, the available literary material does not allow an assessment whether his kinsman 'Gar lo tsa ba preceded 'Gar Dam pa to the Indo-Iranic borderlands.

Concerning Tibetans in Kha che, apart from the purported presence of *dge bshes-s* at Srinagar which would have ended in tragedy, it is not known whether 'Gar dam pa was one

in line with the wish of a renunciate, but often sought after by the various schools' masters and their disciples, as repeatedly shown in the present essay.

That the Shi skyid la (i.e. the Shib pe la, see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.166-167, p.252-254, p.307 for this spelling, the earliest one known from the literature for this pass joining Gu ge Rong chung and sPi ti) was the hunting ground of brigands already as early as the third quarter of the 10th century. Their presence is documented in *Rin chen bzang po'i rnam thar 'bring po*, which describes Lo chen's journey to Kha che in 975 (ibid. p.69 line 1-p.70 line 3): "Dei skabs su Shi skyid kyi chom rkun gsum brgya tsam 'gru la byed pa dang 'dzom pa yod pa la/ rmi lam du sngar gyi mkha' 'gro ma de byon nas/ bu longs cig nang pa la ni mdang gi zam pa nas/ chos pa la mi dga' ba'i gnod sbyin mo cig yod pa de bar chad byed bsam pa yin te/ de bdag gi zlog nas nad pa myur du sos pa yod do/ 'dir sdad na jag pa myur du 'ong bar 'dug pas/ lam gol pa cig tu song las/ dkon mchog la gsol ba drag po thob cig/ ces zer ba ddang/ de ma thag du skag gi bzhangs nas nad pa'i lag pa nas phyag gi (p.70) khrid de gsol ba 'debs shing gom pa bzhi bcu tsam song ba dang phyr gigs pas/ sngar gyi shul du mtshon thogs pa'i jag pa rnams kyis sleb 'dug ste/ dkon mchog dang mkha' 'gto ma'i byin brlabs kyis mthong bar lam drangs por song ngo//; "At that time, some 300 robbers of Shi skyid (spelled so), who were travelling [in that direction], gathered there. The previous *mkha' 'gro ma* went there in his dream and told him: "Son! Get up! Concerning the sick man, at the bridge yesterday there was a *gnod sbyin mo (yakshi)*, who does not like Buddhists. He thought to create an obstacle. I will remove it and the sick man will recover quickly. If you stay here, robbers will quickly come [to harass you]. Earnestly pray to the [triple] jewel while going on a different route". As soon as she said this, he immediately (*skag* sic for *kag*) stood up, took the hand of the sick man, (p.70) [and] led him by his hand, prayed, walked some forty steps and looked back. He saw that brigands carrying weapons had come to the place where they had been before. Due to the blessings of the [triple] jewel and the *mkha' 'gro ma* they went on straight without being seen".

of the earliest bKa' brgyud pa to have reached Kashmir during that period. A candidate to have preceded him in Kha che was Ma yo sgom nag, a disciple of sTag lung thang pa, who was active in the land. He belonged to the group of disciples of the founder of this school known as the *nye ba'i sras bco brgyad* (the "eighteen close spiritual sons") and, apart from his presence in Kha che, had a phase in his life at rDo rje gdan where he was a *bla mchod* (*IHo rong chos 'byung* p.471 lines 6-7), hence an officiating *bla ma* of some local lord. His case being isolated does not, obviously, preclude the possibility that other members of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools were active in Kha che in the period before the year of 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa's visit.

A look from a wider perspective shows that Kha che as a steady source of knowledge for the Tibetans is documented by the flow of people from mNga' ris skor gsum who came to study in the Valley under its masters since the second half of the 10th century. Most of those *bstan pa phyi dar* Tibetans were from sTod but not so much anymore during the bKa' brgyud pa period.

A predecessor to rGod tshang pa at the ancient holy place Dza lan dha ra, sacred to the Buddhists, was the sTag lung pa master, sgom pa Ma nam pa, another one of the *nye ba'i sras bco brgyad* of sTag lung thang pa. He settled in Dza lan dha ra with some seventy monks (*IHo rong chos 'byung* p.471 lines 9-10 and below n.190), which indicates that his presence in this locality was more than a temporary visit the way rGod tshang pa's was. He established a sTag lung pa centre of learning in the Indo-Iranic borderlands.

While the spelling Ma nam pa is adopted by *IHo rong chos 'byung*, the sensibly later *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.243 lines 20-21) spells Ma ni pa, thus implying that he was a bard telling *sgrung-s*. If the spelling of *IHo rong chos 'byung*—a more ancient and perhaps more authoritative only due to this hypothesis—is accepted, he would have been a master from Mang nang (alternatively spelled Ma nam) in Gu ge lHo stod, known for its temples and for the residence built by lha bla ma Byang chub 'od for Jo bo rje A ti sha during the Bengali master's stay in the region.

The continuative presence of sgom pa Ma nam pa at Dza lan dha ra shows that, although most of the disciples of the early bKa' brgyud pa were Khams pa, a few students went from mNga' ris to Central Tibet in order to learn the teachings from the most eminent masters of the bKa' brgyud pa schools, as some of the sTod Tshal pa did, too.

sGom pa Ma nam pa was just one of many sTag lung bKa' brgyud pa members sent out to distant localities of religious importance in the same way as the Tshal pa, 'Bri gung pa, 'Brug pa and, subsequently, the Karma pa did. The dispersion of sTag lung thang pa's disciples to several areas of the plateau and beyond deserves a more comprehensive treatment which is dealt with elsewhere in this book of mine (see below p.144-147).

Deb ther sngon po (p.785 lines 1-6, see below n.192) says that, eventually, gTsang pa rGya ras, too, sent his 'Brug pa disciples to distant holy places. He dispersed his monastic assembly to various lands including Kha che and Dza lan dha ra but also to a wide range of destinations in Asia such as U rgyan, Bya rgod phung po'i ri bo (the Vulture Peak), Ri bo rtse lnga of China, Tsa ri, Sha 'ug sTag sgo and Gangs Ti se. gTsang pa rGya ras's injunction must

have happened before 1211, the year of his death. It is impossible to say whether 'Brug pa presence in Kha che during the period predated 'Gar Dam pa's visit.

Some of these endeavour were personal enterprises but, in most cases, the season in the bKa' brgyud pa ranks was ripe for a shared commitment to promote hermit life and diplomacy in the great retreats of rje btsun Mid la. It was the various bKa' brgyud school's strategy and individual approach.

▪ gNyo chen po's in Bal yul

At the time 'Gar Dam pa was engaged in adventures farther west in the Indo-Iranic borderlands, gNyo lHa nang pa went back east from mNga' ris skor gsum towards Central Tibet, entrusted with another mission on behalf of 'Jig rten mgon po.

Although *gNyo lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* is more concerned with the mystical experiences of gNyo chen po than to record the events in his life, the episode of gNyo chen po in Bal po is one of the historical jewels contained in his biography; the other is the narrative of events occurring in Tibet at the time of gNyo lHa nang pa's death.

The account of his journey to Bal po is made of two main events. The first began after he left sNya nam and headed to the Kathmandu Valley, initially stopping at Li Shin te, near the entrance to Bal po proper. The petty lord, ruler of Li Shin te, was *rje'u Ka ping*. Jo bo Thang sprin was the local god, the protector of this kingdom outside Bal po'i thil.¹³⁹

139. *gNyo lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.80 line 13-p.82 line15): "sNgon sNya nam 'Brug na bzhugs pa'i dus su/ Bal po'i thil du gshegs par bzhed nas/ zhal tshoms ma bzhar bar ring por bzhag nas/ dpon g.yog bcu bzhi tsam lam du chas nas yod tsa na/ Ka ping rje'u zhes bya ba gzugs dang longs spyod dang dbang gis drengs pa zhig/ spyir nang pa Sangs rgyas pa la mi mos/ bye brag du rab tu byung ba la shin tu gnag pa/ btsas nyis ldab du 'bebs pa zhig yong pas/ kho'i yul (p.81) lha mi ma yin chen po/ jo bo Thang sprin zhes bya ba yod pa yin cher g.yo ste/ dpon g.yog 'khor dang bcas pas/ 'dod yon sna tshogs pa'i mchod pa khyer nas/ mi shin ter ma sleb pa'i gong la tshad byung nas bsu ba dang/ mchod pa rgya chen po byas skad/ kho rang gi lhas rin po che bsu ba rgya chen po bya de/ rā dzās rmi lam dang dngos gnyis kar mthong nas/ rā dzā yid shin du g.yos shing mos gus chen po skyes nas/ pho nya btang ste Li shin te ba tsho la/ Bod kyi grub thob chen po geig Bal por byon par 'dug/ nga'i lhas kyang bsu ba rgya chen po bya/ lam khyed kyi yul na mar byon par 'dug gi/ pho mo byis pa yan chad thams cad kyi/ lag pa stong pa ma byed par lag du mchod pa'i rdzas re re gzung la/ bkur sti ci 'byor ba gyis shig bya ba'i bka' byung nas/ Li shin te ba rnam kyi byis pa yan chad khirms su bcug nas/ mchod pa'i yo byad sna tshogs khyer te/ da bde ba zhig du bsu ba rgya chen po byas pas/ Ratna mnyes nas/ blon pos pho brang du spyan 'dren pa'i dus su/ la la na re Ratna geig pu las spyan ma drangs zer/ la la na re dpon g.yog thams cad byon zer/ pho brang gi nang du byon pa'i dus su/ pho brang sgo rim pa mang po yod pa'i/ sgo la la na khri rgod kyi lcags thag btags pa mang po 'dug/ la la na ni sgo srung ba go mtshon can mang po/ la la na ni mda' bkang bkang pa/ la la na ni gri rgon bton bton pa/ la la na ni mdung mnan mnan pa/ de bzhin sgra sta/ dgra zor la sogs pa mtshon mang po gdengs pa'i (p.82) gseb na phar la/ spyan snga ni byams pa'i sa ma ti la mnyam par bzhag nas byon no/ nye gnas rnam shin tu 'jigs shing skyi g.ya' bar gyur te/ 'di snyam du kye ma ho mha' 'khob kyi rā dzās ni bdag cag dpon g.yog mgo bskor te/ gshed ma'i gseb du bcug go snyam ste yid shin tu zhun par gyur to/ de nas sgo nar ma brgal te/ rā dzā'i po brang du byon pa'i tsho/ ra ba pho brang ltar legs pa'i nang na/ Ratna sna tshogs kyi

spras pa'i khri'i steng na/ gos bzang po gyon re rgyan bzang pos spras pa/ rigs dang gzugs dang/ gzi brjid la sogs pas dregs pa de/ Ratna byon pa dang zla ba'i rtsar sbrin med pa'i nyi ma shar ba ltar/ kho'i gzi brjid mog mog por gyur to/ de nas khri bzang po'i steng du gdan bzang po bshams pa la/ Ratna bzhugs su gsol/ nye gnas rnam la yang stan cha bzang po bting ste/ bsnyen bkur rgya chen po mdzad do// de'i tshe rgyal po'i sems kyi rtog pa la/ nga ni 'jig rten na gzugs dang/ gzi brjid phun sum tshogs la/ 'jig rten thams cad zil gyis mnan par nus la/ Tshangs pa dang brGya byin lta bu yin pa la/ Bod kyi grun thob 'di ni bdag bas kyang gzi brjid che ba zhid na/ 'di la yon tan gyi chos ji lta bu zhid mnga' snyam du sems par gyur to//"; "Earlier, while staying at sNya nam (spelled so) 'Brug, [gNyo lHa nang pa] decided to go to Bal po'i thil. He kept his beard unshaven for a long while, during the time when some fourteen *dpon g.yog* took the way [to Bal po]. [One ruler was] Ka ping *rje'u* ("petty lord"), who was handsome, wealthy and proud of his power. He did not, in general, have faith in Buddhism and was, in particular, extremely hostile towards those who had taken vows. His body (*btsas*) was twice as tall as normal. The god of his land (p.81) was a great *mi ma yin* ("*asura*") named jo bo Thang sprin, who greatly influenced him. It is said that, before the *dpon g.yog* and [their] retinue who, carrying offerings of various earthly goods [for 'Brigung], arrived at Li shin te, he gave a great welcome and donations. The *ra dza* saw both in his dream and in reality that his god gave a great welcome to the *rin po che*. The *ra dza*, being greatly moved and having nurtured faith in him, issued an order, sending the message to the residents of Li shin te: "A great *mahasiddha* of Tibet is on his way to Bal po. Even my god gave him a great welcome. Every man and woman of the territory that he is crossing on his way down, including the children, should not be empty-handed but should have some object of offering in their hands and should pay respects". Therefore, the inhabitants of Li shin te including the children who complied with the order, brought various kinds of offerings and gave him a great welcome at a pleasant place. Ratna (i.e. gNyo lHa nang pa) was pleased. When the ministers invited him to the palace, some of them said that Ratna alone should be invited; some others said that all the *dpon g.yog* should come. When he entered the palace, [he saw that] at some of the many successive doors of the palace there were many wild dogs kept on iron chains, at some [others] there were many door guards with weapons, at others there were [guards] ready to shoot arrows, at others there were [guards] with sharp swords, and at others there were guards with spears. (p.82) Likewise, the *spyang snga* passed by them in an equanimous state of compassionate *sa ma ti* (*sa ma dhi*), while these [guards] brandished many weapons in their hands including axes and sickles. His *nye gnas*-s were extremely frightened and began gasping (*skyi g.ya ba*). Thinking: "Alas, we the *dpon g.yog* are captured by this barbaric king. We have been taken into a fold of butchers", they were extremely upset. After passing through all these doors, they arrived at the palace of the *ra dza*. Inside this excellent [building] in the shape of a railed palace, [the king was sitting] on a throne studded with various kinds of gems, wearing a brocaded robe with a beautiful decoration, and feeling proud of his rank, body and splendid appearance. When Ratna appeared, it was as if the sun was shining without clouds beneath the moon, and his (the king's) splendid appearance was overshadowed. Ratna was then asked to sit on a beautiful cushion placed above a beautiful throne. The *nye gnas* were also given good seats to sit on. They were provided a very extensive service. At that time, a thought arose to consciousness in the king: "Although I have a splendid appearance in this phenomenal world and have the power of subjugating all the people by my might as well as I am like Brahma and Indra, this Tibetan *siddha* is more resplendent than me; and I wonder which spiritual qualities he must possess"."

The extraordinary spiritual realisations that the Ka ping *rje'u* and his courtiers experienced owing to gNyo lHa nang pa's powers in reply to the petty lord's mental query are described next in the episode.

gNyos lHa nang pa managed to obtain the favours of jo bo Thang sprin,¹⁴⁰ who—the biography says—was a *mi ma yin*. The Tibetan master impressed *rje 'u* Ka ping so favourably that the ruler paid him devotion and respect. The population of Li Shin te was summoned along gNyos chen po's route to give him offerings, and he was brought to the palace of the local lord, whose pomp and splendour made an overwhelming impression on gNyos lHa nang pa's monks. Using his spiritual proveness, gNyos chen po was able to induce extraordinary spiritual experiences in *rje 'u* Ka ping and his courtiers.

The itinerary followed by gNyos chen po helps to shed light on the location of Li Shin te and a consequent hypothesis concerning its identification. Since gNyos chen po came to the Kathmandu Valley from sNya nam, he went along the route which passes by 'Gram, still used at present, and must have then followed the valley of River Sunkosi.

The Li Shin te he visited on the way to the Kathmandu Valley must have been in the territory to the east of the valley proper. Before reaching Bal po'i thil, gNyos lHa nang pa came first to Li Shin te, which the *rnam thar* of him places outside it, at the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley. Moreover, Li Shin te is not associated in the biography with Bal Bod, the border of the Newar speaking world with Tibet, hence somewhat far from the frontier between the two lands. Hence, his itinerary favours the identification of Li Shin te with Banepa, traditionally Bhoṭa, located at the edge of the Kathmandu Valley in that direction. Consequently, the next step in gNyos chen po's journey was that he entered Bal po'i thil from the east (see below n.142).

A further proof that Li (i.e. Bal po) Shin te was not a minor kingdom in the mountains or lower down in the hills on the way to the Kathmandu Valley but Banepa is that gNyos chen po gave teachings to *rje 'u* Ka ping in the Newari language besides bestowing him extraordinary mystical realisations.¹⁴¹

140. Thang sprin, the name of the local god subdued by gNyos lHa nang pa, bears close similarity to the branch monastery of Byang sprin in Mang yul, called sTang sprin (see the expanded version of the *srin mo* scheme in my work, "The narrative of Srong btsan sgam po's subjugation of the demoness: schemes and historicity" in Vitali, *Essays on the history of Tibet*).

141. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.84 lines 1-7): "Lo gcig gi bar du rab tu byung ba tshong byed pa rnams la/ btsas mgo rkyang las ma phab bo/ de'i tshe rgyal po la Bal po'i skad du/ blab pa rin po che gsum mdor bsdus nas nyams su len pa'i thabs gsungs so/ de nas rā dzās 'khor rnams la bka' bsgo ba/ khyed rnams kyis nga phyir 'gro ba'i dus su/ skyel bsu ji ltar byed pa ltar grub thob chen po 'di la yang gyis shig ces bsgo nas/ 'khor rnams kyis mtshon cha sna tshogs dang rol mo'i sgra sna tshogs kyis skor nas gro lam gcig tu bskyal bas/ spyang snga nas de las bred pa'i skyel thung ba yong ma myong gsungs skad//"; "For one year, the ordained monks [and] the traders were levied no more than only a head tax. At that time, [gNyos lHa nang pa] imparted to the king in Newari a method to practise after abridging the three precious vows. Then, since the *ra dza* ordered his courtiers: "Pay the same seeing off to this *mahasiddha* that you pay to me when I leave", the retinue with a variety of weapons and playing various kinds of musical instruments surrounded him and accompanied him up to the *gro lam* ("main road"). It is said that [gNyos lHa nang pa] exclaimed: "It never happened to me that I was seen off in a more solicitous way (*bred pa*) than this one".

The visit to Bal po by gNyos lHa nang pa and the next one by 'Gar Dam pa (see below p.117-123) coincided with a crucial time in the history of the Kathmandu Valley. Among the turn of events that occurred in Bal po during those years, the literary material from the Kathmandu Valley records the prominent role exercised in the political affairs by the lineage of the Bhoṭarājya, the rulers of the Bhonta house of Banepa, the minor but historically important kingdom in the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley (Slusser, "Indesvara Mahadeva, A Thirteenth Century Shrine" p.186). Ānandadeva I (ca. 1147-1166) was the establisher of the Bhoṭarājya at Banepa (ibid. p.187), whose royal lineage became extinguished during the reign of Yakṣa Malla (1428-1482) (ibid.p.186 n.7).

The lengthy description in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* of the palace of *rje'u Ka ping* points up the remarkable degree of court style adopted by this petty ruler. The sophistication of his court is one more minor clue that Ka ping belonged to the Bhonta house of Banepa, as the location of his petty kingdom and the pomp of his court suggest.

The second step in gNyos lHa nang pa's adventure beyond the Himalayan range was that he witnessed the life and religious expressions of the Kathmandu Valley civilisation. Like his sojourn in Li Shin te, the way he approached the world of Bal po was a combination of secular and religious activities in the style typical of the 'Bri gung pa of that period. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* organizes them in a neat order that I adopt in the next lines.¹⁴²

142. gNyos chen po's endeavours in Bal po'i thil went beyond the assignment received from 'Jig rten mgon po and the diplomatic concern of a 'Bri gung pa ambassador. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.84 line 7-p.85 line 4) reads: "De ltar rā dzās zhabs tog dang 'khor rnams kyis skyel thung byas pas/ Bal po'i thil du thams cad kyis thos de/ Bal gling bzhi'i mi ya rabs thams cad kyis rin po che'i mdun du su mgyogs byas nas/ bsu ba la byung bas/ Bal gling bzhi na grags pa'i 'ba r O ta si ri dang/ 'ba ro sMan dge gnyis kyis sngun la sleb pas/ khong gnyis rang rang can du spyang'dren pa la ma 'chams pas/ spyang snga nas zhal lce mdzad de/ gcig can du chags phab la zhag gcig gnyis bzhugs pa la/ de nas Thel du bzhugs tshe cig shos kyi drung du bzhugs par bya'o gsungs nas/ gnyis pos kyang mnyan nas de ltar byas so/ de nas 'Go khom na Ba po'i rā dzā bzhugs pas/ Bod kyi grub thob byon zer ba thos nas/ pho brang du spyang drangs te bsnyen bkur mdzad/ Bal po'i skad du chos gsungs/ kho shin du dad par gyur te/ nang ba Sangs (p.85) rgyas pa la yang mos pa byed pa gcig byung skad/ gzhan yang Bal gling bzhi'i bha ro Gra ma phal bas zhabs la btud cing bsnyen bkur byas skad/ bzo'i rig pa la mnyes pas O ta si ri dang Ni lam bha ro dPung gi 'bangs Phal gling bzhi na mkhas pa'i lha bzo gcig la/ lha bzor bzung//"; "Likewise, everyone in Bal po'i thil (i.e. the Kathmandu Valley proper) heard about the service rendered by the *rā dzā* and the seeing off by his retinue. All the noblemen of Bal [po] gling bzhi, having rushed to the *rin po che's* presence, welcomed him. Both 'ba ro O ta si ri and 'ba ro sMan dge, famous in Bal [po] gling bzhi, arrived ahead [of everyone else]. Since the two of them could not agree on who would invite him, the *spyang snga* promised: "I shall stay for one or two days with one host [first], and then while in Thel, I shall be the guest of the other one". Hearing this, both of them acted accordingly. Then, since the *rā dzā* of Bal po was in 'Go khom (spelled so, i.e. Bhaktapur) and heard the reports that the Tibetan *siddha* was coming, he invited him to the palace and showed hospitality to him. [gNyos lHa nang pa] imparted teachings to him in Newari. He (i.e. the *rā dzā*) became very faithful to him. It is said that (p.85) he became a devout Buddhist. Moreover, it is said that the *bha ro* of Bal [po] gling bzhi, Gra ma phal pa, rendered service and gave hospitality to

gNyos chen po left Li Shin te and, upon entering the Kathmandu Valley, had first Bhaktapur on his way. He could not yet reach any other major localities of Bal po, which he visited later. Hence, reasons of proximity reinforce the possibility that Li shin te denotes present-day Banepa.

The account of gNyos lHa nang pa's visit to Bal po is the earliest and most detailed—hitherto known—record of the Kathmandu Valley soon after the establishment of the Malla dynasty in 1200, which left an indelible trace in local history.

Another clue that proves the worth of the account in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* is the reference to the residence of the king of Bal po, whose name is not given, being located in Bhaktapur—the biography names it 'Go khom. Bhaktapur also was the seat of power of the kings at the end of the transitional period that gave way to the rule of the early Malla monarchs.

Arimalla was the king who sat on throne in the Kathmandu Valley in the years 1200-1216. He was the ruler who established the Malla dynasty (Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal* p.80-81). He thus was the lord of Bal po at the time of lHa nang pa's visit and Chos sdings pa, too (see below p.125). Colophons dated 1208 (*Devīmāhātmya*) and the next useful one of 1211 (*Māhārahasyasampradāya*) document his reign (ibid.).

A more centralised and stable rule in the Kathmandu Valley must have led 'Jig rten mgon po to look at this new power in order to engage in diplomatic relations, and consequently whether the mission of gNyos lHa nang pa had the objective of establishing ties between the 'Bri gung pa and Arimalla. No 'Bri gung pa mission to the Kathmandu Valley is recorded in the case of the preliminary expedition to Gangs Ti se of 1191. That no record of 'Bri gung pa contacts with the authorities of the Kathmandu Valley may not depend on a lack of historical coverage but on the absence of relations that were formalised with the advent of Arimalla and the foundation of his kingdom. It is also possible that the Malla were those who opted for a policy of closer contacts with the Tibetans.

gNyos lha nang pa'i rnam thar documents the organisation of the Kathmandu Valley in the early years of the 13th century. The biography mentions several times that Bal po'i thil was divided into four sectors which are named Bal [po'i] gling bzhi (the “four constituent areas of the Kathmandu Valley”) in several passages (ibid. p.84 line 9 and line 10, p.85 line 1 and line 3).

The local tradition subdivides the divisions of the Kathmandu Valley into four sectors—eastern, western, northern and southern—whether or not inclusive of contiguous areas (see Vajracharya-Malla, *Gopalarajvaimshavali* p.133-134). They were the *Caṅguṃ* of the Valley:

- Śri Viṣṇufīrthanārāyaṇa, the ye-caṅguṃ (“southern *caṅguṃ*”), founded by Viṣṇugupta with the aim of conquering the enemy's lands;
- Caṅguṃ Nārāyaṇa, the yo-caṅguṃ (“western *caṅguṃ*”), founded due to a famine;

him. Since [gNyos chen po] was fond of art, he hired an accomplished master artist of Phal (sic for Bal) gling bzhi, a subject of O ta si ri and Ni lam bha ro dPung [to create] works of art”.

- Viṣṇunābha, the yañ-caṅgum (“northern *caṅgum*”), founded to produce gold; and
- Śri Caṅgum Nārāyaṇa, the wañ-caṅgum (“eastern *caṅgum*”), founded by those longing for an offspring.

Gopalarajvaimshavali (ibid. p.131) associates these divisions to Jayasthitirājamalla (1381-1394) who reigned in the later 14th century, way after the much earlier signs of their existence which predate 1208.

The biography provides the names of several noblemen—'ba ro O ta si ri and 'ba ro sMan dge, bha ro Gra ma phal pa and Ni lam bha ro dPung— under the authority of the king. All of them are not too significant in historical terms, at least from the viewpoint of the Tibetan studies. Being qualified as 'ba ro (also spelled *bha ro*), almost always reflects the canonical norm in the Tibetan literature to address the nobility of Bal po and not only those from metropolitan India and, more rarely, La dwags.

Spellings at variance in the account imply that different documents were consulted to compile the episode of gNyoſ lHa nang pa's visit to Bal po. The contemporary existence of different dignitaries in Bal po identified as *rgyal po*, *rje'u* and 'ba ro/bha ro is a sign of a hierarchy of power in the Kathmandu Valley. While the bonds of a *rgyal po* with his 'ba ro/bha ro-s is an obvious king-minister situation, the interplay between the king of Bal po'i thil and the *rje'u* of Li Shin te seems to have rested on a feudatory status of the lord of Banepa.

The way gNyoſ chen po cemented relations with the Bal po *rgyal po* by means of his spiritual powers was not dissimilar from the type of interaction he had with *rje'u* Ka ping. His biography goes as far as saying that Arimalla became a Buddhist, hagiographically owing to his meeting with gNyoſ chen po. There are no indications to confirm this from the rest of *gNyoſ lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*. Again, gNyoſ chen po used Newari to impart teachings to Arimalla; the ability to speak in foreign languages being an important cultural trait that Tibetan literature associates with several great masters—e.g. grub thob Thang stong rgyal po in Assam.¹⁴³ Tibetan literature is keen to underline that great Tibetan masters were able to hold forth in other people's languages upon reaching their land in order to stress their extraordinary capacities.

gNyoſ lHa nang pa's biography records another task assigned to him, apart from the diplomatic mission at the court of Arimalla and the latter's feudatory, Ka ping. As soon as he fulfilled his duties with the highest authority of Bal po, gNyoſ chen po engaged in the making of an extraordinary golden umbrella to be placed above the head of 'Jig rten mgon po at 'Bri gung. gNyoſ lHa nang pa commissioned it from a Newar artist, a subject of 'ba ro/bha ro O ta si ri and dPung.

143. rGyur med bde chen, *Thang stong rgyal po'i rnam thar* (p.164 lines 16-17) says: “rGya gar Shri gi ri la mchod rten rnam dag mjal bar byon pa'i lam/ grong khyer Ti ri kha bya ar phebs//”; “On the way to see the pure *mchod rten* on Shri gi ri of rGya gar, [Thang stong rgyal po] went to the town named Ti ri kha”, and at this locality (p.165 line 7): “Ti ri kha pa nrams kyi skad du chos gsungs//”; “He imparted teachings in the language of the people of Ti ri kha”.

The matter of the umbrella (or umbrellas?) made to honour 'Jig rten mgon po is a point of controversy among the sources (see below p.125). The anonymous artist kept working for gNyos lHa nang pa because he made several important objects after 'Jig rten mgon po's death in fire on 1217 to ornament sKyob pa rin po che's tomb and other ones to be donated to the Jo bo statue in lHa sa 'Phrul snang.¹⁴⁴

gNyos chen po then focused on devotional activities. He visited the main shrines of the Valley, regardless whether Hindu or Buddhist. He adopted thus the syncretic attitude for which the Newar population is well known.¹⁴⁵ He had mystical visions and performed

144. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.85 lines 4-10): "'Bri gung gi gser gdugs chen mo la sogs pa spyan snga nas zhal bzhugs bzhugs pa'i dus su/ bzo mdzad tshad khos byas/ sku gshegs pa'i rjes su la yang/ gdung gang gi rgyab yol dang/ lHa sa 'Phrul snang Jo bo Shākya la phul ba'i/ gser gdugs Shākya thub sku'i dkyil 'khor lha bcu bdun gyis bkod pa yod pa/ bzo khyas par du 'phags pa pa nams/ lha bzo des byas pa yin te/ snga phyi thams cad du gnyer pa no sgom pa Rin chen seng ges byas pa gtso che'o//"; "While the *spyan snga* (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po) was alive, he (i.e. the Newar artist subject of 'ba ro O ta si ri and Ni lam bha ro dPung) created [works of art], such as the 'Bri gung's great golden umbrella, following the specifications given [to him]. After ['Jig rten mgon po's] death, the same master artist created extraordinarily good works of art, such as a magnificent golden canopy for his tomb with a *dkyil 'khor* of nineteen gods, the *torana* of the tomb, and a golden canopy with the seventeen deities of the *dkyil 'khor* of the Shākya thub [pa] images, offered to Jo bo Shākya of lHa sa 'Phrul snang. Concerning the persons who had custody of [these objects]—earlier, later and at all times—the main one was sgom pa Rin chen seng ge".

The passage explains that the administrative duties of 'Bri gung *sgom pa* Rin chen seng ge included that of being in charge of those objects but the years during his tenure of the school's secular affairs are obscure. Rin chen seng ge held the post during the years after 1217, when *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* says in the passage translated in this note that he was the 'Bri gung *sgom pa*. The list of the 'Bri gung *gom pa-s* in *rGyal rabs sogs Bod kyi yig tshang*, the Fifth Dalai Lama's *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* and Sum pa mkhan po's *dPag bsam shing* reproduced by Sperling in Appendix One of his "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa" does not establish the length of each *sgom pa's* incumbency.

In the absence of other dates, it is unclear whether Rin chen seng ge was the successor to rDo rje seng ge by 1217. The chronology of the 'Bri gung *sgom pa-s* in the early period after the post was established needs to be based on untraced documents that could shed light on the issue.

145. Unlike gNyos lHa nang pa who followed the syncretic attitude of the Newar tradition towards the two religions popular in the Kathmandu Valley, in 1261 U rgyan pa misbehaved in Ti ra hu ti on the way to rDo rje gdan for his first visit to the heart of the Buddhist world. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.135 line 18-p.137 line 2) reads: "'De nas byon pas mu stegs byed kyi lha khang zhig na/ lha dBang phyug gi rten rdo la byas pa zhig 'dug/ dkon gnyer ma zhig na re (p.136) lha la phyag tshol zer/ nga phyag mi 'tshal gsungs pas/ khyod phyag mi 'tshal na/ khyod rang la na tsha 'ong ngo zer bas/ der na bza' bem po zhig yod pa lha la bkab nas/ de steng du zhon nas khyu khyu gsungs te/ na tsha 'ong na de khyer gsungs pas/ nga'i lha la 'di dra' byas so zer nas/ dkon gnyer ma ngu yin 'dug/ lha Ma hā de wa shā ra'i snya bar zhon zhes pa'i mgur kyang gsungs/ de nas yang byon pas mu stegs byed kyi lha khang zhig tu bzhugs nas/ dri chen dang dri chu lha khang de rang du dor/ spyod pa ci thod thod mdzad pas/ snga dro dkon gnyer zhig byung nas/ lha khang du 'di 'dra byed pa/ 'dir rgyal po mchod pa byed du 'byon pa yin pas phyag dar gyis/ ma byas na rgyal pos gsod du 'ong zer bas/ nga ni gsod pas mi 'jigs/ gsod pas 'jigs

miracles at these holy places. He was at 'Phags pa Shing kun and Gu lang gi lha khang (Swayambhu and Pashupati).¹⁴⁶ At Pashupati he had a vision of bDe mchog. Like fellow Buddhist from the valley, he worshipped his own deities at the Hindu holy places.¹⁴⁷ He paid

na khyod rang phyag dar gyis gsungs pas/ kho na re/ gsod pas mi 'jugs pa'i mi med zer/ der gsol zhal ko phor zhig yod par/ gsang chab bsil nas/ rten gyi mgo thog blugs pas/ dkon gnyer na re/ khyod gsod pas mi 'jigs zhig 'dug ste/ nga gsod du 'ong ngo/ song zhig zer nas kho rang phyag dar byed cing 'dug gsungs/ lha dBang phyug gi 'go (p.137) la gcin gyis gtor zhes pa'i mgur yang gsungs/"; "He then went to a Hindu temple that housed a stone image of the god Shiva. The *dkon gnyer ma* ("woman keeper"?) said (p.136): "Prostrate to the god", but he retorted: "I will not prostrate". As soon as she warned him: "If you do not prostrate, a disease will come to you", he covered the image with a woollen robe and rode on it saying: "*Khyu khyu*" and added: "If a disease will come [to me], take this one". She said: "He is doing this to my image!", and cried. [U rgyan pa] sang a song which said that he rode on the neck of Ma ha de va shā ra (spelled so).

Then he went to another Hindu temple and halted [there]. He relinquished [there] his stools and urine. This being a behaviour supremely unruly, the next morning one *dkon gnyer* came and said: "You did such things in the *lha khang*. The king comes here for his worship, so you must clean it yourself. If you do not do it, the king will come to kill you". [U rgyan pa] replied: "I am not afraid to be killed. If you are afraid to be killed, clean it yourself". [The *dkon gnyer*] said: "There is no one who is not afraid of getting killed". At that time, [U rgyan pa] urinated in a leather (*ko*) bowl he had and poured it on the head of a statue. The *dkon gnyer* said: "You are someone who is not afraid to be killed, but they will come to kill me. Go away". [U rgyan pa] said that the [*dkon gnyer*] was the one who cleaned. He said he sang a song which told that (p.137) he poured urine on the head of the god Shiva".

146. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.85 line 10-p.86 line 3): "De nas 'Phags pa Shing kun la mchod pa mdzad du byon te/ sprul pa'i sku dngos su zhal gzigs/ de'i dus su rDo rje lus kyi gnas lugs phyin ci ma log pa thugs su byon skad/ de nas Gu lang gi lha khang du byon/ Gu lang gi lha rten stong bzhi pa gcig yod pa de mu stegs kyi tshangs par byas nas mchod pa byed skad/ nang pas bDe mchog du byed pa la/ phyag med pas gang du yang gsal ba med/ rin po ches bDe mchog zhal bzhi phyag bcu gnyis par zhal gzigs skad/ de nas so spag bzhengs pa'i dkyil 'khor gcig yod pa gzigs su byon pas/ de lha drug cu rtsa gnyis kyi Ye shes kyi dkyil 'khor dngos su (p.86) zhal gzigs skad/ de nas dByangs can ma shes rab 'phel ba'i rten/ rdo gru bzhi gcig la shes rab 'phel bar 'dod pa rnam lce drud pa gcig yod pa de/ dByangs can ma dngos su gzigs/"; "He then went to offer worship at 'Phags pa Shing kun. He truly had the vision of the emanation image (*sprul pa'i sku*: which one?). [A report] told that the abiding nature of the Adamantine Body appeared to his mind unmistakably. He then went to Gu lang lha khang. There are 4,000 images of the gods at Gu lang. It is said that they are worshipped in a purely Hindu manner. The Buddhist worship bDe mchog who will not appear without any kind of prostrations. [Another report] said that the *rin po che* had the vision of bDe mchog with four heads and twelve arms. He then went to see a *dkyil 'khor* made of bricks. It is said that he truly had the vision of the *Ye shes dkyil 'khor* of the sixty-two deities. Then he had the vision of dByangs can ma, this being the image of dByangs can ma on a square stone who expands wisdom by rubbing the tongue on it".

147. Man lung pa bSod nams dpal (1235 or 1239-?) was a bKa' brgyud with an eclectic education, typical of the school tradition, whereby he was exposed to Tshal pa and 'Bri gung pa teachings as well as those dPyal pa from dBen dmar family of Rong. He journeyed outside the plateau three times. The first occurred in the years between wood rat 1264 (*Man lung pa'i rnam thar* f.6a lines 3-4) and earth dragon 1268 (ibid. lines 4-6).

reverence to the image of dByangs can ma (Saraswati), which bestowed her mystical features and artistic skills to those who rubbed their tongue on it.¹⁴⁸

While carrying out a ritual at dur khrod Ra ma dho ni, the Newar tradition sees the location of this cemetery in the northwest of historical Kathmandu, which corresponds to the area where Bijeswori is situated,¹⁴⁹ gNyos lHa nang pa performed the miracle of manifesting

During this journey, Man lung pa spent time in the Kathmandu Valley, which happened several decades after gNyos chen po. His adventures in Bal yul were full of extraordinary experiences he had at its holy sites. But before entering the Kathmandu Valley proper, again like gNyos lHa nang pa, he had a stay in Bane pa, the Bhonta kingdom where he pleased the ruler of the 'Bong chong castle. He performed rituals that led his wife to beget a son, so that this princely lineage was not interrupted (ibid. f.6b line 8-f.7a line 2).

Man lung pa'i rnam thar (f.7a lines 2-7) vividly describes his endeavours at the great holy places of Bal po, which were exclusively Buddhist: “De nas byon nas Bal po'i grong khyer Ye rang du byon/ gnas po A ma ra tsan ti'i sar slebs/ 'Phags pa shing kun gyi rdo skas kyi steng du mchod pa la byon/ spre'u rnam kyis bsu ba byas me tog gi phreng ba gnam phul/ mchod pa mdzad pas/ sa g.yo ba dang/ 'Phags pa 'grum la sogs pa ltas bzang po byung/ 'Phags pa mar me gtang 'Ja' ma li dang 'jal dus su dkon gnyer gyis mar me gtang du mi bteng ba la/ rang 'bar du byung bas/ ya mtshan can du gyur/ U khang 'Phags pa la mchod pa la mdzad pas 'ja'i gur phug pas ya mtshan du gyur/ Bhu khang du byon pas/ 'Phags pa Gom pa gang rtse tshur byon pa dang ya mtshan can du gyur to/ Hum ka ra'i lha khang du mchod pa mdzad pas/ nam mkha' la Hum gyi sgra che zhing rgyun ring ba cig byung bas/spyan mnga' na gnas pa thams cad la mi rtogs ting nge 'dzin yun ring du skyes pa byung ces grags so//”; “[Man lung pa] then left and reached Patan, the town of Bal po. He stayed at the place of the local man A ma ra tsan ti. He went to perform worship on the stone stairs of 'Phags pa shing kun. The monkeys welcomed him and offered him flower garlands. Upon worshipping [the *mchod rten*], special signs occurred, such as that the earth shook and 'Phags pa [shing kun] vacillated. While having sight of 'Phags pa 'Ja' ma li (White Machendranath), the *dkon gnyer* gave him butter lamps which were not ignited (?) (*bteng*), and it was wondrous that they set ablaze spontaneously. Upon worshipping U khang 'Phags pa (Red Machendranath), it was wondrous that a rainbow like a tent covered it. He went to Bhu khang and, on the way back to 'Phags pa Gom pa gang rtse, [something] wondrous happened. Upon worshipping inside Hum ka ra'i lha khang, a loud Hum sound uttered in the sky which continued for a long time. It is well known that, while he was around, all the locals experienced non-conceptual *samadhi* for a long time”.

148. Rubbing one's tongue in order to increase wisdom is an uncommon performance in Tibet. One exception is the credence popularly associated with the statue of 'Jam pa'i rdo rje at Rwa sgreng. The origin of this cult is unclear, but the story of 'Jam pa'i rdo rje, full of mythological details, links this statue, owned by a lineage of prestigious masters, with Bal po, where it was kept until A ti sha brought it to Tibet (see *Rwa sgreng gi dkar chag* p.95 line 2-p.103 line 12 for the story of 'Jam pa'i rdo rje excerpted from *bKa' gdams glegs bam*).

149. The well known cemetery of Ra ma dho li attracted the attention of several famous masters of antiquity. I may recall here Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas's visit to it. *Deb ther sngon po* (p.278 lines 7-12) reads: “bTsun chung ma'i lag pa nas bzung nas Bon po rgan rgon la bcol/ rnal 'byor ma/ 'u cig gnyis 'deng ngo gsung nas/ Bal yul du Ra ma do li'i dur khrod du sleb pa sogs gnas mang por rnal 'byor pa grub thob mang po dang mjal zhig skad cig la phyin/ lha mang po zhal yang gzigs/ phyr Ding rir 'khor dus zhag bcu dgu lon//”; “Grabbing the hand of bTsun chung ma, ['Gar Dam

himself at the same time in all the other seven great cemeteries of the Tantric tradition.¹⁵⁰ This is a major point of disagreement with *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (see below p.123-125).

Finally, among the mystical experiences that he had in Bal po he had visions of the greatly revered statues 'Bu khang (Rato Matsyendranātha), 'Ja' ma li (Śeto Matsyendranātha) and 'Phags pa Wa ti, the sKyiid grong Jo bo.¹⁵¹ It is unclear whether he went to worship these statues at their shrines. If he did, it would mean that he travelled back to Tibet via sKyiid grong. This is mere speculation because *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* does not say by which route he returned to 'Bri gung.

▪ 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa in Bal yul

In the meantime, 'Gar dam pa, upon retracing his steps towards Central Tibet, headed towards Bal po, like gNyos lHa nang pa had done. After gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar dam pa went together to Tsa ri and Gangs Ti se to lead waves of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s on pilgrimage to these holy places and had a falling out, both made a point to pursue individually the tasks assigned to them by their teacher 'Jig rten mgon po.

The biography of Chos sdings pa says that, upon reaching Bal Bod, the border area between Tibet and the lands traditionally part of the culture of the Kathmandu Valley, 'Gar Dam pa came under great pressure, for he received news that he had been strongly rebuked

pa] said: "Let's entrust our belongings to the Bon po elder. *rNal 'byor ma!* We should leave". They left instantly and met many *rnal 'byor pa*-s and *grub thob*-s at many holy places, such as the cemetery of Ra ma dho li in Bal yul to which they went. They had the vision of many deities. Nineteen days had elapsed when they returned to Ding ri".

150. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.87 lines 2-8): "De'i nub mo bsil ba'i tshal la sogs pa'i/ dur khrod brgyad po thams cad du sku'i bkod pa mdzad de/ dur khrod chen po re re na yang/ Ratna re re tshogs kyi 'khor lo mdzad pa ni/ dper na mi gcig gi mtha' mar me long g.ya' dag pa brgyad skor na/ mi des spyod pa ji ltar byas pa bzhin/ me lonng brgyad ka'i nang du snang ba ltar/ Ratnas lus sems gnyis kyi steng du dur khrod chen po brgyad kyi rten 'brel sgrig mkhyen pas/ phyi rol du de ltar mi 'char kha med yin gsungs so//"; "That night, he assigned his body (*sku'i bkod pa mdzad*) to all the eight great cemeteries—bSil ba'i tshal and the others—and in each great cemetery Ratna (i.e. gNyos lHa nang pa) performed a *tshogs 'khor*. For instance, if a man is surrounded by eight clear mirrors without rust, that man, regardless of what act he performs, is visible in all the eight mirrors. Ratna knew that a good karmic relation connected [him] with the eight great cemeteries, based on both body and mind, and said that it should have not been difficult, in the case of the Hindu [too], to have a similar realisation".

151. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.87 lines 8-13): "De nas skya rengs shar bar gyur pa dang mchod 'grol gtso dgyes pas/ nye gnas kun kyi 'jigs pa bsngangs par gyur nas/ nam langs pa dang dpon g.yog kun grong du byon no/ yang de'i tsho sPyan ras gzigs rang byung mched bzhi la/ 'Bu khang dang 'Ja' ma li dang/ Kyi rong gi rTsa ti gsum sprul pa'i sku mgon su gyur pa//"; "As soon as morning came, all the *dpon g.yog* returned to town. Also at that time, of the four self-originated sPyan ras gzigs brothers, the *nirmanakaya* statues of 'Bu khang, 'Ja' ma li and rTsa ti of Kyi grong (spelled so for sKyiid grong Wa ti) truly were there [for gNyos lHa nang pa to see]".

by 'Jig rten mgon po. His teacher had heard a report from a 'Bri gung pa, whose name is not given in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* but whose identity is easy to assess, that 'Gar dam pa was leading a dissipated life in Bal po. The report said that, on the way back from mNga' ris skor gsum in order to make a parasol to be displayed above the head of 'Jig rten mgon po, he was wasting the wealth he had accumulated for the purpose.¹⁵² This was the same assignment gNyos chen po had undertaken in the Kathmandu Valley shortly before.

There are a few clues that point towards gNyos lHa nang pa as the person who complained about 'Gar Dam pa. Chos sdings pa was accused by a 'Bri gung pa defined in his *rnam thar* as his *grogs po*. Often and almost always in the case of journeys, this term applies to a travelling companion, as is well known by now, and the two had indeed travelled together to Tsa ri before and to Gangs Ti se in 1208 as heads of the expedition to the west.

The accusation against Chos sdings pa contains an enlightening passage. The person who gave it began the speech addressed to sKyob pa ri po che by referring to 'Gar Dam pa as "our" disciple, implying that Chos sdings pa was the disciple of 'Jig rten mgon po as well as the one who was speaking. I have pointed out above that Chos sdings pa was the disciple of 'Jig rten mgon po and gNyos lHa nang pa (p.66). The report to 'Jig rten mgon po strongly suggests that the one who was speaking was gNyos chen po.

152. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.477 lines 1-6): "De nas Bal po'i yul du byon pa dang/ snga ni bsod nams chen po dang/ Bal Bod gnyis kar grags snyan chen po byung bas/ rta gser la sogs pa'i 'bul ba 'ur chen po byung bas/ Bal Bod gnyis kyi lha bza' mkhas pa brgya nye tsam la bla mchod byas/ gser gdugs sgrub cing yod pa la/ chos rje'i spyang ngar/ grogs po ngan pas 'phra ma bcug nas/ 'o skol gyi slob ma Dam pa bya ba de/ Bal Bod gnyis na bsod nams kyi 'ur chen po byung ba dang de/ Bal po na gser gdugs sbrub pa zer skad/ zas su gser za/ skom du gser thung/ gos su gser gyon/ spyod pa sna tshogs byed par 'dug zhus pas/ chos rjes/ de mi bden bar mkhyen yang/ zhu ba'i ngor snang du/ tshogs su/ nga'i bud ma pa zer ba de/ ngas shi rgyu gos/ rul rgyu bskam/ lto gos chos gsum gis bskyangs/ nga ma mnyam bu mnyam du tshar tsa/ nga'i dge' 'dun skyong rog mi byed par/ Bal Bod gnyis na kha zas de gser la byed shing gda' skad/ khos gser gdugs 'grub kyang mi 'grub/ grub par song yang/ kho'i chos brgyad kyi gdugs rgog de/ 'dir byung na/ ngas thal ba rong na mar slab du gtong pa yin/ gsung nas bka' bkyon chen po byon//"; "[Chos sings pa] then went towards the land of Bal po. Previously the fame of his merit having been greatly spread in [the area of] Bal Bod, two in all, since a great rumour of the offerings [that he received], such as horses and gold, circulated to the effect that he was the *bla mchod* of nearly 100 master artists of both [areas of] Bal Bod. While they were making a golden umbrella, a wicked companion slandered him in the presence of the *chos rje* (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po): "It is said that our disciple named ['Gar] Dam pa, this one, the great fame of whose merit has spread around in both [areas of] Bal Bod, is making a golden umbrella in Bal po. As for food, he eats gold. As for drink, he drinks gold. As for robes, he wears gold". [This man] having questioned [Chos sdings pa]'s various activities [there], the *chos rje*, although he knew that it was not true, pretended in the face of the petitioner during the assembly, saying: "My son named ['Gar] Dam pa, I restored his life. I dried him when he was rotting. I supported him with food, cloths and teachings. I brought up this boy who was disrespectful of his vow [and] who does not help to protect my monks. Instead it is said that, in both [areas of] Bal Bod, as for food, he is eating gold. I do not know whether he is making a golden umbrella. Even if he is making one, it is a useless umbrella [based on] his *chos brgyad* (i.e. eight worldly *chos*). If he comes here, I will throw him down in the dust". Saying so, he rebuked him strongly (*bka' bkyon chen po byon*)".

The biography of gNyos lHa nang pa contains evidence of the resentment that he nurtured against Chos sdings pa for having taken the lead in the contacts with sTag tsha Khri 'bar when they both headed the 1208 wave of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s to Ti se. Not a word is found in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* about lHa nang pa's jealousy of 'Gar Dam pa. This is the first and only anonymous hint in the biography that gNyos lHa nang pa wished to settle accounts with 'Gar Dam pa when he preceded him to 'Bri gung. The relative chronology of the activities of gNyos and 'Gar shows that the former went back to 'Bri gung ahead of the latter and thus had the chance to denounce him for his purportedly dissipated behaviour in Bal Bod. gNyos lHa nang pa said: "He eats gold, he drinks gold". In the view of the author of Chos sdings pa's biography, gNyos chen po coolly waited to return to 'Bri gung ahead of 'Gar Dam pa to denounce him to 'Jig rten mgon po and express his resentment by denouncing what he considered Chos sdings pa's misdeeds.

The speech also shows that, in reporting on Chos sdings pa's activities in Bal Bod and Bal po to the head of the 'Bri gung pa, gNyos lHa nang pa resorted to hearsay, which proves his intentions in an even clearer way.

'Gar dam pa's endeavours after his subjugation of Lug stim in Srinagar need to be examined more closely to determine, on his way to Bal po, where the mission of making the extraordinary umbrella assigned to him took him to, given that the events related to it are not described with sufficient clarity in his biography.

This work says that he was in Mang yul when he came to know that gNyos chen po had accused him in the presence of sKyob pa rin po che.¹⁵³ Chos sdings pa realised that only by making the best possible umbrella for 'Jig rten mgon po could he please his *bla ma* and prove to him that he had not dissipated any wealth.¹⁵⁴

153. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.477 line 6-p.478 line 1): "De'i lo rgyus zhib pa mang/ yul na grogs pa snying shin tu brtse ba/ rDo rje rin chen zhes bya ba cig la gsan bas/ chos kyi rje la khrul pa mi mnga' nga 'dul ba rkyen drag po cig (p.478) 'ong ba de mkhyen bas/ zlog p'ai thabs mdzad pa yin ste 'ong dgongs//"; "When ['Gar Dam pa] heard this account in detail in Mang yul from an intimate friend of his called rDo rje rin chen, he thought: "There is no misconception with the *chos kyi rje* (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po), (p.478) since he knows that I am at present coming with an important offering. He must be adopting a method to remove obstacles [for me]".

154. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.478 line 5-p.479 line 1): "gSer gdugs myur du ji ltat tshar ba'i brtson 'grus chen po mdzad pa la/ chos rje kun gyi tshad mar gyur pas/ bka' bkyon mdzad zer pa kun gyis thos pas/ sku bsod chung rgyun bcad pa bzhin du song nas/ nyid kyi thugs dgongs/ 'dii 'og nas ma slong na/ bla ma bsten pa dang/ sgom sgrub byas pa dang/ dka' ba spyad rnam la don med pas/ Bal Bod 'dir yi ge rim su bri nyan pa'i grub rtags bgha ston dgos dgongs nas/ (p.479) khrom mang po'tshogs pa'i dbus su/ khyed kyi yul gyi lha 'dre gtum mo ma rungs pa 'di ngas btul ba yin/ gsungs//"; "[Even] by making a great effort to finish the golden umbrella more quickly, given that everyone had heard the rumours that the *chos rje* had abused him and that this had become universally trusted (*tshad ma*), [he knew that] his miserable merit would likewise come to an end. He realised that if he did not rise up from this dejection ('*di'i 'og nas ma slong na*), [all his] learning from a *bla ma*, meditating, teaching to disciples and performing austerities would be meaningless. Since [Chos sdings pa] thought that there was need to display a few signs of [his] accomplishments in [the land of] Bal Bod, suitable to be put in written form, (p.479) in the middle

He also realised that he needed to prove his spiritual attainments by displays of siddhic power so that he could attract local support and thus speed up the making of the golden umbrella. He then undertook the task of subduing the local deity in the area of Bal Bod, an episode described at some length in *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar*.¹⁵⁵ This deity has a no less evocative name than the one of Lug stim, for he is called sBrang gdong ma (“Fly Face”). While in the case of Lug stim one can guess the nature of the local cult behind the name of the deity, sBrang gdong ma represents a misspelling of the deity’s original name adjusted to sound derisive in the Tibetan language. The whole account documents the existence of another popular, non-Buddhist religious cult that had developed locally.

The worship of sBrang gdong ma implied the sacrifice of large quantities of animals. ‘Gar dam pa went to the local lake and coerced the deity to manifest himself with his acolytes, and pressed him to take the Buddhist vow, so that animal sacrifice could be abolished for good, otherwise he would ravage the country and destroy his cult.¹⁵⁶

of a gathering of a large crowd he said: “I will subdue the mischievous and wrathful *lha 'dre* of your country”.

155. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.479 line 4-p.480 line 2): “Bal Bod ‘tshams kyi lha ‘dre mthu’ che la rtsal drag pa/ nub ma re la yul khams bas/ soms can brgya’i srog ‘bul rgos/ dus bzang go chog sems can lnga brgya re re’i srog ‘bul dgos pa’i/ sBrang gdong ma zhes bya ba cig yod de/ de’i mdun brla’ mtsho’i khar byin nas/ mkhan po Chos sdings pa la/ khyod kyi bla ma ‘dir byon pas/ sBrang gdong ma ‘khor dang bcas pa da lta rang ‘dir shog cig/ ces pa’i skad ring gtong du bcug pas/ de ma thag tu rGya gar gyi a tsa ra/ gser gyi rna cha can/ ras nag (p.480) gi ral ga phu dung kha bo che gyon/ gser ska’i ske rag bcing// Bal Bod kyi lha ‘dre mang pos bskor nas byung gsung/ mkhan po Chos sdings pas ni/ a tsa ra cig mthong gsung/ Tshul rgyal gyis ni ra khyu cig mthong lo/ gzhan sku ‘khor gha res ni mtsho’ khol ba mthong zer ro/ de nas lha dre des/ Dam pa slob dpon pad mar mthong nas/ phyag ‘tshal skor ba byas zhabs la ‘dzus/ mchi ma bton/ yus kyis brnang nas mdun du ‘gyel skad//”; “The locals had to sacrifice the life of one 100 animals every day [to] the *lha 'dre* of the border of [the land of] Bal Bod, the latter being wrathful and skillful to [performing] great *mthu*’ (spelled so). There was [a *lha 'dre*] called sBrang gdong ma (“Fly Face”), to whom it was necessary to sacrifice the life of 500 animals on every special occasion. It is said that [Chos sdings pa] went up to him at the bank of a *brla*’ (spelled so for *bla*) *mtsho* and let out in a loud voice: “Given that your *bla ma* has come here, [you] sBrang gdong ma and your retinue must manifest yourselves to mkhan po Chos sdings pa now”. He said that, immediately after, an Indian *a tsa ra*, wearing golden earrings, a black cotton (p.480) dress with big sleeves and a belt made of gold, appeared, surrounded by many *lha 'dre* of [the land of] Bal Bod. mKhan po Chos sdings pa said: “I saw an *a tsa ra*”. Tshul rgyal [exclaimed]: “I saw a flock of goats”. Other members of the retinue proclaimed: “We saw the lake boiling”. It is reported that, then, since the *lha 'dre* saw [Chos sdings pa] as slob dpon Pad ma, they fell down in front of him and offered prostrations, touched his feet and shed tears, being overwhelmed by distress”.

156. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.481 lines 1-2): “Dam pa’i zhal nas/ las rgyu ‘bras kyi chos bshad/ dge’ bsnyen gyi sdom pa phog/ da phyin cod sems can la gnod ‘tshe ma byed/ srog gi dod por dkar gsum dang rngar gsum zo/ do nub nas song la khyod rang gyi bu la/ sdom pa blangs pa dang/ dge bsnyen byas pa’i lo rgyus shod la/ nga’i dam tshig dus rgyun du ma rjed par gyis cig/ gsung nas song ngo//”; “[‘Gar] Dam pa told [the *a tsa ra* and his retinue]: “I spoke about the karmic law of cause and effect. I have imparted to you the *dge bsnyen* vow. From now on you must

The consequence was that everyone in that kingdom embraced customs more consonant with Buddhist piety in prohibiting the shedding of blood. The first to act accordingly and to advise his subjects to follow suit was the ruler of the region. He is called sNe shang rTsal (the "sNe shang power man") in the passage,¹⁵⁷ which creates some confusion inasmuch as decoding the name sNe shang is concerned. sNe shang normally denotes Ma nang, but it is unlikely that the episode took place in Ma nang, because the biography earlier mentions Chos sdings pa's presence in the Bal Bod borderland. It is also unlikely that, around 1208, the Ma nang territory went beyond its natural boundaries and reached as far as the area south of sKyid grong and its environs.

not harm the life of animals. You must eat the *dkar gsum* and *rngar gsum* (sic for *mngar gsum*) instead of [taking] the life [of animals]. This evening, tell your children the story that you took the vow and that you are a *dge bsnyen*. You must not forget that you are all the time bound to me by *dam tshig*". After saying this, he left".

157. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.481 line 2-p.482 line 2): "De'i nub mo kho'i bur byed pa yul de'i rgyal po sNe sang rtsal bya ba can du byung nas/ bla ma Dam pa 'Gar zhes bya la/ ngas dge' bsnyen gyi sdom pa blangs/ srog mi za ba'i dam bca' byas pa yin bas/ da phyis cod bras kyi g.yag lug dang/ 'bru sna tshang ba dang/ rin po che'i phye ma za 'og gi khug mar blugs nas mchod pa dang/ dkar gsum dngar gsum gyis mchod cing/ srog bsos ngas yul khams phur bar byed do/ bla ma 'di la 'bul ba zhabs togs che bar gyis cig/ ma byas na ngas yul khams brlag par byed do/ nga la dge bsnyen chen po gyis cig/ snga ming nas bos nas/ ngas yul khams brlag par byed do/ ces zer ro/ phyir nang sNe shang rtsal gyis sde ris thams cad bsdus nas/ bla ma 'di sprul pa'i sku dngos su byon pa yin bar snang/ 'o skol gyi yul bdag chen po 'dis kyang/ dge' bsnyen gyi sdom pa blangs/ da phyis cod srog bsnagos pa thams cad brlag par byed/ dkar gsum dngar gsum gyi mchod rgos/ bla ma 'di la 'bul ba (p.482) rgya chen po byed dgos/ ma byas na yul khams na gnod pa chen po byed zer nas/ rtags dang cho 'phrul rtags can byung bas/ thog mar bla ma 'di la 'bul ba rgya chen po byed dgos zer nas/ rGya gar rDo rje gdan nas byon ba'i/ rten mchog rin po ches dbu mdzad pa'i/ rgya 'bul gsum tsam byas/'"; "That night, [the *a tsa ra*] came to tell his son, the king of that land, namely sNe shang rTsal: "I have taken the *dge bsnyen* vow with bla ma dam pa 'Gar. I am bound to the vow of not eating the life [of animals]. From now on, as a result, I must worship by filling the pouch with all kinds of grains and precious powder [rather than] by [sacrificing] *g.yag* and sheep, and I must worship by [using] the *dkar gsum* and *rngar* (sic for *mngar*) *gsum*. If we take the life [of animals], our country will go waste. We must render great service and make offering to this *bla ma*. If we do not do so, our country will be destroyed. You must call me *dge bsnyen chen po*; if you call me by [my] previous name, our country will be destroyed". sNe shang rTsal gathered all the external (*phyir* sic for *phyi*) and internal communities and districts, and said: "It seems that this *bla ma* is truly an incarnation. Even this great lord of our country took the *dge bsnyen* vow. From now on, [the *bla ma*] will destroy all those who take the life [of animals]. We must make offerings with *dkar gsum* and *rngar* (sic for *mngar*) *gsum*. (p.482) We must make big offerings to this *bla ma*. Otherwise he says that he will cause great harm to our country. Since he has given omens and signs of his miraculous power, first of all we must make a big offering to this *bla ma*". They, therefor, gave him three offerings of "one hundred", headed by the excellent precious receptacle holder brought from rGya gar rDo rje gdan".

It is a pity that the text does not expand on the subject of the holy object that was brought from rDo rje gdan to Bal po rdzong. Going by its designation in the text as a *rten*, it was not a relic but either an image, a *mchod rten* or a book.

It is equally improbable that Chos sdings pa, on his way back from Srinagar, went to the Kathmandu Valley via sNe shang, and thus that he avoided to proceed to the Himalayan hills by the easiest possible route from Byang thang, that through Glo bo which he would have left for a more impervious itinerary. Had he done so, he would have gone from Thang skya (in Glo bo Shar ris) to sNe shang across the Gangs la,¹⁵⁸ thus encountering the small glacial lake on the southern side of this pass in Ma nang, where he would have converted the local deity, sBrang gdong ma, and the local lord, sNe shang rTsal, to Tibetan Buddhism. From there he would have gone to Bal po via the Pahari areas of present-day Nepal. But this route would be not sensical for someone coming from the west.

That Chos sdings pa received the news of 'Jig rten mgon po's rebuke when he was in Mang yul suggests, rather, that he actually proceeded to Bal po along the usual sKyid grong-Bal po rdzong road. Consequently, sNe shang should be considered in those days as referring to a wider—geographical rather than political—expanse of land which included Bal Bod, whose local deity was sBrang gdong ma. If so, the lake to which Chos sdings pa proceeded in order to subdue the local deity may have been one of the Gosainkund lakes, the most important bodies of water in the area.

It is not uncommon that people and localities from the Bal po rdzong area are addressed as sNe shang, and thus the name of their chieftain seems to reflect this custom (on the use of the term sNe shang to address people of Bal po rdzong (see G. Tautscher, "Guthi Policy and Tamang Mountain Cults: Contested Domains between the Malla Kingdom of the Kathmandu Valley and the Tibetan Monastic State" after Ehrhard, "The lands are wiped like a golden

158. The geographical and cultural ties between parts of Glo bo—lower Glo bo and Glo Shar ris in particular—and Ma nang is stressed by *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* in a passage referring to the abbotship of Dharma bsod nams at rTa sga (see above p.50-51), i.e. the same period in which Chos sdings pa was active in mNga' ris (ibid. f.10b lines 3-6): "De nas, gdan sa gsum pa sprul sku gZhon nu seng ge zhes bya ba byon/ des Byang dgon Chos lung nas/ mkhan po 'ol bkod pa zhes bya ba spyang drangs nas/ des gtso mdzad dge slong lnga bcu tsam gyi dBus su bsnyen par rdzogs pa mdzad zer ba'i rnam thar yang yod/ de'i tshes sngar rtogs ldan Dar ma mtshan can gyis Blo bo'i gsham/ sNi shangs kyi gting na/ A su ra brag phug ces bya ba yod pa der thugs dam mdzad cing/ 'phrin las kyang mang du mdzad//"; "Subsequently, sprul sku gZhon nu seng ge came to be the third [rTa sga] *gdan sa*. He invited mkhan po 'Ol bkod pa ("appointed from 'Ol?") from Byang dgon Chos lung, who was the main performer (*gtso mdzad*) [in the ordination], and [gZhon nu seng ge] took the *bsnyen par rdzogs pa* vow in the midst of fifty *dge slong*. This is also mentioned in his *rnam thar*. Earlier than his (gZhon nu seng ge's) time, the *rtogs ldan* bearing the name of Dar ma bsod nams (spelled so) performed his meditation at A su ra'i brag phug, which is inside the sNe shang country of Glo bo gsham ("lower Glo bo"). He also performed many deeds [here]."

The particularly reputed cave of A su ra'i brag phug was also frequented by Mar lung pa, Dharma bsod nams's contemporary and fellow Tshal pa. Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.336b line 4) says: "dBen sNe shang Mon gyi yul/ A su ra brag phug U rgyam Padma'i gnas/ shes ldan yid dga' sgro 'dogs skyod pa'i sa/ ngad ldan skye 'chis 'jigs pa bsgom sa yin//", "The hermitage of sNe shang Mon gyi yul A su ra brag phug, a holy place of U rgyan Padma, is a place where holders of knowledge can happily clear away their doubts and a place of meditation for removing the fear of birth and death".

basin").¹⁵⁹ The toponym sNe shang—also spelled gNyi shang—is associated with the border between Bal po and Bod (i.e. Bal Bod *so mtshams*) in the most popular of all Mid la ras pa's biographies, the one penned by gTsang smyon He ru ka.

gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa thus went to the Kathmandu Valley by the same route. gNyos lHa nang pa crossed the border at Bal po rdzong from sKyid grong. 'Gar dam pa, too, despite the confusion created by the term sNe shang in the name of the chief of the Bal po rdzong area, went straight across Mang yul and onwards down to Bal po from the north.

Bal Bod in 1208—or soon thereafter—was included in the expanded territorial extension of the sNe shang but did not belong to Ma nang proper. The petty kingdom of sNe shang rTsal, therefore, was a composite territorial entity since it consisted of “inner and outer districts, and communities” (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.481 line 5). This principality, located as a buffer zone between Tibet and Bal po, preserved autonomy at a crucial time when a new, powerful dynasty had had raised to power in the not-too distant Kathmandu Valley (see p.111).

Several political entities or ethnic groups existed in the area at least as early as in the 1040s when Jo bo rje A ti sha stayed in sKyid grong. They were the communities named Sa Mu Ti rnam gsum (*Byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (f.2b lines 6-7), see Vitali, “Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)” p.293-294 and n.30). Petty kingdoms, not necessarily the same as those of the 11th century, continued to exist until not less than the early 13th but the Bontha dynasty from Banepa, for instance, reached its end two centuries thereafter.

A clue showing that the petty kingdom of sNe shang rTsal was not prone to provincialism was the donation to 'Gar Dam pa by the local people of a statue originally kept at rDo rje gdan (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.482 lines 1-2). However, the gift has a contradictory implication since the land practised an extreme form of cults far from Buddhism and closer to the Hinduism of the Himalayan hills.

Chos sdings pa's feats in Bal po other than the making of the parasol are described in a more succinct manner than those of gNyos lHa nang pa. The only episode preserved in his biography is his miracle at dur khrod Rāmadholi (spelled Ra ma dho ni in the biography of him).¹⁶⁰ The miracle has a striking assonance with the one performed by gNyos chen po at the

159. Franz-Karl Ehrhard's article “The lands are wiped like a golden basin” should be consulted on the use of the ethnonym sNe shang to address the people of Bal po rdzong (in particular *ibid.* p.135).

160. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.483 lines 4-6): “Yang dus res shig na/ dur khrod Ra ma dho li na/ tshogs kyi 'khor lo mdzad pa'i dus su/ bu slob dang yon bdag rnam la/ khyed rnam da lta phyir sdod/ tshogs la long spyad ran pa'i dus na/ khyed la sbran bar bya'o gsung/ Bal po cig gis dpag na yar bltas pas/ Dam pa bzhi' phyogs bzhi na bzhugs nas/ rdo'i ka pa la'i nang na/ phyag yug yug mdzad bdo' lo/ de la sogs ste grub rtags brgya' dang rtsa brgyad bstan/ mi dang mi ma yin ba thams cad btul/ yul kham thams cad dbang du bsdu//”; “Again on one occasion, when he was performing a *tshogs kyi 'khor lo* at dur khrod Ra ma dho ni (sic for Ra ma dho li), he told his

same cemetery. The difference between the two is that while gNyos chen po displayed seven semblances of himself at the seven great cemeteries of India, Chos sdings pa manifested himself in four different emanations at the same cemetery.

The performance of 'Gar dam pa earned him the fame that a second grub thob Bir wa pa had come to Bal po. More than anything else, the biography of him affirms that Chos sdings pa completed and consecrated the extraordinary umbrella in gold for 'Jig rten mgon po, depicting a cycle of sixty-two gods whose identity is not specified.¹⁶¹ Details are missing, too, in the biography of gNyos chen po but a cross-reading of the two biographies provides an indication of how events that led to the completion of the golden parasol unfolded. First, lHa nang pa placed the order of the umbrella with the artist who was a subject of 'ba ro O ta si ri and dPung. Then the umbrella was completed when Chos sdings pa was in the Kathmandu Valley. The text does not imply that gNyos lHa nang pa was physically present during its making. No reference is also made that gNyos chen po had brought the umbrella with him upon his arrival at 'Bri gung.

It was popular among fellow bKa' brgyud pa of the period to donate umbrellas to their great religious teachers or their monasteries. Two of them made for Tshal pa monasteries, roughly at the same time when the golden canopy was cast for sKyob pa rin po che,¹⁶² but

disciples and sponsors: "You should stay out now. I will distribute the *tshogs* to you when the time is proper". A [man from] Bal po looked inside through an interstice (*dpag na* sic for *phag na*). [He saw that] four [manifestations of] Dam pa were sitting in the four directions and moving their hands in and out of a stone *ka pa la*. He displayed 108 signs of his siddhic attainments, such as this. He subdued all men and *mi ma yin*. He brought all the countries under his power".

161. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.483 line 6-p.484 line 3): "Grub thob kyi grags pas/ rGya Bal gnyis (p.484) kar khyab ste/ rGya gar gyi grub thob chen po 'Bhi ra pa/ zhes bya ba de/ da lta na grub thob chen po Dam pa 'Gar zhes bya ba gyur/ deng sang Bal yul na/ Bhi ra ba'i rnam thar mdzad cing yod lo/ zer ba'i snyan pas phyogs kun tu khyab nas/ dur khrod tshogs kyi 'khor lo brgya rtsa brgyad phul nas/ bDe' dGyes gSnag gsum kyi dkyil 'khor gsum/ bla ma'i sku'i dkyil 'khor rGyal ba kun 'dus bzhengs/ dur khrod rang du rab gnas mdzad/ gder gdugs rin po che yang tshar nas/ rab gnas mdzad//"; "His fame as a *grub thob* spread in both rGya [gar and] Bal [po] (p.484): "The great Indian *grub thob*, namely 'Bhi ra pa (spelled so), has at present become the one known as the Tibetan grub thob chen po dam pa 'Gar. His fame spread in all directions, and [people] said "At present, he is in Bal yul following the example of Bhi ra ba (spelled so)". Having offered 108 *tshogs kyi 'khor lo* at [that] cemetery, he made the three *dkyil 'khor* of bDe' (spelled so), dGyes [and] gSang, altogether three, and a *mandala* with the image of the *bla ma* embodying all the Victorious Ones. He consecrated them at the cemetery itself. After he also completed the golden umbrella, he consecrated it".

Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar (p.484 line 6) adds: "Rin chen gser gyi gdugs mchog la/ drug bcu rtsa gnyis kyi bkod pa rdzogs//"; "The sixty-two depictions were completed on the excellent umbrella in precious gold".

162. *Gung thang gi dkar chag* (f.26a line 6-f.26b line 1): "Bla ma bZang zar rtsegs nams kyis Tsha gung thang gi gtsug lag khang dang/ sGom sde lHa phyug nams su gsung rab rin po che gser gdugs/ ganydzi ra/ gung mo che la sogs pa'i zang zing gi (f.26 b) 'bul ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa bskyal//"; "Bla ma bZang zar rtsegs and others (*rnams*) sent material offerings (f.26b) that the

gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa did not make one parasol each for 'Jig rten mgon po.

Hence the two 'Bri gung pa masters shared experiences in the course of their interaction, sent as they were to the same territories, but attributed to themselves in full activities partially undertaken by the other and performed strikingly similar miracles in similar situations. The ultimate point of convergence in the accounts of their enterprises after they parted ways in Pu hrang is that each one claimed for himself the merit of having made the canopy for 'Bri gung.

Other controversies forsaken, as the grudge nurtured by Chos ye for gNyos and 'Gar during the Tsa ri pilgrimage, the affair of the umbrella indicates that the mission assigned by 'Jig rten mgon po to gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa included contacts at a strategical juncture with the new potentate in Bal po when the powerful Malla dynasty had surged to supreme authority in Bal po. Once again, the events mentioned in the 'Bri gung pa literature show that the religious emissaries sent from 'Bri gung undertook diplomatic missions to the Kathmandu Valley in 1208 or soon thereafter, and were not simply engaged in pious activities in honour of their teacher.

The 'Bri gung pa's mandatory visits to Bal po are an indication that they tried to formalise lasting contacts with the Newar, but it was the Sa skya pa who eventually established steady ties with them sometime thereafter. As often stated in the past, including by me, the Sa skya pa's enhanced secular status favoured the establishment of steadfast relations with the Newar following Se chen rgyal po's takeover of the throne, 'gro mgon 'Phags pa's ascendancy at the Yuan court and the construction of gSer thog, gSer 'bum and lHa khang chen mo at Sa skya, all events consumed in the years 1260-1265 (Tse tan zhabs drung, *bsTan rtsis kun las btus* pa p.188).

Before leaving the issue of the golden umbrella made in Bal po for 'Jig rten mgon po, a symbol of devotion to the supreme head of the 'Bri gung pa but, most significantly, the diplomatic bonds with Arimalla, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* says that 'Gar Dam pa himself took the great parasol to 'Bri gung.

No date is given for the end of the 1208 mission that took first gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa together to Gangs Ti se and Pu hrang after meeting Sa pan in Gung thang and crossing Byang thang to reach Bal po individually as last destination.¹⁶³

mind cannot conceive, such as precious collections of books, a golden umbrella, a *ganydzira* and a *gung mo che* to Tshal Gung thang and sgom sde lHa phyug".

The year in which a golden umbrella was given to both Tshal Gung thang and lHa phyug mkhar is not given in the *dkar chag*. However, the fact that lHa phyug mkhar, founded in 1194, was the recipient of a set of gifts similar to those for Tshal Gung thang may indicate that donations of religious ornaments offered by the 'Bri gung pa to their *bla ma* and those of the Tshal pa occurred in the same years.

163. A sequence of events in the life of Shri phug pa of those years is a key to approximate the outburst of the disease at 'Bri gung and consequently the return of Chos sdings pa to 'Jig rten mgon po's monastery after that of gNyos lHa nang pa who preceded 'Gar Dam pa in Bal po and back to the *dgon pa*.

'Jig rten mgon po was overjoyed to see him again, explaining to him that he never actually nurtured any doubt concerning any alleged misbehaviour on his part during all the time 'Gar Dam pa was away.¹⁶⁴

Shri phug pa was around Khams in 1196 when he was met by Ti shri ras pa (*Ti shri ras pa'i rnam thar in lHo rong chos 'byung* p.214 lines 12-13), but there is no date of his arrival in the Tangut kingdom.

The extent of Shri phug pa's stay in Byang Mi nyag is not mentioned in the literature, too. Sources document Shri phug pa's protracted presence and active role in Byang Mi nyag that continued in the years after the Hor pa war broke out (see above p.19).

On the sixth day of the third month of earth horse 1210, Ti shri ras pa, Shri phug pa and rTsang po pa were able, by means of casting *gtor ma*-s, to flush out water from the citadel walls, causing many casualties in the Mongol ranks during their siege to the Tangut capital (ibid. p.215 lines 8-12). It is then a hypothesis that the outbreak of the disease at the monastery following Shri phug pa return to 'Bri gung from Byang Mi nyag occurred soon after 1210. This period must have marked Chos sdings pa's return to the monastery with the parasol made in Bal po.

Shri phug pa was in Byang Mi nyag when he met Chos sdings pa who had set out to Khams in wood dog 1214 and then went to the Tangut kingdom (*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.493 lines 5-6: "Shing pho kyi'i lo dpyid zla ba tha chung gi/ tshu bcu' drug gi nub mo tshu/ glo bur tu/ chos srje zhal nas/ bu skyid 'dod la Khams su song/ 'gro ba'i don la Khams u song//"; "Suddenly the *chos rje* ('Jig rten mgon po) said in the evening of the sixteenth of the last spring month of wood male dog 1214: "Son! Go to Khams! Whatever happiness or sorrow this may bring to you! Go to Khams for the benefit of sentient beings").

This shows that Shri phug pa's stay in Byang Mi nyag was not continuous during an unspecified number of years since he travelled back and from dBus. The epidemic which came to 'Bri gung broke out in the Tangut kingdom after the early campaigns of Jing gir rgyal po against it. The return of Shri phug pa to dBus may have depended on the dire situation faced by Byang Mi nyag owing to the Hor pa attacks and the spread of the disease. Shri phug pa then went back to Byang Mi nyag in the midst of the Hor pa military actions against the kingdom and by the time Chos sdings pa reached Byang Mi nyag, an epidemic of smallpox was affecting the Tangut people (ibid. p.502 line 6-p.503 line 1): "De nas Me nyag gyi rgyal khams su byon/ yul khams der 'drus pa'i yams chen po (p.503) byung ba dang thug pas dang/ nye gnas gZhon nu 'od bya ba gcig 'brum pa byung nas shi bas/ khong shi log byas//"; "Then [Chos sdings pa] went to the kingdom of Me nyag. He came across a heavy smallpox epidemic in the land. (p.503) Nye gnas gZhon nu 'od got infected by smallpox and died. [Chos sdings pa] took him back from death".

It is not clear whether this epidemic protracted from the earlier years or was another infection.

164. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.488 lines 4-5) reads: "De nas rims kyis 'bul ba bsdu zhing byon pas/ 'Bri gung gi thel rin po cher sleb//"; "Then having collected offerings stage after stage, he arrived at the precious 'Bri gung gi thel".

An epidemic broke out at that time, but 'Jig rten mgon po was too pleased to see Chos sdings pa again to worry about it. He indeed realised that, with the arrival of his disciple, the risk that the epidemic would spread in 'Bri gung had receded (ibid. p.489 line 4-p.490 line 2): "rTen 'bren g bzang/ grib kyang yol bar 'dug nas/ dge' 'dun la'ang mjal/ sku 'tshams yang bkrol gsung/ ngas khyod la tshogs su bka' bkyon mang po mdzad pa la/ khyod mi dga' ba ma byung ngam gsung/ Dam pas dman pa ngan sar lhung dgos pas/ zhal da mang po mdzad zer ba shin tu thugs la btags zhus pas/ chos rje'i zhal nas/ bka' bkyon theg pa'i slob ma yang/ snyigs ma'i dus 'dir dka' ba ste/ bla mang 'dra'i thun po la/ slob ma khyod dra 'byung ba'ang legs/ gsung nas nyid la spyang chab

The same passage says that an epidemic which had broken out during that period receded concomitantly with Chos sdings pa's arrival back in 'Bri gung. Events at that time may have unfolded in a different manner. 'Gar Dam pa is said to have had special powers to stop the spread of infectious diseases.¹⁶⁵ Chos sdings pa was able to eradicate the disease with the help of rDo rje 'Jigs byed on that occasion.

Before reporting 'Gar dam pa's own return to 'Bri gung, *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* spends several passages to recording his departure from the Kathmandu Valley and his feats

cig kyang byon gsung ngo/ de nas dus bzang po yar kyi tshes bcu la/ gser gdugs rin po che chos rje'i dbu la phul/ rten mchog rin po che rnam dang/ Dam pa'i chos rin (p490) po che dang/ gra pa mi rin po che rnam dang/ sman gyi dos rnam dang/ men dang/ ras dang/ ther ma dang/ bu ram dang/ 'bras rnam kyi dos rnam dang/ gser gdugs kyi lhag ma rta gser rnam dang/ khri thog stong bzhag/ stong thog brgya bzhag gi 'bul ba bgyis//"; "After *chos rje* said: "The omens (*rten 'dreng* sic for *rten 'brel*) are good; infections [from the epidemic] seems to have disappeared (*yol* sic for *yal*)", He added: "Meet the monks. I will break my meditation. I rebuked you bitterly in the assembly. Were you not upset?". ['Gar] Dam pa said he was extremely delighted that many instructions were imparted [to him in such a way]. The inferior ones can indeed falter into wrongdoings. The *chos rje* said: "A disciple who can bear scolding is very rare in this degenerate age. It is excellent that a nasty *bla ma* like me has a disciple like you". Having said so, ['Gar Dam pa] said that he himself shed tears. On the tenth of the wakening [moon], which is an auspicious occasion, the precious golden umbrella was placed above the head of the *chos rje*. ['Gar dam pa] offered the precious excellent receptacles; the precious books of the Noble Religion; (p.490) *gra pa mi rin po che* ("[his] monks and distinguished people?"); heaps of medicinal plants; *men* (?); bales of cotton, woollen cloth, molasses and rice; pure gold (*rta gser*) that was the residue of the [metal used for the golden umbrella; [money at the order] of 1,000 in addition to 10,000, and of 100 in addition to 1,000").

165. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.102 line 18-p.103 line 4): "De skabs shig dpal chen Shri phug pa'i 'bul ba'i rjes su/ nad bdag mo 'grangs te byung nas/ Gling rin po che'i dge 'dun rnam la rims byung pas/ grub thob 'Gar nyid dang/ rin po che gNam mtsho ba gnyis/ dge 'dun bsnung ba rnam kyi sngas srung du rje sKyob pas bka' gngang pa/ dge 'dun bsnung ba zhig gi thad du dmigs ba 'bog du byon pas/ de nyid gshegs nas phyir byon (p.103) pas Nad bdag mo dpral ba na mig zla ba tsam yod pa/ mgo bo nam mkhar sleb pa zhig gis khrag gi kha phrur 'debs pa gzigs nas rDo rje 'Jigs byed stong gsum dang mnyam pa'i skur bzhengs nas zhal du gsol bas phyi rteng ser lhag gi song bas phyi nang nas rims nad chad//"; "On one occasion, after offerings were given by dpal chen Shri phug pa, Nad bdag mo ("the queen of diseases") followed him. Monks of Gling rin po che caught an infectious disease. rJe sKyob pa ordered that both grub thob 'Gar himself and rin po che gNam mtsho ba should protect (*sngas srung*, lit. "protect the pillow") the ailing monks. [Chos sdings pa] went to focus his concentration in front of one ailing monk. After [the monk] died and ['Gar] came out [of his room], (p.103) he saw Nad bdag mo with eyes as big as moons on her forehead, her head reaching the sky and blood flowing out of her mouth, whereupon he manifested an emanation of rDo rje 'Jigs byed as big as the universe (*stong gsum*), who ate her. Thereafter there were hail and wind, and the infectious disease was removed from inside and outside [the monastery]".

The epidemic coincided with a donation of undescribed items, this time on the part of Shri phug pa who had been sent by sKyob pa rin po che to Byang Mi nyag to meet the local king. It seems that the epidemic was unintentionally brought by Shri phug pa from Mi nyag to Central Tibet.

in Chu bar, the hermitage bordering on La phyi, the other great holy place frequented by rje btsun Mid la. The large caravan he led back to Tibet from Bal po attracted some criticism from the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley,¹⁶⁶ a sign of the never too idyllic relations between the Newar and the Tibetans when they came to the Kathmandu Valley, documented in several sources during different periods.¹⁶⁷ Chos sdings pa, as often was the case with 'Bri

166. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.485 lines 3-5): "De nas skyel bsu' byed mkhan dang/ zla 'gro dang/ tshong pa dang bcas pas/ mi 'gros stong lhag cig gis/ rten rnams gdan drangs nas/ nor rna mos bzhod khur byas nas nas yar byon pas/ Bal po na re/ Bal po mi nor zas gsum/ rten yang mtshan can gyis thog drangs nas/ grub thob chen po des bsod nas/ song/ zer lo/ rTsang na tshur byon pas/ bar bzhud pa' rgyus yod yin pa dang/ grub thob kyi nyan pa byung bas/ chos dang/ rten dang/ gra pa mang po dang/ ras phrug men gsum la sogs pa bsod nams chen po byung gsung ngo//"; "Then, he went up together with over 1,000 people including those bidding farewell and welcoming him, escorts (*zla 'gro*) and traders. Since he took images along, with porters carrying the goods, the Bal po [people] said: "This *grub thob chen po* has left after collecting persons, wealth and food of Bal po, and, in particular, the most extraordinary receptacle holders". Since he was going to rTsang, those on the way (*bar bzhud*) who knew about [his itinerary] and had heard about the fame of *grub thob*, offered books, receptacle holders, monks, as well as cotton, wool, and *men* (?), altogether three. He said great merit derived to them".

167. One meaningful episode involved U rgyan Rin chen dpal. Upon returning from his second sojourn at rDo rje gdan at an unspecified time after iron horse 1270 and thus when the Mongol law had already been enforced in Tibet once again, U rgyan pa became the head of the Tibetans exiled in Bal po, who numbered in the thousands. He relieved them from the harassments of the local authorities in Bal po. They had taken shelter in the Kathmandu Valley, owing to a drought in Tibet, but they actually fled due to the heavy taxation imposed by Sa skya, as said by a *dge bshes* of this school who was in Kathmandu at the time.

bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.176 line 14-p.178 line 3): "bDe bar Bal po'i 'thil du phyags phebs so/ Bal po'i 'thil du Bod kyi bsodug bsngal gsal/ Zab mo'i sgang du gzhan gyi 'tshe ba zhi/ rgyal bu thams cad sgröl gyis bzhugs pa'i gnas/ ri bo chen po A yang ka nyid gzigs/ yang de'i dus su Bod du lo nyes byung nas/ dgun po de Bal po'i yul na/ Bod stong phrag mang po 'dug ste spyod pa ci dran byas pa la/ Bod rnams kyi rje grub chen rin po che dang/ Bho ta pandi ta dang/ Sa skya pa'i dge bshes shig (p.177) dang gsum la/ Bal po'i bha ro rnams la zhu ba mdzad rogs zhus pas/ Bho ta pandi pa na re/ U rgya pa smyon pa des nged kyi dogs mi 'ong zer skad/ rje grub chen rin po che pas/ khyed ma rnyo bas go bcad kyi/ Bod 'di rnams lam la 'gor ba/ tshad pa ma phog pa zhig gyis shig gsungs/ Sa skya pa'i dge bshes de na re/ Bod ngan pa 'di rnams Sa skya pa'i khral la brog nas 'dir 'ongs/ da Bod du slebs dus re re la an re bzhug gis zer/ khong gnyis kyi zhu rogs mi byed pa 'dug pas/ bla ma pas zhu pas/ khag phar skur tshur skur mdzad nas ma grub/ der grub chen ri po che pas/ Bod rnams khyed rang thams cad Bod thang du 'tshogs la/ rgyug pa 'dom ri ba re zung las/ nam zla phi mor gsoḍ pa yin gyis shig gsungs pas/ Bod rnams kyi de bzhin byas pas/ rje grub chen rin po che pa la Bal po rnams na re/ bla ma khyed Bod kyi dpon po mi mdzad pa zhu zer ba la/ ngas Bod kyi dpon byas pa med/ Bod khong rang tsho thams cad nam zla dmar mor song/ tshad pas 'chi ba las mi 'ong pas/ gnas pos skyil du byung yang mi rdeg re go zer gyi 'dug ces gsungs pas/ Bod rnams la lam rgyags/ 'bras pham bcu (p.178) bzhi bcu bskur zhing bskur zhing/ rje grub chen rin po che'i sku 'khor nyi brgya tsam la/ ji tsam theg pa'i 'bras bskur nas btang ngo//"; "[U rgyan pa] comfortably reached Bal po 'thil. At Bal po 'thil the sufferance of the Tibetans was relieved. Afflictions of other [Tibetans] came to an end at Zab mo'i sgang. He visited ri bo chen po A yang ka, a holy place frequented by all the [spiritual]

gung pa emissaries, took back with him large amounts of wealth, which caused jealousy.¹⁶⁸

princes who have been liberated. At that time, there was a crop failure in Tibet, hence, that winter, in the land of Bal po there were many thousands of Tibetans. Remembering all the kinds of misdeeds [they had to bear], the Tibetans requested the *rje grub chen rin po che*, Bho ta pandi ta and a Sa skya pa *dge bshes*, (p.177) altogether three, to intercede with the Bal po'i *bha ro*-s. It said that Bho ta pandi ta exclaimed: "This crazy U rgyan pa will not be useful to us". The *rje grub chen rin po che* retorted: "It is excellent (*go bcad*) that you are not crazy, so you should prevent them from catching fever along the way". It is said that the Sa skya pa *dge bshes* exclaimed: "These bad Tibetans came here to evade the taxation by the Sa skya pa. Now, when they will go back to Tibet, each of them will stand (*bzhug*) [responsible] for this crime". The Tibetans went to see the *rje btsun rin po che*, and pleaded with him: "Those two will not help us with [our] appeal to [the Bal po *bha ro*-s]. We beg [you], the *bla ma*, to help us plead with [the *bha ro*-s]". He pleaded with the *bha ro*-s, but [the problem] was not sorted out because the various [*bha ro*] denigrated one another (*phar skur tshur skur*). Hence the *grub chen rin po che* said: "All of you, Tibetans, must gather at Bod thang (i.e. Thundikel in Kathmandu), and carry a [walking] stick (*rgyug pa*) one 'dom long [for the journey to Tibet]. If you stay here the next season, you will catch a fever and die. Whoever will be holding up [*skyl ba*] here will be killed". The Tibetans did follow suit. The Bal po [authorities] requested the *rje grub chen rin po che*: "*Bla ma*, do not be the head of these Tibetans". He replied: "I am not the head of these Tibetans. All these Tibetans will leave during the hot season. [Otherwise,] catching fever, they will die, which is not commendable. The locals say that, if they hold them up, they will beat them". Provisions for the journey were given to the Tibetans amounting to fourteen *pham* of rice for each of them. (p.178) Rice was sent along with the 200 attendants of the *rje grub chen rin po che* as much as they could carry".

There are a few implications in this episode I wish to explore. Going by U rgyan pa's reply to Bho ta pandi ta, it would seem that the latter questioned the sanity of taking the Tibetans back to the plateau. U rgyan pa pointed out that it was even worse to oblige them to stay in the Kathmandu Valley, a pro-Sa skya stronghold, exposed to tropical diseases and the harassment of the local authorities. This was an obvious solution after U rgyan pa's attempt to have a parley with the local dignitaries failed on account of the impossibility of finding any local authority who would have been reliable enough to deal with the matter.

The other issue, raised by the Sa skya pa *dge bshes*, pertains to the sphere of the resistance put up by Tibetans who resented the authority of the Mongol/Sa skya alliance. Being an active and uncompromising opponent of foreign rule in Tibet and of the alliance (see my "Grub chen U rgyan pa and the Mongols of China"), U rgyan pa organised dissent against the Mongols' representatives and brought this dissent to the plateau in order to engage them.

As for the remarkable quantity of rice carried on the way by U rgyan pa's attendants, it seems it was meant to cope temporarily with the necessities of the people the expedition met on the way.

Bho ta pandi ta is a mysterious and intriguing character. The way he spoke to U rgyan pa gives the impression that he was a Tibetan settled permanently in the Kathmandu Valley, also because he was known by the name used by the non-Tibetan people of the Himalaya to identify the inhabitants of the plateau. The *rnam thar* provides evidence that the term Bhota was already in use at least during the early 14th century when this biography of U rgyan pa was written.

168. In order to travel to the Kathmandu Valley, gNyo s lHa nang pa disguised himself as a hermit—e.g. he let his beard grow for a long time—which indicates a preoccupation to appear as destitute as possible to the border authorities upon entering Bal po (see above n.139 for the concerned passage in *gNyo s lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*).

The most interesting notion in 'Gar Dam pa's biography concerning his visit to the locality of Bring in Chu bar, on his way back to 'Bri gung, is a reference to the existence of a reliquary containing the remains of rje btsun Mid la. The passage tells that Chos sdings pa decided to leave at Bring the *sku 'bum mchod rten* which contained those relics. He appointed a new *dkon gnyer* to take care of them, while he took along with him some objects that had belonged to the great poet-saint—a tooth and his walking stick.¹⁶⁹ It may be just fortuitous but the *dkon gnyer* of rje btsun Mid la's relics at Bring who left this duty, replaced by one of Chos sdings pa's disciples, and returned to his homeland, hailed from the Kha rag branch of the gNyos clan, to which IHa nang pa belonged. Was this new appointment the consequence of a change of equilibrium between the two travelling companions to Gangs Ti se after their relationship fell apart?

Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan in his late '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* reads the mission of Chos sdings pa to the lands on the "upper side" in devotional terms but the biography of Chos sdings pa shows that he was deeply involved in secular affairs.

169. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.486 line 4-p.487 line 1): "De nas mar byon pas/ Bring na rje btsun chen po'i sku 'bum kyi dkor gnyer gyi rmi lam du/ rje btsun chen po byon nas/ sang nyin nga'i bu Ras chung pa 'byon pa yin pas/ nga'i sku 'bum dang/ tshem dang/ phyag kar dang/ gtod la khyod rang rgyal khams 'drim/ gsung ba rmi/ phyir nang/ su 'byon bsam tsa/ Dam pa dpon slob nyung nge pa cig mdzad nas byon pa la/ kor gnyer na re Ras chung pa byon/ re rga re rga zer nas/ bro mo che bjungs/ rten rnam phul/ brgyags gang yod la dro byas/ sdod gsung tsa ma nyan nas/ Kha rag rgyal khams su song/ Dam pas rten gnyis po gdan drangs/ sku'bum gyi kor gnyer dud me 'dod cig zhag gsung/ de nas yar mar byon pas/ (p.487) Chu bar sGom phug du byon/"; "Then, on the way down, at Bring, in the dream of *dkor* (sic for *dkon*) *gnyer of rje btsun chen po's sku 'bum*, he dreamt (*rmyis* archaic for *rmi*) that *rje btsun chen po* [Mid la] appeared and said: "Since, tomorrow, my son Ras chung pa will come, after giving him my *sku 'bum*, tooth and walking stick, you should roam in the country". The following morning, upon wondering who would come, ['Gar] Dam pa arrived with a few disciples and the *kor* (sic for *dkon*) *gnyer* said: "Ras chung pa has come. How happy I am (*re rga re rga*)!". He performed a great dance. He offered him the receptacle holders. He fed them with whatever provisions were there. When ['Gar Dam pa] told him to stay on, he did not listen, and left for the country of Kha rag. ['Gar Dam pa] told [his retinue]: "Let's take along the two receptacles holders. One [of you] must stay behind at the place of the *kor gnyer* of the *sku 'bum*". Then he went down again. (p.487) He went to Chu bar sGom phug. He made a *tshogs* ['*khor*] and *gtor ma*".

After he performed songs at the Pu hrang court of sTag tsha Khri 'bar (see above n.119), the Chu bar episode confirms that Chos sdings pa was an accomplished singer of religious songs, like some *bstan pa phyi dar* masters of mNga' ris skor gsum. Leaving Chu bar, Chos sdings pa sang a few songs of great masters of the past. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.488 line 1) reads: "De nas Dam pa rGya gar gyi pad dbyangs 'di/ slob dpon 'phags pa Klu grub kyi pad dbyangs yin pas/ ngo mtshar che dgongs/"; "Then again, while walking, he sang the song from the lotus [feet] (*pad dbyangs*) of Dam pa rGya gar. Since this was the song from the lotus [feet] (*pad dbyangs*) of slob dpon 'Phags pa Klu sgrub, he thought it was extraordinary".

That he knew a song of Pha dam pa is interesting for a few reasons. It shows that Pha dam pa was a transmission holder of at least one song of Nagarjuna and that, through him, it became the property of the Tibetan tradition.

The 'Bri gung pa author focuses on 'Gar Dam pa's fulfilment of the task to make the extraordinary umbrella to be placed over the head of 'Jig rten mgon po and does not mention any other activity either at the court of Pu hrang, where he gave inspirational teachings to sTag tsha and healed him. Nor is recorded his defeat of Lug stim, the local deity of Srinagar. However, Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan does briefly mention 'Gar dam pa's subjugation of the local deity sBrang gdong ma, whom the text goes as far as to identify as the *gzhi bdag* of Bal yul. The 'Bri gung pa author's understanding of the episode is similar to the other sources. It took place in the territory of Bal Bod to the south of sKyid grong and north of the Kathmandu Valley proper but the controversial notion sNe zhang is omitted.¹⁷⁰

This interpretation is reductive because the episodes in mNga' ris that had Chos sdings pa for their protagonist are good examples of his attention to the secular repercussions of his activities. Mundane and spiritual matters went hand in hand in the attitude and practice in his case too, as the large amount of wealth that he brought to 'Bri gung demonstrates.

'Gar dam pa's return to 'Bri gung and his reconciliation with his teacher according to *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* end Chos sding pa's adventures in the west.

After his return to the head monastery of his school, life led Chos sdings pa in directions other than to the lands on the "upper side", and he never had occasion to frequent them again. He accomplished other great feats in other lands and under different local rulers.¹⁷¹

170. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.103 lines 10-13): "IHag par Bal yul tshun chad du byon nas/ gser gdugs ngo mtshar can sgrub nas dbu thog tu phul/ Bal yul gyi gzhi bdag sBrang gdong ma dang/ Bya zhu sogs gzhi bdag gdug pa can rnam dam la btags shing/ dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa bstsal//"; "In particular, [Chos sdings pa] went as far as Bal yul, and having succeeded in [making] an extraordinary golden parasol, he offered it as cover over ['Jig rten mgon po's] head. He bound to a vow mischievous *gzhi bdag*-s such as sBrang sdong ma, the *gzhi bdag* of Bal yul, and Bya zhu ("hat of bird feathers" or else Bya gzug: "bird tail"?). He gave them the *dge bsnyen* vow".

171. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.103 lines 5-10) mentions the progress he made in the practice of rDo rje 'Jigs byed a résumé of his most stunning feats: "gZhang yang rDo rje 'Jigs byed kyi bskyed rim brtan po mnga' bas/ Bla g.yel gyi gdung ma dang/ nyid kyi bang khang gi ya them bcas la yang rwa yi rjes yod par grags/ physis 'phrin las kyang nam mkha' dang mnyam par gyur nas/ chos rje rin po che'i drung du 'bul mo che lan mang du mdzad//"; "Moreover, he had stable development stages of rDo je 'Jigs byed, as is well known from the imprints of [the deity]'s horns on a beam of Bla yel and the threshold of its middle floor. Thereafter, his activities came to be equal to the sky. He made great offerings to the *chos rje rin po che* on many occasions.

The same text then passes to recollect his feats on the "upper side", in Khams and beyond, outside the limits of the plateau. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.103 line 14-p.104 line 3) says: "Phyis Khams su phebs pa'i skabs shig/ rje 'Jig rten gsum mgon nam mkhar byon nas mjal bas zhing gzhan du gshegs pa mkhyen nas gsol 'debs kyi gdung dbyangs mdzad cing/ myur stabs su 'Bri gung du byon/ 'bul ba chen po mdzad/ Mi nyag tu khirms gcod kyi mi bco brgyad rengs par mdzad pa dang/ Byang Brong smyon pa'i thog tu chibs kyi kha lo bsgyur bas byang 'brong smyo pa'i thog tu chibs kyi kha lo bsgyur bas byang 'brong re zhis bryal zhing/ bryal sangs tshe smyo ba las grol ba dang/ mDo Khams byang

I deal with them at some length elsewhere in a work of future publication.

phyogs kyi smad du phebs tshe Hor dmag byung ba nub gcig la yang kha ba chen po phab ste 'ga' zhid non cing/ byings rnamslar log pa dang/ 'Ol tsha 'Brong bu gnyis chings mdzad pa 'Ol tshas cung zhid bka' la ma nyan pas mi shis pa sna tshogs byung/ Nag 'du'i Khri tshos stod du phebs tshe sku la (p.104) bsdo bar brtsams pas ming gi lhag ma tsam du song ba nus mthu bsam gyis mi khyab cing rub pa'i rtags dang/ ngo mtshar ba'i rdzu 'phrul bstan pa yang shin tu mang bas yi ge 'brir ma lang/ Chos sdings su dgon btob/ nyin bzhugs pa'i tshes tshogs pa stong dang ntyis brgya tsam 'du ba byung/ de skabs bKa' gdams kyi ston pa zhid gis phrag dog byas pas mi 'gyang ba med par gyur/ Ser ba Brag thog pas mi gnyes pa cung zad byas pas khyod la rtags 'ong de dus 'Bri gung du song/ zhes su gsungs pa ltar/ sbyang ki ngu ba dang gdung ma chag pa dang/ khro chag pa dkar yol chag pa gsum du gcig tu byung/ mkhar tshal ba brgyad du song nas gcig ma gtogs 'gyel bas 'jigs nas rje 'Jig rten gsum mgo gyi drung du phyin nas slob mar gyur/ Mang ra rTa sha ba zer ba'i dmag mi gdug pa can sum brgya lhag tsam gyis/ bstan pa la 'che bar byung bas mDo li ba bcu drug la bka' gnang nas dag gis rgyugs pas/ lung pa thams cad btsun pas gang bar mtong nas/ dmag mi rnam 'jigs drags nas go mtshon rnam sku mdun su spungs shing yon bdag byed par khas blangs/ de nas sku 'khor lnga brgya tsam khrid/ byings rnam Chos lding nyid du bzhag nas/ nyid 'hor bcas Dwags por phebs/ de nas Kong po skyem du phebs te/ da lta'i 'Gar sa dgon du grags pa 'di btob/ de nas sPu bor byon nas Phu lung dgon 'debs par mdzad cing/ de nas mi ring bar sprul pa bsdu so//"; "Later, on the occasion of going to Khams, he saw rje 'Jigs rten gsum mgon soaring in the sky and realised that he had departed to another realm. He performed a song of sorrow in the form of a prayer, and hastily returned to 'Bri gung. He made a great offering. In Mi nyag, [Chos sdings pa] stiffened eighteen men who [had come to] apply the law, and rode on the mad 'brong of the north. Upon his controlling it, the 'brong of the north fainted for a while. When it recovered the senses, its madness had been removed. When he went to the lower side of northern mDo Khams (i.e. mDo stod aka Yar Khams), the Hor dmag ("guards on duty to enforce the law") came. One night he caused much snow to fall, and some of them were stuck, while the rest went back. He led both 'Ol tsha and 'Brong bu to reach an agreement, but since 'Ol tsha did not listen to his advice, they suffered several misfortunes. When he went to sTod, the Nag 'du'i (spelled so) Khri tsho plotted to harm him, the result was that not even a trace of their name was left. He manifested inconceivable powers and signs of his attainments, and extraordinary miracles. These were so many that I cannot even begin to write about them. He built the monastery at Chos sdings. When he was there, an assembly of over 1,200 monks gathered. At that time, when a bKa' gdams master was jealous of him, [his life] was not prolonged and he ended up to exist no longer. Since Ser ba Brag thog pa took a slight disliking [of 'Gar dam pa], and according to the words [of Chos sdings pa]: "When you receive some signs, you'd better go to 'Bri gung". Immediately the wolves [began] howling, the beams collapsed, the [kitchen] vessels broke, and the cups broke, altogether three, which happened all at the same time. The castle cracked into eight parts, and except for one, [all of them] tumbled down. [The man] was scared. He went to see rje 'Jig rten gsum mgon and became his disciple. When over 300 mischievous soldiers from Mang ra rTa sha ba came to harm the teachings, ['Gar dam pa] gave an order to sixteen mDo li ba and these went in pursuit of them. Seeing that the whole valley was filled with monks, the soldiers were scared. They piled their weapons in front of him (i.e. they handed over their weapons), and accepted ['Gar dam pa] as patron. Then, leading 500 in his retinue while leaving the rest at Chos lding (spelled so), he went to Dwags po with his followers. He then went to Kong po sKyem. He founded the [monastery] currently known as 'Gar sa dgon. He then went to sPu bo (i.e. sPo bo) and built Phu lung dgon. Not long after he died".

▪ The 'Bri gung pa in Gu ge

bKa' brgyud pa masters, native of Upper West Tibet, made their debut on the scene of the lands on the "upper side" not later than the first quarter of the 13th century, one generation after the Tshal pa from mNga' ris such as Mar lung pa and rTogs ldan mDzes pa. Most of them were 'Bri gung pa. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, the main disciple of Seng ge ye shes, was the earliest of these local masters.

To assess his life activities, Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od's autobiography entitled *Dus gsum Sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar* should be combined with the anonymous *rnam thar* of him (see Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*, which begins on p.489 line 2).

Don mo ri pa was born in 1203 at Khyung lung in a family of Pu hrang belonging to the 'Bro clan,¹⁷² perhaps the most prestigious one of non-Zhang zhung pa origin in Upper West Tibet. More than any other in antiquity, the 'Bro contributed to the establishment of the kingdom of mNga' ris skor gsum achieved by sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon. The 'Bro sided with the lineage of his royal successors. Don mo ri pa thus belonged to the nobility of the land, although not ancestrally residing in it.

Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od's *rab tu byung* vow received from the *mkhan po* of Khyung lung and his disciple in wood pig 1215, more than his birth at this locality, has an importance beyond the episode per se (see *Dus gsum Sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar* in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.489 line 4 and n.174).

The name of the Khyung lung *mkhan po* is not recorded in the passage. Elsewhere in the text (ibid. p.491 lines 2-3), where it is said that Don mo ri pa was administered the *dge tshul* vow, the master who participated in the ordination is defined as the *yongs kyi mkhan po*.

172. *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.495 lines 4-6): "De la 'gro mgon chen po de ni dang po sku tshe snga ma yang/ gTsang gi Bye ma kar rur mkhan po Byang chub sems dpa' zhig sku skye ba bzhes la lags skad/ der Byang chub sems dpa' rnam ni/ 'dul bya gang rgya che ba la dgongs pa yi pa'i phyir/ sTod mNga' ris kyi rgyal kham Gangs Ti se dang/ mtsho Ma pham dang khad nye ba'i grong khyer Khyung lung zhes bya bar sku skye ba bzhes so/ de yang rgyal ba'i gdan sa yon tan thams cad 'byung ba'i gnas (p.496) der/ chu mo phag gi lo la sku 'khrungs so//"; "With regard to this, it is said that [rDo rje mdzes 'od], this great protector of the sentient beings, in his previous life, incarnated into mkhan po Byang chub sems dpa' at Bye ma ka ru of gTsang. Therefore, these [successive] Byang chub sems dpa', in order to take care about whatever had to be extensively accomplished in favour of the beings to be trained, took birth [as rDo rje mdzes 'od] in grong khyer Khyung lung near Gangs Ti se and mtsho' (spelled so) Ma pham in the kingdom of sTod mNga' ris. Furthermore, at this holy place where are all kinds of qualities, the *gdan sa* of the victorious Ones he was born water female pig 1203".

Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.496 lines 1-2): "De yang 'jig rten pa dang mthun pa'i phyir yab 'Gro ban dhe Nam mha' rdo rje zhes bya ba yin/ Pu rangs kyi yul Log zhes bya ba yin no//"; "With regard to this, in terms of phenomenal life, [rDo rje mdzes 'od's] father was 'Gro (spelled as) ban dhe Nam mkha' rdo rje. His clan was 'Gro (spelled as). The land of Pu rangs [where his 'Gro family originated] is known as Log".

The spelling 'Gro for 'Bro is a secondary one, *ga* quite often substituting *ba* also in the case of the spelling Gru for the Bru clan of Bon po origin.

He was sTag sgo ba according to a further line of the same work (ibid. p.489 line 6). Don mo ri pa was made a *dge tshul* and a *rab tu byung ba* in the same year and received the monastic name rDo rje mdzes 'od.

rDo rje mdzes 'od's ordination at his native place in a Buddhist milieu indicates that, since the foundation of the mNga' ris skr gsum dynasty, the Bon po were no more active in Khyung lung, a most important locality for their tradition. They did not regain control of this most important locality to their tradition during the period which experienced a revival of Bon po fortunes since masters of *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* were active in these territories.¹⁷³

More significantly, the biography of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od provides evidence that a bKa' brgyud pa institution existed at Khyung lung at least when he took the *rab tu byung* vow in the presence of the monks of this holy place.¹⁷⁴ Khyung lung was a major bKa' brgyud pa *gnas* besides those in Pu hrang. It is neglected in the enumerations of 'Bri gung pa holy places met with in other works of the 'Bri gung pa literature.

The antecedent that led to the presence of the 'Bri gung pa were present at Khyung lung, in an area contiguous to the holy mountain and the lakes was the consequence of the expedition

173. There is an expanded version to the well known account of the Chos sku marble statue installed by the 'Bri gung pa at Nyan po ri rdzong, one of their monasteries on the Gangs Ti se processional path (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.491). According to it, five statues were legendarily brought to mNga' ris stod by a Gar zha *grub thob* during the reign of rTse lde, as is popularly believed by West Tibetans (Chos dbyings rdo rje, *Gangs Ti se lo rgyus* p.50 line 8-p.51 line 5). Chos dbyings rdo rje identifies the five statues as follows (ibid. p. 50 lines 15-16): “Gar zhwa 'Phags pa/ bTang 'Phags pa/ Kra dum rNam lha dkar po/ Khyung lung 'Od dpag med/ Ti se Chos sku 'Od dpag med bcas lnga byung bar grags//”, “Five [statues] are known to have existed: Gar zhwa 'Phags pa, bTang 'Phags pa, Kra dum rNam lha dkar po, Khyung lung 'Od dpag med, Ti se Chos sku 'Od dpag med”.

I wonder whether, for reasons of historical parallelism with the case of the Nyan po ri rdzong 'Od dpag med, the 'Bri gung pa takeover of Khyung lung was marked by the placing of the other 'Od dpag med statue at this locality.

174. Don mo ri pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.489 lines 3-4), which is his autobiography, repeats his own birth date: “'Jig rten gsum mgon chos kyi rgyal/ bla ma rin chen thugs rje yis/ thog med dus nas bdag bskyangs pas/ 'dir yang dal 'byor phun sum tshogs/ rgyal bas bsngags pa'i gnas chen du/ chu mo phag gi lo la skyes/ lo ni bcu gsum lon pa dang/ dbyig pa'i zla ba tshes gsum la/ Khyung lung mkhan slob rnam gnyis la/ rab tu byung nas 'Dul ba mnyan/ lo ni bcu bzhi lon pa'i tshe/ lHing lo Mang rum gnyis su bsdad/ dam pa'i chos la slob gnyer byas//”; “Due to the precious benevolence of 'Jig rten gsum mgon, the *bla ma* victorious [lord of] the teachings, he protected [me] since the beginningless of time, At this time, [having obtained] an excellent human birth, too, [I Don mo ri pa] was born in water female pig (1203) in the great holy place praised by the Victorious Ones. As for the year, when [I] reached the age of thirteen (1215), on the third day of *dbyig pa'i zla ba*, since [I Don mo ri pa] took the *rab byung* vow from both the Khyung lung *mkhan* [*po* and] *slob* [*dpon* in the ordination], [I Don mo ri pa] learned '*Dul ba*”.

By reading this part of his *rnam thar* one comes to realise that after his early education took place in Khyung lung he was brought to Pu hrang to further his studies.

of earth dragon 1208, headed by gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa.

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* describes this expedition as not as formative in terms of a definitive occupation of the territory by the *school's ri pa-s* as the next one. Their institution at Khyung lung is a sign that already in 1208 or soon thereafter the 'Bri gung pa had put stable roots at the southeastern extremity of Gu ge lHo stod in the vicinities of Gangs Ti se, earlier than the establishment of the first *rdor 'dzin* in Pu hrang in 1215. Their *gnas* at Khyung lung was in Gu ge lHo stod not in Pu hrang but near the centre of the 'Bri gung pa activities in Pu hrang stod.

▪ The context of the bKa' brgyud pa presence in Gu ge

From the secular perspective, Gu ge lHo stod, south of the Glang chen kha babs, was involved in the support of the 'Bri gung pa like Pu hrang and Mar yul. Its king, Kra shis lde btsan, was one more ruler who gave patronage to the *ri pa-s* from 'Bri gung (see n.175). '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* states that bKra shis lde btsan was one of the royal patrons of Ghu ya sgang pa, the first 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* in charge of the retreatants at Gangs Ti se. He reached the sacred mountain in wood pig 1215.¹⁷⁵ The other *yon bdag-s* of Ghu ya sgang pa were the Pu hrang pa *jo bo-s* sTag tsha Khri 'bar, gNam lde mgon—the rNam lde mgon of *mNga' ris ryal rabs*, aka A tig sman—and dNgos grub mgon of Mar yul (see above p.90-91).

The inception of bKra shis sde btsan's rule must have antedated wood pig 1215.¹⁷⁶ He was

175. '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.27b line 6-f.28a line 2): "Chos rje (f.28a) Ghu ya sgang pa zhes grags pa byung/ rdor 'dzin chen po 'di dang/ Gu ge chos rgyal khri bKra shis lde btsan/ Mang yul rgyal po lha chen dNgos grub mgon/ Pu rang rgyal po bla chen sTag tsha Khri 'bar dang/ gNam mgon lde yab sras rnamdang mchod yon du 'brel zhing mNga' ris skor gsum du 'phrin las shin tu rgyas/'", "The one who became known as chos rje Ghu ya sgang pa, this great ['Bri gung] *rdor 'dzin*, and Gu ge chos rgyal khri bKra shis lde btsan, Mang yul rgyal po lha chen dNgos grub mgon, Pu rang rgyal po-s bla chen sTag tsha Khri 'bar and gNam mgon lde, the father and sons, became associated by *mchod yon*. [Religious] activities were extraordinarily expanded in mNga' ris skor gsum".

176. '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.27a line 5-f.27a line 2): "De lta bu'i sgo nas rje nyid dgung lo don gsum bzhes pa'i tshe gzhi khrid thob pa'i gсар bu phal che ba ri la gtong ba gnang ste/ de yang bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa pan chen Ghu ya sgang pa zhes sam mtshan dngos chos rje Phun tshogs rgya mtsho zhes grags pa gTsang Bo dong du sku 'khrungs zhing bla ma mkhas grub du ma la bsten nas mDo sNgags rig pa'i gnas kun la mkhyen pa (f.27b) brgyas pa'i sten chos rje rin po che nyid kyi bka' drin las rtogs pa'i yon tan phul du phyin pa brnyes pa de nyid kyiis gtsos zhan yang grub thob Ri pa Nag po dang/ Ri pa sNgon po sogs mgon chen lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyis shu rtsa lnga Ti se..." and *ibid.* (f.27b lines 4-5): "... rDzong bar mdzad do", "In this way, when the lord ('Jig rten mgon po) was seventy-three (1215), he sent most of those who had recently received basic teachings to the hermitages. Concerning this, bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa pan chen Ghu ya sgang pa, otherwise his true name being chos rje Phun tshogs rgya mtsho, was born at gTsang Bo dong. Having received teachings from many learned *bla ma-s*, he mastered all knowledge of *mDo sNgags*. Moreover, due to the favour of *chos rje rin po che* ('Jig rten mgon po), he obtained an outstanding quality of wisdom. 55,525 meditators, headed by him and also by grub thob Ri pa Nag po and Ri pa sNgon po, ... were sent to Ti se".

already the king of lHo stod when Khyung lung had become an active 'Bri gung pa centre in the days of the bestowal of the *rab tu byung* vow to rDo rje mdzes 'od.

The inception of the bKa' brgyud pa presence in Gu ge fell at the end of a long period of decadence in the kingdom following the end of the mNga' ris skor gsum dynasty. The other factor that affected the well being of the kingdom was the second devastating Qarakhanid invasion in the second quarter of the 12th century after the cumulative reigns of the bKra shis rtse, Jo bo rGyal po and 'Od 'bar rtse, sons of the illegitimate king of Gu ge bSod nams rtse.¹⁷⁷

Despite a semblance of restoration owing to the reinstatement of the local line of Gu ge with the enthronement of rTse 'bar btsan, the son of bKra shis rtse who died in battle against the Qarakhanid invaders, and the interim rule of Jo bo rGyal po over united Gu ge, Rong chung and Khu nu, matters did not improve much.

Wood pig 1215 was, therefore, the year in which Ghu ya sgang pa established himself at Ti se with his community of meditators and was sponsored by Gu ge bKra shis lde btsan and the other rulers of sTod.

177. The governance of Gu ge was weakened as a consequence of the coup at court that led to the assassination of rTse lde. The successive death of pho brang Zhi ba 'od in iron hare 1111 that marked the end of *bstan pa phyi dar stod lugs* was the other major cause of weak Gu ge. The smooth handling of the kingdom was marred first by change following the reign of the second of its two kings, dBang lde and bSod nams rtse, who had no right to rule, and then by disruption coming from outside the kingdom.

After bSod nams rtse's illegitimate tenure of the throne, the unity of the kingdom was lost due to the split of his reign among his three sons rather than to internal subversion. Gu ge's strength was eroded by illegitimacy, the end of the great dynasty and territorial subdivisions. Gu ge lHo Byang passed into the hands of bKra shis rtse; Rong chung, on the northern bank of the Glang chen kha 'babs, east of Shib pe la, north of Pi ti and south of Rub zhu, thus neighbouring the ancient territory of Cog la, went into those of 'Od 'bar rtse; and Khu nu was the land of Jo bo rGyal po.

It may have been more than a coincidence that the Gar log (the Qarakhanid of Kashgar) waged another war against mNga' ris skor gsum after the one in the previous century, profiting of the kingdom's fragmentation and loss of focus. bKra shis rtse was killed in battle against them at gNyi gong phu, the northernmost tip of his kingdom towards Turkestan. 'Od 'bar rtse was made captive and deported to Sog po'i yul, hence the throne of Rong chung remained without a ruler. The only survivor, Jo bo rGyal po, kept holding Khu nu and took over control of Gu ge on provisional basis.

He ruled over the entire land (Khu nu, Gu ge lHo Byang and Rong chung). Hence the region was reunited after the Gar log invasion. The royal line of Rong chung became extinguished since *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* says that 'Od 'bar btsan's son was "idle", since he did not have an offspring. The statement shows that 'Od 'bar btsan had a child before captivity in Sog po'i yul. Had he returned to Upper West Tibet, he would have sat on the throne of his land.

Hence two royal lines were left, the one of bKra shis rtse in Gu ge lHo Byang, which went to the heir rTse 'bar btsan, the youngest of his five sons (A ka ra tsa, Tsan dra bho di, spelled so for bo dhi, A mi sogs tsa, Phyogs tsa and rTse 'bar btsan). The other line was that of Jo bo rGyal po and scions in Khu nu, who continued to rule in their land according to their rights of succession. Jo bo rGyal po's son was gCung lde who fathered Zhong lde. In turn, his son was Jo bla ma. Hence *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* records four generations in the genealogy of Khu nu, presumably up to the inception of members of the 'Bri gung pa and Tshal pa schools' frequentation of Upper West Tibet.

Gu ge split into two halves, lHo stod and Byang ngos, respectively supported by rTse 'bar btsan's Pi ti rgyal mo lHa rgyan and the Che chen queen, Blo ldan rgyal mo, owing to their dispute and the animosity of the two regions' monks.¹⁷⁸ Pi ti was linked to the Gu ge Byang ngos kingdom and its faction. Che chen bza' Blo ldan rgyal mo supported Gu ge lHo stod. Gu ge, which had been one land since Nyi ma mgon assigned it to his middle son bKra shis mgon, again suffered a division after the rule of the illegitimate ruler bSod nams rtse's three sons. *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* does not mention anything whether Rong chung was incorporated into one of the two divisions of Gu ge or was kept separate.

The Pi ti queen rGyal mo lHa rgyan bore sPyi lde btsan and rTse ldan ngal. dPal 'od btsan and 'Dul srid 'dul btsan were born to Che chen bza' Blo ldan rgyal mo. sPyi lde btsan, a sensitive and responsible king who was also known as Mol mi mkhyen ("unable to speak"), ruled Byang ngos.¹⁷⁹ dPal 'od btsan ruled Gu ge lHo stod. The lands of Upper West Tibet were thus fragmented into several kingdoms, those of Gu ge lHo stod and Byang ngos, Pu hrang—perhaps Rong chung—Khu nu and Mar yul.

mNga' ris rgyal rabs records the rulers of Byang ngos but not the lineage of dPal 'od btsan's successors in lHo stod. The dynastic gap in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* that mars the genealogy of lHo stod continues for some fifty years. The kings of Gu ge lHo stod after Pal 'od btsan are supplemented by 'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus since they were supporters of 'Jig rten mgon po's school during the earlier three quarters of the 13th century like the Pu hrang *jo bo*-s.

bKra shis lde btsan was the first of several kings of the lHo stod dynasty recorded in the literature. His policy was not to restrict his engagement to matters of his land but concerned Pu hrang, too, proved by his support to Ghu ya sgang pa and the help he provided when civilian aid was a pressing need of the time.¹⁸⁰ Given that Ghu ya sgang pa was the 'Bri gung

178. The sentence is closed by the syllable *lde*. It reads Blo ldan rgyal mo lde, which makes little sense in the case of a queen. lDe has thus to be corrected to the terminative particle *ste*.

179. His name stands for "overall king, sovereign", while the Gu ge kingdom was fragmented during his rule.

180. In another episode relating the construction of a dam at Kha char to prevent inundations of the rMa bya kha 'babs, *Kho char dkar chag* confirms that the Gu ge king bKra shis lde was a contemporary of rNam lde mgon. After a lengthy description of the making of the two side statues at Kha char by rNam lde mgon, the *dkar chag* (f.11b-12a = p.49 lines 4-10) says: "Dus de tsam na Gu ge chos rgyal gyi gdung rgyud khri bKra shis ldes/ Pu rang 'Khor chags su phebs/ gtsug lag (f.12a) khang la chu yi 'jigs pa skyobs pa'i thabs bka' khyab btsal/ bye ris brgyud byang byas/ skye bo 'jigs te/ chu la dbyug pa rgyab pas chu kha gyur/ chu la rags rgyab pa'i lugs srol bzang po btsugs pa'i bka' drin che//", "At about that time (i.e. of rNam lde mgon), khri bKra shis lde, who belonged to the lineage of the Gu ge *chos rgyal*-s, went to Pu rang 'Khor chags (Kha char). He issued orders to arrange an effective method to protect the *gtsug lag khang* from the fear of the river. The range of the sandy dunes had been washed away. The population was frightened. Having blocked the flood of the river, he diverted the course of the waters. Due to his instructions, an efficient system of controlling the river [by means of] an embankment was introduced".

rdor 'dzin at Gangs Ti se for twenty-five years starting from wood pig 1215, bKra shis lde was the lHo stod king during at least some of the period the former spent at the mountain.¹⁸¹

A prayer of 'Jig rten mgon po, and thus an authoritative document, mentions another king, mnga' bdag rgyal po Kun grags lde, who is associated in its lines to the line of rTse lde. The passage is open to a double interpretation, based on the way the conjunction *dang* which separates the *dbon sras* ("offspring") of rTse lde from Kun grags lde is read. If *dang* is meant to separate Kun grags lde from the *dbon sras* of rTse lde then it would mean that he was not part of the line that descended from the great mNga' ris skor gsum king. If *dang* is used to reinforce the statement of the sentence, Kun grags lde must have been a king of Gu ge and therefore of lHo stod since it is not mentioned in the complete lineage of Byang ngos. Another, more decisive, aspect to be considered is that *dbon sras* is not accompanied by a plural and therefore could only refer to Kun grags lde. Since only one *dbon sras* of rTse lde is mentioned in the prayer, Kun grags lde was the king on the throne of Gu ge lHo stod before bKra shis lde btsan.

Hence Kun grags lde's successor bKra shis lde btsan was the king of Gu ge lHo stod during whose reign the 'Bri gung pa founded an institution at Khyung lung. The sponsorship awarded to the 'Bri gung pa by lHo stod before the 1215 expedition proves that the kingdom gave a contribution either preceding or contemporary to the Pu hrang pa involvement in the patronage of 'Jig rten mgon po's disciples. The year in which Ghu ya sgang pa arrived at Gangs Ti se and the period he spent in the area is the chronological cornerstone to approximate the dates of bKra shis lde btsan's reign. His reign comprehended the grant of Khyung lung to the 'Bri gung pa, followed by his patronage of Ghu ya sgang pa. Wood pig 1215 also is the *terminus ante quem* for the establishment of the bKa' brgyud pa monastery at Khyung lung.¹⁸²

181. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a line 2): "rDo rje 'dzin pa 'dis Ti ser lo nyi shu rtsa lnga ri pa bskyangs nas bstan pa'i rtsa ba chugs par mdzad do//", "This *rdor rje 'dzin pa* protected the *ri pa*-s at Ti se for twenty-five years. He thus established the foundations of the teachings". In a prayer written by 'Jig rten mgon po reference is made to "Rigs gsum mgon po'i gdung rgyud rje/ mNga' ris stod du sku 'khrungs pa'i/ rgyal po rTse lde'i dbon sras dang/ mnga' bdag rgyal po Kun grags lde//", "The descendants of rgyal po rTse lde, [who] was born in mNga' ris stod [and belonged] to the lineage of the Rigs gsum mgon po [kings], and mnga' bdag rgyal po Kun grags lde" (*Nyin byed mun bral snang gsal* p.380 line 5).

These people of royal blood were contemporaries with 'Jig rten mgon po (d. 1217), being thus active in the decades between the last quarter of the 12th and the early 13th century. Given the period in which he presumably ruled and the absence of records concerning the dynasty of the kings of lHo stod after the reign of dPal mgon btsan until that of bKra shis lde, one should wonder whether Kun grags lde could have been bKra shis lde btsan's predecessor on the lHo stod throne. However, the use in the sentence of the conjunction *dang* separating Kun grags lde from the successors of rTse lde is enough evidence to dismiss the possibility that Kun grags lde was a descendant of rTse lde and therefore a ruler of Gu ge lHo stod. He must have reigned elsewhere.

182. *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.496 lines 2-3): "rGung lobcu gsum pa la yongs kyi mkhan po/ dpal mDzes 'od la dge tshul mdzad//"; "When he was thirteen years old (1215), [rDo rje mdzes 'od] the *yongs kyi mkhan po* gave him the novice (*dge tshul*) status under [the name] dpal mDzes 'od".

The entrance of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od into the 'Bri gung pa ranks shows that Khyung lung was a hermitage with a local monastic community, given that there were masters who could act as the *mkhan po* and *slob dpon* in his ordination. It was not too different from bKa' brgyud pa institutions often addressed as *rdzong*,¹⁸³ where small groups of practitioners gathered. Khyung lung was a 'Bri gung dgon pa or a retreat centre founded earlier than rGyang grags, established by Ghu ya sgang pa after his arrival in 1215.

That Don mo ri pa took his vow in 1215 might have been circumstantial rather than coincidental given that this was the year in which the presence of the 'Bri gung pa at Gangs Ti se was officially sanctioned by all local rulers—the *jo bo*-s of Pu hrang, the kings of Gu ge lHo stod and Mar yul—who granted patronage to them. The fact that Don mo ri pa took his

It is not clear until who was the *yongs kyi mkhan po*—was he already *mkhan po* lDem?—and whether he was the general abbot in Gu ge or in Pu hrang too.

Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, in turn, was appointed general abbot of Gu ge Pu hrang in 1245 following the death of *mkhan po* lDem (see below n.264) and the uneasiness of Seng ge ye shes owing to serious earthquake that affected the area (see below n.263). Seng ge ye shes finally joined his disciple.

183. Don mo ri pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (i.e. his autobiography) (p.492 line 3-p.493 line 3): "Bla ma Byang chub rdzong ba la/ pha zhing pha mkhar longs spyod bcas/ bran sogs yongs dag bcas nas phul/ bcom ldan bDe mchog 'Khor lo la/ Lu hi pa yi lugs dang ni slob dpon Dril bu pa yi lugs/ rGa lo'i lugs dang gsum po yi/ rgyud dang sgrub thabs dbang bka' dang/ gdams ngag bcas pa ma lus dang/ Ma hā mā ya'i rgyud dang ni/ sgrub thabs dbang bka' gdams ngag bcas/ mKha' 'gro snyan rgyud byin rlabs bcas/ Chung gsum gyi gdams ngag dang/ Thugs (p.493) rje ri po che mKha' 'gro'i skor/ Mi tra'i chos skor thams cad dang/ Byang chub ltung bshags bshad pa dang/ Lam 'bras Zha ma'i lugs dang ni/ Zhi byed bDen bzhi'i gdams ngag bcas/ mNgon pa rtogs pa'i rgyud dang ni/ Phyang rgya chen po stod lugs kyi/gdams skor khri dang bcas pa dang/ Kha rag skor gsum zhes pa dang/ So so'i reg pa gcer mthong dang/ Slabs btus rtsa ba'i bshad pa dang/ Indra bodhi'i chos skor/"; "Having acted as *yongs dag* (spelled so), [I] offered [my] father's field, castle and wealth including the servants to bla ma Byang chub rdzong ba. In return, [I] learned, concerning bcom ldan 'das bDe mchog 'Khor lo, the *rGyud*, *sgrub thabs*, *dbang bka'* and *gdams ngag* according to the system of Lu hi pa, the system of slob dpon Dril bu pa and the system of rGa lo, altogether three; as for *Ma ha ma ya'i rgyud*, the *grug thabs* and *dbang bka'*, *mKha' 'gro snyan brgyud sbyin brlabs*, *Chung gsum gi gdams ngag*, *Thugs* (p.493) *rje chen po mkha' 'gro'i skor*, the entire *Mi tra'i chos skor*, and *Byang chub ltung bshags bshad* ("exposition"); as for *Lam 'bras* according to the system of Zha ma, the *Zhi byed bden bzhi'i gdams ngag*; as for *mNgon par rtogs pa'i rgyud*, *Phyang rgya chen po* according to the sTod system, its *gdams skor* ("cycle of teachings") [and] *khrid*, *Kha rag skor gsum*, *So so'i reg pa gcer mthong*, *Slabs btus rtsa ba'i bshad pa*, and *Indra bodhi'i chos skor*".

The location of the castle that Don mo ri pa donated to one of his teachers is nowhere given in his autobiography, and thus one cannot ascertain whether it was in Log of Pu hrang or Khyung lung. In the latter case, the existence of a castle of his 'Gro/'Bro family at this locality, the ancient cradle of the Zhang zhung pa, would emphasise the takeover of the Zhang zhung capital on the part of the ancient associates of sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon from Bod. If this castle was built at any time after Nyi ma mgon's conquest of mNga' ris skor gsum, it would still show that, given the traditional sympathies of the 'Bro for Buddhism, the Bon po did not recover Khyung lung even before the bKa' brgyud pa installed themselves there.

monastic vow in that year may amount to an effort by both the Gu ge pa and the Pu hrang pa to give some of their best youth to be monks in the 'Bri gung pa institutions mushrooming in the localities and hermitages of mNga' ris stod. The growth of institutions took the connotation of a revival similar of Ye shes 'od's summons of youths from his lands to populate the temples and monasteries founded by him.

Given their itineraries recorded in the sources as a step on their way west, Chos sdings pa as early as in 1208, when the locality was perhaps sanctioned as a major *gnas* in the control of the 'Bri gung pa must have transited Khyung lung. In 1216 rGod tshang pa, too, passed by Khyung lung, travelling from Gangs Ti se to Preta puri, Mang nang and Tho ling before reaching Pi ti and then Gar sha (see Tucci, *Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley* p.15-19 and p.87 line 1-p.88 line 16).

After the reign of bKra shis lde btsan, the kings of Gu ge lHo stod, bKra shis dbang phyug and his son dPal mgon lde, sponsored Nyi ma gung pa, the second 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* at Ti se, who succeeded Ghu ya sgang pa in 1239.¹⁸⁴

A chronological approximation, given further absence of information about them exists besides their sponsorship of the 'Bri gung pa at dKar sdum and near Gyang grags, is that bKra shis dbang phyug ruled at least from the late 1230s. His son dPal mgon lde succeeded him sometime in the early third quarter of the 13th century before Grags pa lde (1230-1277), the next ruler of Gu ge lHo stod, ascended its throne.

Signs do not exist that the situation of lHo stod changed during the regnal years of its next kings. bKra shis lde btsan, bKra shis dbang phyug and his son dPal mgon lde reigned in Gu ge lHo stod but did not control Tho ling for a brief span of time (see below p.267-268). Byang ngos, too, had its separate line of rulers.

The king of Gu ge lHo stod bKra shis dbang phyug and his son dPal mgon lde awarded g.Yu phug, Bar pad phug and mDa' chos phug in upper dKar sdum of Pu hrang, along with Za lang stod smad, a religious estate of rGyang grags, to the second 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* Nyi ma gung pa (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.675).

The allotment to the *rdor 'dzin* of localities in areas under the Pu hrang *jo bo-s* testify to a loose condition of land control among the local kingdoms with, in this case, a situation of extraterritoriality in favour of Gu ge. These grants must have been accepted by the Pu hrang *jo bo-s* in view of their grant to the 'Bri gung pa whom they sponsored.

184. 'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus (f.31b lines 2-4): "De'i rjes su rdo rje 'dzin pa Nyi ma gung pa byon zhing/ rje 'di la Gu ge rgyal po khri bKra shis dBang phyug dang/ dPal mgon lde yab sras kyis chos zhus zhing/ Pu rang dKar sdum gyi phu g.Yu phug/ Bar pad phug/ mDa' chos phug beas dang Za lang stod smad rnam rGyang grags kyi chos gzhis phul bar grags/", "After him, rdo rje 'dzin pa Nyi ma gung.pa came. The kings of Gu ge khri bKra shis dBang phyug and dPal mgon lde, the father and son, received teachings from this *rje*. It is well known that they awarded [him] g.Yu phug, Bar pad phug and mDa' chos phug in upper dKar sdum of Pu rang, and Za lang stod smad which was a religious estate of rGyang grags".

Further developments in the bKa' brgyud pa ranks

▪ Byang chub gling pa, another 'Bri gung pa at Gangs Ti se

'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus, a source that makes a systematic attempt at a treatment of the pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se, concentrates on the main events and the most important 'Bri gung pa and other bKa' brgyud pa masters but also neglects other 'Bri gung pa who also had part in them. The *lo rgyus* simplifies, too, events promoted by the main masters. The picture that is projected is authoritative but not exhaustive, an approach that has made the *rnam thar*-s of gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar dam pa needed to assess the events of the three 'Bri gung pa expeditions in better detail.

Other bKa' brgyud pa sources, especially *lHo rong chos 'byung* which has brief biographies of lesser known masters of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools, contribute to gain a wider perspective of the frequentation of Upper West Tibet during the period.

A good case recorded in this text is the biography of Byang chub gling pa,¹⁸⁵ who, around the time when gNyos and 'Gar proceeded to the lands on the "upper side", went to Gangs Ti se and Bal po. His life and endeavours echo those of Chos sdings pa. They were both native of Khams but from different localities (respectively 'Bri klung and the area of future sDe dge). They went to Gangs Ti se, then to Bal po where Byang chub gling pa received extraordinary gifts from the local king, and went both back to Khams.

Byang chub gling pa's biography is too short to treat his activities at Gangs Tise and in Bal po in their full scope but is long enough to make one realise that he must have left a considerable mark in the lands on the "upper side" at large, close, as for their importance, to those by gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar Dam pa. Byang chub gling pa had mystical visions at Gangs Ti se, a sign of spiritual accomplishment common to great masters during their stay at the sacred mountain.¹⁸⁶

185. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (*Byang chub gling pa'i rnam thar* p.422 line 7-10): "Byang chub gling pa ni/ yul Khams kyi 'Bri rgyud gSang dbang/ grong mtha' che gnas khang mKhar skya ru yab sGa A gro tsha ston pa A sang zhes pa rTa mgrin la yi dam gcig dang/ yum Nyag gro za Ge ma thar mo bya ba'i lhungs su zhugs//"; "Byang chub gling pa was from gSang dbang in 'Bri rgyud (the land of the 'Bri chu). He was born in a big household at the border village mKhar skya. His father was sGa A gro ston pa A sang, whose tutelary deity was rTa mgrin. His mother was Nyag Gro za dGe ma thar mo.

Ibid. (p.423 lines 2-7 "De nas dgung lo bcu gsum pa la sBa sgom so so'i slob ma gNam mtsho Se mo do'i grub thob bKra shis ri chen pa dBus su byon dang grogs nas byon//"; "Then, aged thirteen, when he accompanied gNam mtsho se mo do's grub thob bKra shis rin chen, who was a disciple of each of sBa sgom himself, who went to dBus, during the journey, all groups of travellers posed the question to [Byang chub gling pa] whether all parties of travellers on the way were happy. He said: "They are". Then Se mo do [bKra shis rin chen] wondered: "What do you mean?". "It is true". He said. "It means that they are not common people".

186. *lHo rong chos 'byung* (*Byang chub gling pa'i rnam thar* p.423 lines 15-19): "Ti ser byon nas sgrub pa mdzad pa'i tshel/ rnam rgyal bum pa la rten nas gSang ba 'dus pa'i lha tshogs zhal gzigs/ las kyi bum pa la rten nas bDe mchog gi lha tshogs zhal gzigs/ Sangs rgyas stong rtsa gnyis gtso bo Shakya thub pas mdzad nas re res kyang 'khor mi 'dra ba re bstan pa gzigs so//"; "After reaching Ti se, during his meditation, [Byang chub gling pa] had the vision of the assembly of

Like gNyos and 'Gar, Byang chub gling pa visited the Kathmandu Valley after going to Gangs Ti se, but he did not go there with anyone of the two, for his journey to Bal po took place years after theirs.¹⁸⁷

His biography says that Byang chub gling pa went to Gangs Ti se after he was instrumental in eradicating an epidemic that affected 'Bri gung.¹⁸⁸ This is the epidemic mentioned in

gods of gSang ba 'dus pa using the support of a *rnam rgyal bum pa*. He had the vision of the assembly of the gods of bDe mchog using the support of the *las kyi bum pa*. He had the vision of each of the two thousand Sangs rgyas, headed by Shakya thub pa, giving teachings to each one of their different retinue”.

I excerpt here a few passages concerning the life of Byang chub gling pa from his short biography. *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.422 lines 7-10): “Byang chub gling pa ni/ yul Khams kyi 'Bri rgyud gSang dbang/ grong mtha' che gnas khang mKhar skya ru yab sGa A gro tsha ston pa A sang zhes pa rTa mgrin la yi dam mdzad pa gcig dang/ yum Nyag Gro za dGe ma thar mo//”; “Byang chub gling pa was from gSang dbang in 'Bri rgyud (i.e. 'Bri klung). He was born in a big household at the border village mKhar skya. His father was sGa A gro ston pa A sang, whose tutelary deity was rTa mgrin. His mother was Nyag Gro za dGe ma thar mo”.

Ibid. (p.423 lines 2-4): “De nas dGung lo bcu gsum pa la sBa sgom so so'i slob ma gNam mtsho Se mo do'i grub thob bKra shis rin chen pa dBus su byon//”; “Then, aged thirteen, he accompanied grub thob bKra shis rin chen of gNam mtsho se mo do, a disciple of each sBa sgom, who went to dBus”.

Ibid. (p.424 lines 1-12): “De nas Byang gi Phru gtsug du dgon pa mdzad nas bshugs pa'i tshe/ mDo smad pa rnam kyi 'bul skyes sogs kyi bsnyen bkur dpag tu med pa byung nas 'Bri gung thel gyi gdan sa la gnod kyi dogs nas Khams su 'byon par bzhed pa'i tshe/ Khams kyi gzhi bdag dBu che brag dkar gyis gdan drangs nas Khams su 'byon pa'i tshe ri dwags rnam kyis kyang rang rang gnas pa'i sar rim bzhin du skyel ma byas nas 'Dor du mDo na Mang rar dmar shig bya ba'i sar bden tshig brjod cing byon pa'i tshe rdo che chung thams cad mchod rten du gyur/ da lta yang ming rDo mchod nang zer/ de nas gtso bor Pa song gi dgon pa btob cing/ gzhan yang Rab sgang/ Li thang/ A ldan/ mGa' thag/ mGo rod/ 'Ba' thang/ rGod lung/ Ra 'bos pa/ Rog mo ba/ 'Phel nye ba rnam su byon nas dgon pa mang du btob cing/ sgrub rgyud kyi bstan pa dar bar mdzad do//”; “He then built a *dgon pa* at Byang 'Phru gtsug. While staying there, uncountable [instances of] respect came to him such as the mDo smad pa made him offerings. Thinking that it might have been harmful to the *gdan sa* of 'Bri gung thel, when he planned to leave for Khams, he was invited by the Khams sponsor dBu che brag dkar. Upon going to Khams, he was taken in stages to the areas inhabited by every species of local wild animals. When he went to a place called Mang rar dmar shig at mDo in 'Dor reciting the *bden tshig* [prayer], all the stones, big and small, turned into *mchod rten*-s. Even today, this place's name is known as rDo chod (sic) nang (“stones with a chod (sic) [rten] inside”). Then, he founded his main *dgon pa* of Pa song. Moreover, since he went to Rab sgang, Li thang, A ldan, mGa' thag, mGo rod, 'Ba' thang, rGod lung, Ra 'bos pa, Rog mo ba, and 'Phel nye ba, he founded many monasteries. He diffused the teachings pertaining to the meditation transmission”.

187. *IHo rong chos 'byung* (*Byang chub gling pa'i rnam thar* p.423 lines 15-19): “Der Bal po'i rgyal pos spyen drangs nas Sangs rgyas kyi tshems dang/ Byang chub shing/ ras kyi na 'bza' 'jig rten pa'i dngos pa mang du phul//”; “Since the king of Bal po invited him there, he offered [Byang chub gling pa] a tooth of Sangs rgyas, [a leave from] the Bodhi tree, a cotton robe (rje btsun Mid la's?), and many worldly items”.

188. In the lines immediately preceding his departure to Gangs Ti se, *IHo rong chos 'byung* (*Byang chub gling pa'i rnam thar* p.423 lines 8-15) says: “'Bri gung thel du slebs shing/ chos rje

Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar that subsided at the time of 'Gar dam pa's return to 'Bri gung not before 1210, described in the biography of him as the outcome of the powerful intervention of his *yi dam* (see above n.164). This is one more case of two 'Bri gung pa masters who are credited with the same achievement.

Byang chub gling pa received important relics from the Malla king as gifts, while neither of the other two 'Bri gung pa masters is credited with similar donations when they visited the Kathmandu Valley.

The name of the Malla king who gave important relics and lavish gifts to Byang chub gling pa is not recorded in his *rnam thar*, and his identity remains problematic. There is no clue to establish in which year Byang chub gling pa went to the lands on the "upper side", the *terminus post quem* being after 1210 when the epidemic affected 'Bri gung upon Chos sdings pa's return. The most likely Malla king to have given important relics to Byang chub gling pa—a tooth of Sangs rgyas and a leave from the Bodhi tree—was Arimalla, the same monarch who met gNyos and 'Gar, since he ruled until 1216.

The biography of Byang chub gling pa contributes significantly to expand the understanding of the situation of that period. It documents that other departures to Gangs Ti se took place in those years apart from the three main ones—those of 1191, 1208 and finally that of 1215 which I summarise below (p.291-292).

The 'Bri gung pa sources relentlessly record the almost uncontrollable growth of the 'Brigung pa monastic community.

As early as one year after the departure of gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa to the lands on the "upper side" in 1208, the congregation had again assumed majestic proportions.¹⁸⁹ Hence other members of the community, such as Byang chub gling pa, left to Gangs Ti se in the next few years, and others to different hermitage places, following the new growth in the number of monks at the head monastery.

'Jig rten mgon po dang mjal dpon slob thugs yid gcig tu 'dres/ chos khrid dang gdams ngag rdzogs par gngang zhing/ thugs nyams su bzhes pas yun ring po ma lon par grub pa rnyes shing/ bla ma bDe mchog du yod par 'dug/ Thel du nad yams chen po byung ba la 'Jig rten mgon pos sbyin sreg gyis gsungs nas sbyin sreg mdzad nas nad yams chad pa byung//"; "[Byang chub gling pa] went to 'Bri gung thel. After he met chos rje 'Jig rten mgon po, the master and disciple became so close that they had one and the same mind. He received complete teachings, *khrid* ("explanations") and *gdams ngag*. As he engaged in spiritual practice, not long after he obtained spiritual attainments. There are many accounts of his vision of the *bla ma* as bDe mchog and the *bla ma*'s vision of him as Phyang rdor. At Thel, a great epidemic disease having broken out, 'Jig rten mgon po asked him to perform *sbyin sreg* ("homa", "fumigation rituals"). Since he performed *sbyin sreg*, the epidemic disease was eradicated".

189. 'Bri gung *La phyi lo rgyus* (f.16b line 6-f.17a line 2): "Phyi lo de bas kyang tshogs grangs je 'phel du song ste (f.17a) ji skad du/ rNam thar Phyang rgya me thog ma las/ khri krag bcu gsum tshogs su tshogs/ zhes gsung pa ltar phyi lo tshogs pa khri tsho bcu gsum 'dus//"; "It has been said (*ji skad du*) that, the next year (1209), the number of [monks in] the congregation grew bigger than that. (f.17a) According to *rNam thar Phyang rgya me thog ma*, ['Jig rten mgon po] said that a congregation of 13,000 [monks] had assembled. On the grounds of such a statemen, the next year (1209), a congregation of 13,000 [monks] had gathered".

Byang chub gling pa is not mentioned among the 'Bri gung pa who went to Gangs Ti se in 1215. The statements in his biography that he was involved in rescuing the 'Bri gung community from the epidemic and thereafter he departed to the holy mountain indicate that he went to the lands on the “upper side” before the death of sKyob pa rin po che in fire ox 1217.

▪ The sTag lung pa on the “upper side”

'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po 'i rnam thar (p.390 line 5-p.391 line 1) enumerates the regions and localities where sKyob pa rin po che sent his disciples in 1208—U rgyan, for Dza lan dha ra, Gan dha la (i.e. Dril bu ri), Gangs Ti se, rDo rje gdan, Bal yul, A su ra brag phug, La phyi, Chu bar and Tsa ri. There are meeting points and divergences with the localities where members of the sTag lung school were sent, according to *lHo rong chos 'byung* and *sTag lung chos 'byun*, by sTag lung thang pa bKra shis dpal (1142-1210) far from their head monastery in the north of lHa sa.

The groups of sTag lung thang pa's disciples, known as the *nye ba 'i sras* (the “[spiritual] sons close to him”) and *rang dang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad* (the “eight who had perceptions similar to him”), were mostly sent to remote areas, in some cases, beyond the limits of the Tibetan speaking world.¹⁹⁰

190. I cite here the passages of *lHo rong chos 'byung* dedicated to the disciples who sTag lung thang pa dispersed to distant localities, and include the variant spellings of *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.243 line 2-p.244 line 12). The two sources are similar at least in their dealing with the *rang dang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad* (“the eight who had perceptions similar to him (i.e. sTag lung thang pa)”) and the *nye ba 'i sras bco brgyad* (“the [spiritual] sons close to him”). *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.470 line 3-p.471 line 20) reads: “De lta bu chos rje rin po che de la slob ma bsam gyi mi khyab pa byung ba 'i nang nas rtogs pa mchog tu gyur pa nyis stong brgya byon cing/ de 'i nang nas rang rang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad/ gdams ngag rdzogs par thob pa gsum/ thugs kyi sras bzhi/ zhu sna mi dogs pa gsum/ nye ba 'i sras bco brgyad yod ces pa 'i rang dang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad ni/ gzims phyil na rin po che mGon po dang/ gdan sa na sku tshe 'i gang la rtogs pa 'i mchog dang ldan pa sum stong drug brgya byung bar grags/ rGya nag na Kho yo mkhan rgan/ grwa pa bdun brgya re tsam/ rGya nag dang Bod kyi bar rTogs ldan sBas ngo/ grwa pa lnga brgya re tsam/ 'Jang na A rgod zhig po/ grwa pa 'bum tsho bkrang/ Yul shod brgyad po na rDza dgon dbon po/ grwa pa stong tsho gsum/ rGo shod ga skya na rGo rig ras pa [note: Jo ru ras pa yang zer] grwa pa stong gnyis brgya tsam/ sPo 'bor ga skya na 'Dzam Dza ser/ grwa pa sum brgya tsam/ Mi nyag lGa na lGa rang lGa pa/ grwa pa lnga brgya tsam/ sMad Mi nyag lGa na Sum bu gSer tshang ba slob ma grangs kyi mi tho pa tsam yod ces/ thugs kyi sras bzhi ni bla ma Mu tho ba [note: Mu tho ba/ dGa' ston/ Lung kha ba gsum nas yang 'bral med gsungs] zhes bya ba rdzu 'phrul la dbang thob pa zhig sTag lung rang du bzhugs nas grwa pa mang du bskyangs/ dam pa dGa' ston lo lnga bcu rtsa bdun gdan gcig tu bzhugs nas grub pa mdzad/ 'Brom Glo btsun lo drug cu la gdan gcig tu thugs (p.471) dam la bzhugs/ Jo bo Da 'bum lo bcu bzhi la 'dag sbyar byas/ zhu sna mi dgos pa gsum ni/ Shangs kyi bla ma O sha pa grwa pa nyis brgya tsam/ 'On gyi bla ma rTsi lung pa slob ma bco lnga tsam bskyangs/ sgom pa Do pa zhes bya ba Byang gi Do la bzhugs nas snod ldan gang byung la gdams ngag ston cing grwa pa la ma nges mdzad/ rdzu 'phrul gyis phyag skyel ba sku mdun du nyin ma chag par 'ong ba yin zer/ ne ba 'i sras bco brgyad ni Kha che na Ma yo sgom nag/ rDo rje gdan gyi bla mchod mdzad/ rGya gar du thog na/ Kong po sgom nag/ grwa pa brgya re tsam/ sTag lung na gur kum phor gyis bkyes/ Sing ga la na bla ma lHu ge/ grwa pa sum brgya tsam

re/ Dza len dha ra na sgom pa Ma nam pa/ grwa pa bdun cu tsam/ U rgyan na Grags pa rgyal mtshan sbas pa'i rnal 'byor du bzhugs/ rGya gar A su ra'i brag phug la bla ma Gar pa/ Bal po na Ru so grub thob/ sKyid grong na 'Dan ma lHa chen/ Ri'u sgang na grub thob Ri'u sgang pa/ Brag dkar rta so na rTogs ldan rNa ral ba [note: gTsang La stod Grom pa] grwa pa brgyad cu tsam/ La stod Thang chung na rin po che dBus pa/ grwa pa bdun brgya tsam/ gTsang rong na rtogs ldan Zhwa nag pa/ sTod lung na mchod gnas dKar po/ sNye mo na Phyar ston zhig po/ Yar lung na Mar sgom bSod nams dpal/ 'Dam na sBa ba rGya khri/ Chu bo ri la Sangs rgyas sgom/ grwa pa bdun brgya tsam/ spyan snga na Shes rab rgyal mtshan/ 'di rnams slob ma mi bsten pa ni sbas pa'i rnal 'byor du bzhugs zhes thos/"; "Likewise, this *chos rje rin po che* had disciples in inconceivable [numbers]. Included in them there were 2,100 who became excellently gifted with perceptions. Among them, there were the *rang dang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad* ("the eight who had equal perceptions as himself"), the three who received complete *gdams ngag*, the four *thugs kyi sras*, the *zhu sna mi dgos pa gsum* ("the three who did not need to ask [permission]"), and the *nye ba 'i sras bco brgyad* ("the eighteen close sons"). The "eight who had perceptions similar to him" were: Rin po che mGon po at gZims spyil ("hut"). It is well known that 3,600 [disciples] had excellent realisations when he stayed at the *gdan sa*;

In China, Kho yo mkhan rgan [with] some 700 monks;

Between China and Tibet, rTogs ldan sbas ngo [with] some 500;

In 'Jang, A rgod zhig po [with] the number of 100,000 monks;

In Yul shod brgyad po, rDza dgon dbon po [with] 3,000 monks;

In rGo shod, rGo rig ras pa [note: also known as Jo ru ras pa] [with] some 1,200 monks;

In sBo 'bor ga skya, 'Dzam Dza ser [with] some 300 monks;

In Mi nyag lGa, lGa rang lGa pa [with] some 500 monks;

I have heard that, in sMad Mi nyag lGa, there was Sum bu gSer tshang ba [with] an unspecified number of disciples.

Concerning the *thugs kyi sras bzhi*, bla ma Mu tho ba [note: [sTag lung thang pa] said that Mu tho ba, dGa' ston, Lung kha ba, altogether three, never separated], who had miraculous powers, protected many monks by residing at sTag lung itself. Dam pa dGa' ston spent fifty-seven years on the same couch meditating. 'Brom Glo btsun spent sixty years on the same couch meditating. (p.471) jo bo Da 'bum had walled-in meditation for fourteen years.

The *zhu sna mi dgos pa gsum* ("the three who did not need to ask [permission]") were Shangs kyi bla ma O sha pa [with] some 200 monks; 'On gyi bla ma rTsi lung pa [with] some fifteen monks; sgom pa Do pa stayed at Byang gi Do and gave *gdams ngag* to those who had the capacity to receive them, which he did to an unspecified number of monks. It is said, that, due to his miracles, there were people who brought gifts to him for one day without interruption.

The *nye ba 'i sras bco brgyad* were:

In Kha che, Ma yo sgom nag. He was the *bla mchod* of rDo rje gdan;

in Ru thog (rGya gar sic for Ru thog), Kong po sgom nag [with] some 100 monks. At sTag lung, he offered bowls with saffron (*gur kum* spelled so for *gur gum*);

in Sing ga la, bla ma lHu ge (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: lHug) [with] some 300 monks;

at Dza len dha ra, sgom pa Ma nam pa (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: Ma ni pa) [with] some seventy monks;

in U rgyan, Grags pa rgyal mtshan stayed [there] as a secret *yogin* (*sbas pa'i rnal 'byor*);

at rGya gar A su ra'i brag phug, bla ma Gar pa (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: Mang dkar ba or Ga zhar);

in Bal po, Ru so grub thob (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: Ru po grub thob);

at sKyid grong, 'Dan ma lHa chen (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: lDan ma lHa chen);

at Ri'u sgang, grub thob Ri'u sgang pa;

The dispersion of his followers to distant places performed by sTag lung thang pa himself must have occurred before iron horse 1210 when he died and, most likely, around the time of the 1208 wave of 'Bri gung ri pa-s sent to Gangs Ti se. The sTag lung pa, too, participated in the same activities which characterised the endeavours of other bKa' brgyud pa during the same period.

The *rang dang rtogs pa mnyam pa brgyad* (the “eight who had perceptions similar to him”) were active in:

- 1) China;
- 2) the land between China and Tibet;
- 3) 'Jang;
- 4) Yul shod brgyad po;
- 5) rGo shod;
- 6) sBo 'bor Ga skya;
- 7) Me nyag lGa; and
- 8) sMad Me nyag lGa.

The *zhu sna mi dgos pa gsum* (the “three who did not need to ask”) were in:

- 1) Shangs;
- 2) 'On; and
- 3) Byang gi [Se mo?] Do.

The *nye ba'i sras bco brgyad* (the“ [spiritual] sons close to him”) were in:

- 1) Kha che;
- 2) rGya gar;
- 3) Sing ga la [of Bal po rdzong];
- 4) Dza lan dha ra;
- 5) U rgyan;

at Brag dkar (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: Brag dkar rta so), rTogs ldan rNa ral ba [note: he hailed from gTsang La stod Grom pa] [with] some eighty monks;

at La stod Thang chung, rin po che dBus pa [with] some 700 monks;

in gTsang rong, rtogs ldan Zhwa nag pa;

in sTod lung, mchod gnas dKar po;

in sNye mo, Phyar ston zhig po (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: Cher ston zhig po);

in Yar lung, Mar sgom bSod nams dpal;

in 'Dam, sBa ba rGya khri (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: 'Ba' pa rgyal khri);

at Chu bo ri, Sangs rgyas sgom [with] some 700 monks;

Shes rab rgyal mtshan stayed with the *spyang snga* (*sTag lung chos 'byung*: dBu ma pa chen po Shes rab rgyal mtshan).

I have heard the saying that those who did not teach disciples were secret *yogin* (*sbas pa'i rnal 'byor*)”.

- 6) rGya gar A su ra'i brag phug;
- 7) Bal po;
- 8) sKyid grong;
- 9) Ri'u sngang;
- 10) Brag dkar,
- 11) La stod Thang chung (also frequented by members of the Karma pa);
- 12) gTsang Rong;
- 13) sTod lung;
- 14) sNye mo;
- 15) Yar lung;
- 16) 'Dam;
- 17) Chu bo ri, and
- 18) sTag lung, in order to stay with sTag lung thang pa.

The typology of these sTag lung pa frequentations—whether there was a rotation of disciples at these localities or their presence was permanent—is not indicated in the various enumerations, concerned as they are with statistics alone. A good number of these sTag lung pa groups embodied the policy which was the trademark of other bKa' brgyud pa schools. The “eight who had perceptions similar to him” were sent to several lands beyond the limits of the Tibetan world, in particular those across its eastern frontier. However, one cannot say whether the sTag lung pa communities they headed also had the secular role of establishing ties with the local authorities in China, in the land between China and Tibet, 'Jang and Byang Mi nyag.

▪ Exclusivity and cohabitation: how the various bKa' brgyud schools' settled on the “upper side” None of the disciples of sTag lung thang pa and their acolytes settled in the pilgrimage places of Gangs ri, La phyi and Tsa ri, where the presence of the Tshal pa, 'Bri gung pa and 'Brug pa is documented in the literature. Were the sTag lung pa not given space for any settlement at these holy places? Ri bo Gan dha la (i.e. Dril bu ri in Gar zha) too seems to have been off limits to the sTag lung pa at that time, whereas there is no evidence to ascertain whether this was also the case during the period of sTag lung thang pa's successors.

Instead, Kha che, U rgyan, Dza lan dhara, rGya gar A su ra'i brag phug, rDo rje gdan and Bal po were the lands frequented by both the 'Bri gung pa and sTag lung pa.

While the attitude of the 'Bri gung pa at Gangs Ti se and the lakes was rather uncompromising to the point of objecting to the presence of fellow bKa' brgyud pa exponents, they were unable to establish the same exclusive control in the foreign lands of China, the territory between China and Tibet, 'Jang and Mi nyag.

The 'Bri gung pa, whose presence on the “upper side” was major, are not included among the visitors to U rgyan, a holy place frequented by the 'Brug pa and the sTag lung pa. In general, journeys to U rgyan by members of the bKa' brgyud pa schools were scarce during the years before and after the turn of the 12th century.

lHo rong chos 'byung and *sTag lung chos 'byung* say that the member of the sTag lung pa who went to U rgyan was Grags pa rgyal mtshan. He acted as secret *yogin* (*sbas pa'i*

rnal 'byor). Grags pa rgyal mtshan must have been a lone proponent from the sTag lung pa ranks because the two sources add that the *sbas pa'i rnal 'byor-s* were those active in these lands without a following of disciples, as the nature of their practise requests.¹⁹¹

In terms of the localities shared by the 'Bri gung pa and the sTag lung pa, the list of the disciples sent by sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po to the west ignores Kha che and, thus, the journey of Chos sding pa to Shri na ga dPal gyi ri. Moreover, despite Chos sdings pa's achievements in Bal Bod, the list of the localities frequented by the 'Bri gung pa in 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas' *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* does include this area.

On their part, the sTag lung pa shared sKyid grong and nearby Sing ga la of Bal po rdzong with the Tshal pa whose rTa sga ba members from mNga' ris had founded monasteries and had left an important mark on the territory in Mang yul to the south and east of its main centre in the area.

Despite gTsang pa rGya ras not personally proceeding to Gangs Ti se, the 'Brug pa did not neglect to frequent the sacred mountain. A passage of this *bla ma's* biography found in *Deb ther sngon po*, says that gTsang pa rGya ras, too, dispersed his disciples to distant holy places. The list provided—U rgyan, Dza lan dha ra, Kha che, Bya rgod phung po'i ri bo (the Vulture Peak), Ri bo rtse lnga of China, Tsa ri, Sha 'ug sTag sgo and Gangs Ti se—is quite similar to that of the places to which 'Jig rten mgon po sent his disciples in 1208.¹⁹²

191. The short biography of Ri khrod ras pa dBang phyug rgyal mtshan in *IHo rong chos 'byung*, an ascetic who frequented La phyi, Tsa ri and Gangs ri, and therefore he is mentioned here, is meaningful, for it gives a lively example of the personality of a “secret yogin”.

This *chos 'byung* (p.453 lines 4-10) reads: “Ri khrod ras pa dBang phyug rgyal mtshan ni/ Sa skya rNam 'grel kyi dge bshes/ Bla 'khor gyi gdan sa lo gsum byas/ bla ma Pho ri ba/ U rgyan pa/ mKhas btsun pa/ La stod dBang rgyal sogs grub thob mang po la gtugs nas snang sems la dbang thob/ Ti se/ La phyi/ Tsa ri/ rGya gar gyi yul mtha' dag sogs gnas chen kho na 'grim/ sbrang po'i dman cha 'dzin cing/ che thabs gyi mi gral mi bsnayags pas chag snang ngang gis 'gag/ sbas pa'i tshul bzung bas zhal tshor ba yang dka'//”; “Ri khrod ras pa dBang phyug rgyal mtshan was a *dge bshes* of Sa skya rNam 'grel. He was the *gdan sa* of Bla 'khor for three years. Since he studied (*gtugs*) with many *grub thob-s* such as bla ma Pho ri ba, U rgyan pa, mKhas btsun pa, and La stod dBang rgyal, he was able to control his illusory thoughts. He only visited great holy places such as all those at Ti se, La phyi, rTsa ri and in the land of rGya gar. Since he wore the poor attire of a beggar which prevented him to frequent high class people, he got freed from a state of attachment and hatred. It was also difficult to recognise his true nature (*zhal*), given that he was in disguise”.

Ibid. (p.453 lines 19-20): “sKu tshe brgya phrag lhag bzhugs nas Tsa rir cig char du gshegs zhes thos//”; “After living for over 100 years of age, I heard that he died at rTsa ri in an instant”.

192. *Deb ther sngon po* (p.785 lines 1-6) reads: “Phyag rgya chen po'i rtogs pa shar ba stong phrag lnga tsam/ U rgyan Dza landhara Kha che dang Bya rgod phung po'i ri bo dang/ rGya'i Ri bo rtse lnga dang Tsa ri dang Sha 'ug sTag sgo dang Ti se la sogs pa'i gnas dag tu tshe dang sgrub snyoms pa gyis gsung pa'i bka' gnang nas/ 'khor 'gyed pa mdzad/ bya rgod kyi nyin lam bco brgyad du 'Brug pa'i bu slob kyis ma khyab pa med bya ba byung//”, “[gTsang pa rGya ras] issued an order to some 5,000 [meditators of his school] in whom the experience of *Phyag rgya chen po* had risen, saying: “[You] must spend [your] life in meditation at U rgyan, Dza landhara, Kha che, Bya rgod phung po'i ri bo (the Vulture Peak), Ri bo rtse lnga of China, Tsa ri, Sha 'ug sTag sgo,

Nonetheless, no dates are provided for the departures of the 'Brug pa monks to distant destinations, so that the dispersion of gTsang pa rGya ras's monastic community is chronologically uncertain. A meagre *terminus ante quem* is that it occurred before his death in iron sheep 1211.

The 'Brug pa did not frequent Gangs Ti se at the same time as the first 'Bri gung pa and Tshal pa, but the literary evidence of their settling at the holy mountain indicates that they reached it before 1211, thus confirming the statement of *Deb ther sngon po*. It was only in the spring/summer of wood dog 1214 that rGod tshang pa proceeded to Gangs Ti se, and remained there until the autumn of fire rat 1216.¹⁹³

and Ti se". He dispersed his followers. The saying was formulated that "there is no place at a distance of a vulture's eighteen days journey not covered by 'Brug pa disciples".

193. Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdorje, *rGod tshang pa rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.70 line 10) say: "gNas de ru lo ngo gsum bzhugs//", "He stayed three years in this holy place (Ti se)". Since rGod tshang pa arrived at Ti se in wood dog 1214 (*Deb ther sngon po* p.803 lines 2-5), he stayed at Ti se until fire rat 1216. He was at mchod rten Khong seng in the summer (of 1214) after his arrival in Pu hrang (*rGod tshang pa rnam thar rgyas pa* p.60 lines 16-18). He spent the winter (of 1214-1215) at Ma pham (ibid. p.64 lines 2-3: "Nged slob dpon Yon btsun gnyis kyis Ma pham gyi Gad skyibs shig tu dgun rgyags bsdad//", "Both I myself (rGod tshang pa) and slob dpon Yon btsun spent the winter at Gad skyibs (i.e. Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs) of Ma pham"). The *rnam thar* next records the episode of a 'Bri gung pa sending him away from gSer gyi bya skyibs. He spent the summer (of 1215) at Ma pham curing the illness which was tormenting him (p.64 line 19-p.65 line 1: "dByar bred ni mi bred gnas de kar chu rde'u (p.65) gsol cing zla ba lnga bzhugs//", "It was summer, there was nothing to fear. He spent five months at this holy place (Ma pham), drinking water with tiny pebbles"). During that time he met Seng ge ye shes. The episode of sTag tsha's rebuke to the 'Bri gung pa-s follows (in autumn 1215) (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.674). In the late part of the winter (beginning of 1216), rGod tshang pa's companion Dam pa gTsang went for a circumambulation of Ti se (*rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar* p.67 lines 8-9: "De'i dgun smad Dam pa gTsang skor ba la byon//"). Then, having spent the summer (of 1216) at Ti se, rGod tshang pa thought of going to Dza lan dha ra in the autumn (of 1216), which he did (p.70 lines 3-4: "dByar thog de kar bzhugs nas ston Dza lan dha rar gshegs dgongs//").

Mon rtse pa, *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar* (*dKar brgyud gser phreng* p.301 lines 1-3) says that rGod tshang pa stayed at mchod rten Khong seng until the summer of the same year: "mTsho' Ma phang gi'gram sleb pa dang/ nga 'di khar chu 'thung gin sdod pa yin byas pas/ grogs po Dam pa bya ba de na re/ nga la gser zho gang do yod pa'i tsongs nas mnyam por za bas Pu rang su 'gro dgos zhes yang yang zer nas byon/ gser zho gang tsongs pas tsam pa bre bcwo' Inga re byung/ de khyer nas Te se la byon pa dang/ 'Brug pa dbang pa'i spyil po phug pa thams cad 'Bri khung pa la khyer/ dbyar po de Te se'i mchod rten Khong sang bya bar bzhugs//"; "As soon as [rGod tshang pa] reached the bank of mtsho' (spelled so) Ma phang, since he said: "Now I will stay here surviving on drinking water", his travelling companion Dam pa repeatedly insisted: "I have two *zho* of gold to sell (*rtsongs* sic for *btsongs*). Since we can eat together, you must come to Pu rang". Since they sold the *zho* of gold, they each got fifteen *bre* of *rtsam pa*. Carrying that, he went to Te se (spelled as). All the huts and caves owned by the 'Brug pa had been taken away by the 'Bri khung pa. That summer, he stayed at mchod rten Khong sang (spelled so for Khong seng) of Te se (spelled so).

He was preceded by some fellow 'Brug pa. Their names are recorded as Dam pa lHa zhiḡ, Tsa re sngon po and gTer khung ba in his main biography, *rGod tshang pa rnam thar rgyas pa* by Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba. They were already *in loco* when rGod tshang pa arrived at the mountain.¹⁹⁴

A major omission in *Deb ther sngon po*'s list of holy places frequented by gTsang pa rGya ras's disciples is Ri bo Gan dha la in Gar zha, the main 'Brug pa centre on the "upper side", where rGod tshang pa sojourned on the way to Dza lan dhara and back from the same locality in the Indian Northwest. This shows that the 'Brug pa came to settle at this holy place in the years between 1211 or soon before this date and 1216.

rGod tshang pa is credited in some sources including *Bon po Ti se dkar chag* to have been the Buddhist who opened the "door" of Gangs Ti se.¹⁹⁵ He was not the pioneer of the bKa' brgyud pa presence at the holy mountain and not even for the 'Brug pa. Despite the presence at Gangs Ti se of some fellow 'Brug pa before him, his status and spiritual capacity led some sources to recognize him as the opener of its "door", and to record accounts of his miraculous reconnaissance of the sacred geography. Hence he was given credit for this activity rather than other fellow school members.

Here follows an overview of the situation and the powers on the stage of mNga' ris stod smad and the Western Himalaya around 1208. At that time:

- Pu hrang was at the peak of its ascendancy under sTag tsha Khri 'bar;
- there was no local authority in Dol po worth mentioning in the bKa' brgyud pa sources;
- the Men Zhang nomads from Byang (lower Byang thang), 'Brong pa and Mustang were not so powerful in Glo bo and sKyid grong as at a later time;
- the area of Bal Bod at the border with sKyid grong was controlled by a local ruler; and
- the Malla dynasty had risen to predominance in Bal po.

All these powers were reached by the bKa' brgyud pa emissaries with the exception of the kingdom of Ya rtse which was neglected by the Tshal pa and the 'Bri gung pa at least until after the death of 'Jig rten mgon po in 1217. This shows that Ya rtse, till then, although

194. Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdorje (*rGod tshang pa rnam thar rgyas pa* p.63 lines 13-15): "Cir Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs Dam pa lHa zhiḡ gis bzung/ rDzong Tsa re sngon pos bzung/ Dar gTer khung bas bzung nas de gsum 'Brug pa'i phug yin//", "In general, Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs was held by Dam pa lHa zhiḡ, [Nyan po ri] rdzong was held by Tsa re sngon po and Dar [lung] was held by gTer khung ba. These were the caves of the 'Brug pa". On rGod tshang pa at Ti se see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (p.404 and in particular p.408-409 and n.671, n.672 and n.673).

195. dKar ru Bru chen bsTan 'dzin rin chen (*Ti se dkar chag* p.637 lines 3-4) considers rGod tshang pa the Buddhist ascetic to whom the practitioners of his religion attribute the opening of the Ti se door, but he is quick in dismissing him and considers the Bon po master dByil ston Khyung rgod rtal the person to whom this credit should be given: "rGod tshangs pa'i gnas yin zer thams cad/ dByil ston Khyung rgod yin pas gong ltar brtags//"; "All rGod tshangs pa's (sic) holy places were those of dByil ston Khyung rgod, as shown above", which is an overclaim.

already powerful, had not yet surged to a prominent political role and did not attract the diplomatic interest of the bKa' brgyud pa.

▪ The 'Bri gung pa expedition to Gangs Ti se of 1215

The sources of the school say that in wood pig 1215 the monastic community at 'Bri gung had again grown to an even more overwhelming dimensions.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, 'Jig rten mgon po decided to disperse again his monks to hermitages and distant holy places.¹⁹⁷ An exorbitant

196. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.117 lines 3-5): "Lo re re la yang dpag tu med pa de dpon sgom pa'i zhabs sMan pa'i lha gsol cig pu la yang zla drug tsam gyi nang du stong dang nyi shu rtsa lnga rab tu byung ste lo re la'ang brgya'am stong dam khri'am 'bum gyi bar yang mtha' mi mang por grangs kyi mi tshod do tshur byon pa dang gshegs pa yang dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'khor stong phrag gam brgya phrag dag bzhud pa dang tshur byon pa dang ri khrod du rnal 'byor ba sgrub pa byed du 'gro ba tshan pa brgya stong du ma 'gro dang 'ong/"; "Every year, uncountable [disciples] who took the *rab tu [byung]* vow during six months, having appeased sMan pa'i lha (i.e. sMan lha or sMan bla) at the feet of the *dpon sgom pa* were 1,025. Every year, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, whose endless number cannot be assessed, [took the vows]. It is inconceivable to write about and exhaust [the subject of] the *dkyil 'khor* of the assembly, the groups of thousands or hundreds of *dge ba'i bshes gnyen* who returned to ['Bri gung] or left from [there]; of the *rnal 'byor pa-s* who went to hermitages to meditate, returned to ['Bri gung] or left from [there]; and[, in general,] the many groups of hundreds and thousands who also returned and left from [there]"

Was the *dpon sgom pa* mentioned in the passage a 'Bri gung *sgom pa* whose name is not given in the literature or, less likely, *sgom pa rDo rje seng ge*? On the latter see above (n.23).

197. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.27a line 5-f.27a line 2): "De lta bu'i sgo nas rje nyid dgung lo don gsum bzhes pa'i tshe gzhi khrid thob pa'i gsar bu phal che ba ri la gtong ba gnang ste/ de yang bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa pan chen Ghu ya sgang pa zhes sam mtshan dngos chos rje Phun tshogs rgya mtsho zhes grags pa gTsang Bo dong du sku 'khrungs zhing bla ma mkhas grub du ma la bsten nas mDo sNgags rig pa'i gnas kun la mkhyen pa (f.27b) brgyas pa'i sten chos rje rin po che nyid kyi bka' drin las rtogs pa'i yon tan phul du phyin pa brnyes pa de nyid kiyis gtsos zhan yang grub thob Ri pa Nag po dang/ Ri pa sNgon po sogs mgon chen lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyis shu rtsa lnga Ti se..." and *ibid.* (f.27b lines 4-5): "...rdzong bar mdzad do/"; "In this way, when the lord ('Jig rten mgon po) was seventy-three (1215), he sent most of those who had recently received basic teachings to the hermitages. Concerning this, bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa pan chen Ghu ya sgang pa, otherwise his true name being chos rje Phun tshogs rgya mtsho, was born at gTsang Bo dong. Having received teachings from many learned *bla ma-s*, he mastered all knowledge of *mDo sNgags*. Moreover, due to the favour of *chos rje rin po che* ('Jig rten mgon po), he obtained an outstanding quality of wisdom. 55,525 meditators, headed by him and also by grub thob Ri Nag po and Ri pa sNgon po, ...were sent to Ti se".

'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus (f.17a lines 2-6): "De nas lo 'ga' zhid song ba na sngar bas kyang 'phel te ji skad du 'Dus tshom gsal byed las/ khri tsho bco brgyad tshogs pa la/ 'Bri gung Bla g. yel thang na bsgrags/ zhes gsungs pa ltar tshogs pa khri tsho bco brgyad du longs pas/ slar yang ri pa tha ma 'gyed par dgongs nas/ de yang sngon gNyos kyi bur ston gyi skabs kyi tshogs grangs de nyid ma bsgrigs pa'i rten 'brel khyad par can du dgongs nas/ 'di'i skabs kyang pan chen Gu ya sgang pas gtsos pa'i sgom chen lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyer lnga Ti se la rdzangs/ de bzhing du dge bshes g. Yag ru dPal grags kiyis gtsos pas lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyer lnga

number of *ri pa*-s were sent to the mountains, an indication that the situation had developed favourably in the three main holy places of La phyi, Tsa ri and Gangs ri, so that large groups of meditators could be sent to these localities, unlike before.¹⁹⁸

La phyi/ rdor 'dzin mGo bo ches gtsos pas lnga khri lnga stong lnga brgya nyer lnga rTsa ris bcas rdzongs//"; "Then, a few years later, it is said that [the monastic community] grew bigger than before. According to '*Dus tshom gsal byed*' ("Record of the gatherings"), an announcement was made to the congregation of 180,000 [monks] at 'Bri gung Bla g.yel thang. On the grounds of this declaration, since the congregation reached [the number of] 180,000, [Jig rten mgon po] again pondered to disperse the last [butch] of *ri pa*-s. Concerning this, having thought about the extraordinary karmic nexus by which the number [of monks in] the congregation at the time of gNyos' earlier offering of molasses did not reach [that many members], on that occasion as well, he sent 55,525 meditators to Ti se, headed by pan chen Gu (spelled so) ya sgang pa. Likewise, he sent 55,525 to La phyi, headed by dge bshes g.Yag ru dPal grags. He sent 55,525 to Tsa ri, headed by rdor 'dzin mGo bo che".

The reference in '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus*' to a document dedicated to the record of the events that led to the departures of the 'Bri gung monks in 1215, entitled '*Dus tshom gsal byed*' ("Record of the gatherings"), could establish that this work was the source of the two *lo rgyus*, one about the school's exponents at Gangs Ti se and the other about its groups at La phyi. Both were penned by dKon mchog bstan 'dzin chos kyi blo gros 'phrin las and I use them profusely in this volume of mine. The absence of a similar reference in '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*', completed in fire monkey 1896 while '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus*' is not dated, could be a sign that the one on La phyi was the antecedent to the other on the sacred mountain.

Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng*' (p.92 line 23-p.93 line 3):

"Di skabs tshogs shin tu rgyas te/ pan chen Gu ya gangs pas gtso byas pa'i lnga khri dang lnga stong lnga brgya nyer (p.93) lnga Ti se/ dge bshes g.Yag ru dPal grags kyis gtso byas pa'i nga khri dang lnga stong lnga brgya nyer lnga La phyi/ rdor 'dzin Mgo bo ches gtso byas pa'i nga khri dang lnga stong lnga brgya nyer lnga Tsa rir brdzangs//"; "At that time, the congregation was remarkably expanded. 55,525 [*ri pa*], headed by pan chen Gu ya gangs pa, were sent to (p.93) Ti se; 55,525 [*ri pa*], headed by dge bshes g.Yag ru dPal grags, to La phyi; and 55,525 [*ri pa*], headed by rDor 'dzin mGo bo che, to Tsa ri".

198. The exorbitant number of 55,525 monks who would have been sent to each one of the three main pilgrimage places is not necessarily a mystical expression of unrealistic magnitude but represents the ever-growing dimension of *ban de*-s at 'Bri gung, although these statistics per se exceed any realistic dimension obviously.

'*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus*' says that its monastic community reached 180,000 monks in 1215, and given that the monks were divided into three groups, the total of the three represents their almost complete disbanding, since some 1,500 would have remained at 'Bri gung.

Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng*' (p.88 lines 2-10) gives another assessment of the imposing dimensions that the monastic community took throughout the years: "Di skabs tshogs pa sngon ma las kyang cher rgyas nas da byar gnas gcig gi skabs dge 'dun 'bum phrag gcig gis tshul shing bzhes pa dang/ de nas mi ring bar de bas kyang tshogs pa cher song ste gnas gsum sogs gnas khyad par can rnam ri pa nyis stong bdun brgya rdzangs pas phyi lor khri phrag bcu gsum tshogs su 'dus te/ de yang rNam thar phyi rgya me tog las/ na ning dud kyi skabs shig na/ bu zhabs tog can gyi rnal 'byor pa gnyis stong bdun brgya ri la song/ de gcig dus kyi deng sang na/ khri phrag bcu gsum tshogs su tshogs/ zhes gsung//"; "At that

Following the ascension of sTag tsha Khri 'bar on the throne of Pu hrang, the region surged to even more splendour than in the days of the previous expedition from 'Bri gung in 1208, since it could welcome a wave of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s of much larger proportions.

'Jig rten mgon po's efforts to organize his community in an optimal way were not facilitated by the circumstances. A famine led to the migration of considerable quantities of 'Bri gung pa from their other centres. This event was the additional cause added to the changed conditions of the monastic assembly that contributed to the 1215 dispatching of a new, massive wave of hermits to the three main bKa' brgyud destinations.¹⁹⁹ After the 1208 famine that affected areas of Central Tibet; followed by the epidemic that broke out at 'Bri gung sometime around 1210, another famine disrupted life in 1215.

Ghu ya sgang pa, said in '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*, '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* and '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* to have been the head of the *ri pa*-s to Ti se in 1215, was accompanied by Ri pa Nag po and Ri pa sNgon po at the head of the expedition, about whom one can glean little from the literature.²⁰⁰ There is a serious omission in these works. They ignore gNyos lHa nang pa, the head of the *ri pa*-s in the 1215 expedition, too, who had a more preeminent role in the course of the expedition than Ghu ya sgang pa.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar records that, without the presence of Chos sdings pa, he could finally win the favour of sTag tsha Khri 'bar on that occasion.²⁰¹ A major performance

time (1208), since the assembly grew bigger than before, on the occasion of *dbyar gnas*, 100,000 monks were served the wood of moral law (*tshul [khrims] shing bzhes*, i.e. the moral wood is the wood with which a spoon for the monks is made). Not long thereafter, the assembly became bigger than that. Since 2,700 *ri pa* were sent to extraordinary holy places such as the three sacred sites, the next year 130,000 got together in the assembly. Concerning this, according to *rNam thar phyag rgya me thog*, ['Jig rten mgon po] said: "On one occasion during the last year, 2,700 *rnal 'byor pa* who are responsible disciples went to the mountains. In those circumstances, 130,000 gathered in assembly".

199. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.90 lines 4-7): "sNgon mu ge chen po gcig byung pa'i dus su/ sngon La phyi na bzhus pa'i dus su/ dpon g.yog mang pos Gangs Ti se dang/ mtsho Ma 'phang la byon pa'i dus su/ ru ba tshan ched po yod pas ltad mo ba mangs nas glags ma byung/ nyi ma phyi ma la 'khrus sgo de bas dben pa gcig du byon/", "When, earlier, a great famine broke out which was when [gNyos lHa nang pa] was staying at La phyi, the *dpon* and many disciples left for Gangs Ti se and mtsho Ma 'phang (spelled so). The group of ['Bri gung pa] being very large, many onlookers [came to see], who could not be turned away. In the following days [the 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s] went to a more secluded bathing door".

200. The Ri pa nag po who went to Ti se in 1215 with the third wave of hermits dispatched by 'Jig rten mgon po should not be confused with the Ri pa nag po who sent abusive letters to Se chen rgyal po and marched some distance in Khams against the Hor emperor with an army of fellow bKa' brgyud pa soon after the conclusion of the *gling log*. On Ri pa nag po see *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.443 lines 16-20) and Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.125 lines 10-17).

201. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* adds (f.84a lines 1-7): "De'i dus su Gangs Ti se bstan pa'i rtso bor zhal gzigz so/ gangs 'phran rnam mchog zung gcig gis rtso byas pa'i dGra bcom pa lnga

of gNyos lHa nang pa was the miracle he carried out at Ma pham g.yu mtsho. He magically flew to the centre of the lake and met Klu'i rgyal po Ma dros pa in his palace underwater.

The 1215 enforcement of the 'Bri gung rdor 'dzin institution at Gangs Ti se in charge of the community of local hermits and their activities marked the definitive establishment of the 'Bri gung pa at the holy mountain.

The sources add that a wave of *ri pa*-s was dispatched to La phyi and Tsa ri in the same year. The head of the *ri pa*-s, together with mGo bo che, was g.Yag ru dPal grags. 'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus (f.17a lines 2-6, see above n.197) says that he was chosen as the Tsa ri rdor 'dzin whereas his role at La phyi is not specified. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan's 'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng has it that g.Yag ru dPal grags was the La phyi rdor 'dzin.²⁰² Their appointments at the other two localities, internal disputes among fellow bKa' brgyud pa notwithstanding, shows that the 'Bri gung pa were able to settle locally in a definitive way.²⁰³

brgyar gzigs/ rgyal po sTag tshang dpung gi tshogs dang bcas pa/ lha dBang phyug chen po 'khor bcas su gzigs/ skad do// sngar yar byon pa'i lam du ra dza sTag tsha bla zhang kun yang/ yongs grags la Gar pa Byang stor gyis 'du shes bsgyur zer ste/ spyan snga na nas kho men gzhan gcig yin gsung/ sna len du ma btub kyang/ de'i snyan pa thos pa'i skabs su/ nas dang sran ma dang sran chung gi phye brgya la sogs pas bkur ti dpag tu med pa mdzad//", "At that time he (gNyos lHa nang pa) truly saw Gangs Ti se as the main symbol of the teachings and the minor mountains as the pair of excellent [disciples of Buddha] leading the five hundred Arhat. [A report] says that king sTag tshang (spelled so for sTag tsha) and his retinue of guards truly saw lha dBang phyug chen po (Mahashiva) and his cycle. At the time of his previous journey (in 1208), when they were coming up [to Gangs Ti se], it is said that on the way Gar pa Byang stor (spelled so for rdor) influenced the attitude of raja sTag tsha bla zhang [and] also of all [the king's entourage in disfavour of gNyos lHa nang pa] in general. The *spyan snga* (i.e. gNyos lHa nang pa) said: "It cannot be him. It must be someone else". Although [during his earlier visit] it became improper to receive him [due to Gar pa's jealousy], on this occasion, realising his reputation, [sTag tsha Khri 'bar] paid him innumerable [acts of] homage [by offering him] one hundred [measures] of barley, beans and peas".

202. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, 'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng (p.105 lines 2-4): "rDor 'dzin g.Yag ru dPal grags kyis La phyi btang cing/ gzhan yang sKyid grong du gnas bzhi brgya rtsa brgyad btang pa 'ga' zhig da lta yang yod//"; "rDor 'dzin g.Yag ru dPal grags established La phyi. In sKyid grong he founded 428 *gnas* ("holy places"), some of which are still existing at present".

g.Yag ru dPal grags extended the range of his influence to the immediate east of La phyi and was active in sKyid grong when the Tshal pa, in this area, had a role of great significance to the Tibetan tradition. It is a pity that the same source does not say more on his presence in sKyid grong and the relation with the Tshal pa and the local families who left a mark on the history of sKyid grong during that period (see Vitali, "Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)", in Prats ed., *The pandi ta and the siddha, Studies in Honour of Eugene G. Smith*).

203. 'Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus (f.17b lines 1-4) has this to say on the holy places controlled in the areas of La phyi by the 'Bri gung pa around 1215: "La phyir btang pa'i ri pa rnams bla ma'i bka' bzhin lam dBus gTsang gi gzhung brgyud gTsang La stod kyi phyogs su 'byor zhing rGyal

When the 1215 expedition headed by gNyoḡ IHa nang pa and Ghu ya sgang pa reached Gangs Ti se, rGod tshang pa had already sojourned at the holy mountain and holy lake for a while. Following the establishment of their representative at Gangs Ti se, the balance between the hermits of the bKa' brgyud pa schools went in favour of the 'Bri gung pa who took a predominant role, stressed by rGod tshang pa without much appreciation (*rGod tshang pa rnam thar* by Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba p.60 line 6-p.67 line 4).

No post of Gangs Ti se *rdor 'dzin* was introduced in the 'Bri gung pa ranks before the 1215 expedition. Those who headed the two earlier missions were not *rdor 'dzin*-s, which indicates once again that masters like Ngad phu pa, 'Gar Dam pa or gNyoḡ IHa nang pa had not been sent as permanent representatives of the school. Ghu ya gangs pa was a resident of Gangs Ti se for twenty-five years (see '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* f.29a line 2). With the introduction of the Ti se *rdor 'dzin*, the 'Bri gung pa came to use a system close to the one adopted by the Tshal pa.

The appointment of the *rdor 'dzin* represented the culmination of a phase and the opening of a new one. The long period of diplomatic steps with the rulers in the lands on the "upper side" bore its fruits, and the establishment of the school at its centre in mNga' ris stod with the support of the local authorities led to further political and religious activity. Some eminent 'Bri gung pa—primarily Seng ge ye shes at the outset of his endeavours—settled in mNga' ris and diplomacy was renewed focusing on rising powers that did not belong to the Tibetan world.

Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan draws some conclusions in his '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* on the harmonious coexistence of the bKa' brgyud pa despite the large

gyi Shri/ Rong shar Brin stod smad/ La phyi gong 'og/ gNya' nang/ Mang yul gyi yul stod smad bar gsum/ Tsum Ku thang gi phyogs sogs ri sul rnam su sgrub khang brtsegs nas bzhugs shing/ bla ma rdor 'dzin pa nyid kyis gtso bor La phyi gangs kyi ra ba dang/ Le sde stod smad rnam su ri khrod dang sgom khang mang du brtsegs shing yul phyogs de rnam kyi skye bo kun gyi mchod gnas mdzad nas bsod nam kyi tshogs spel/"; "The *ri pa*-s sent to La phyi according to the order of the *bla ma* reached gTsang La stod after crossing mainland dBus gTsang on the way. They built *sgrub khang*-s in the mountainous ravines such as rGyal gyi Shri; Rong shar Brin stod smad; La phyi gong 'og; gNya' nang; *yul stod smad bar* of Mang yul, altogether three; Tsum and Ku thang, and stayed there. The *bla ma rdor 'dzin*, as the main one, built many hermitages and meditation houses at La phyi gangs kyi ra ba and Le sde (spelled as for Lan bde) stod smad, and since they were the *mchod gnas* of everyone in these localities, they increased their amount of merit".

The tract of land occupied by the La phyi *ri pa*-s according to '*Bri gung La phyi lo rgyus* was sensibly bigger than the expanded area of La phyi (La phyi, Brin and gNya' nang) because it encompassed the territories of Mang yul, Tshum and Ku thang farther to the west of La phyi, and transcended traditional boundaries by incorporating more than a single region. It neared the edge of the Tibetan speaking world because *ri pa*-s were settled al Le sde, seemingly a deviant spelling of Lan bde, the area to the south of sKyid grong, visited by Jo bo rje A ti sha during his sojourn in Mang yul and especially liked by him (see Vitali, "Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)". However, literary evidence shows that the limit of Tibetan settlements reached in antiquity farther to the south of the present border between Tibet and Nepal (ibid.).

mass of retreatants sent to share hermitages and asceticism. He adds that in that period the spiritual focus of those hermits led them to conduct themselves to a life of renouncement without disputes among them.²⁰⁴

However, rivalries and the ambition of pursuing, at least among the heads of the *ri pa*-s, the tasks often assigned collectively to them by 'Jig rten mgon po enhanced competitiveness. Exemplary is sKyob pa's request made to his disciples that they should display their skill to perform miracles (see n.84). These tasks were secular in some cases and often diplomatic. The masters went, therefore, beyond the strict code of conduct of an ascetic. These demanding activities that pertained to the sphere of *chos* and *srid* often led to irreconcilable disagreements.

The failure of the 1191 expedition to Gangs Ti se and the lakes to establish the pilgrimage on sound basis is imputable to the explorative nature of slob dpon Ngad phu pa's mission that did not continue owing to the ravage of the Muslim invasion of 1193-1194 rather than to internal disagreements.

Soon afterwards, there were irreconcilable disputes that marred the unity of intents of the trio (gNyos, 'Gar and Chos) heading the 'Bri gung pa *ri pa*-s already at the outset of the initial mission to Tsa ri. The trio of 'Jig rten mgon po's disciples was not well balanced. gNyos was the teacher of 'Gar, while Chos ye did not have a close relation with the other two. dPal chen Chos ye had disagreements with gNyos and 'Gar on religious matters during the pilgrimage and did not get together with them again (see above p.80-81). At that time, gNyos chen po and 'Gar Dam pa still shared common points of view given the fresh appointment of gNyos as the teacher of 'Gar Dam pa and Chos sdings pa's relative inexperience.

The second split in the unity of intents of the remaining duo occurred at Gangs Ti se in 1208, the next and only time they went out together.

The activities of the 'Bri gung pa in the lands on the "upper side" did not fail to be scrutinized at 'Bri gung. Reports of the deeds of the *ri pa*-s were reaching the main monastery.

204. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.93 line 8-line 24): "Ri pa 'di rnams brdzangs nas mi ring bar slar yang tshogs pa khri tsho bco bryad byung zhing/ 'di la rtsod pa med kyang blo chung 'ga' zhig gis/ 'di lta bu mi shong snyam na de ltar ma yin te 'di skabs nag yod pas 'Dul ba'i sbyangs pa'i yon tan bcu gnyis kyi gnas kyi skabs su/ shing drung pa dang/ gzhi ji bzhin pa gsungs pa ltar g.yam spyil chung ngu rang shong tsam dang/ shing drung/ brag phug/ gad phug bya skyibs sogs su tshe 'di blos btang gi sbyangs pa'i yon tan la gnas bzhin bzhugs pa las/ da lta'i skyid chos kyi longs spyod dang 'byor pa 'di lta bu med pas mi shong ba'i dogs ma mchis so//"; "Not long after dispatching these *ri pa*-s, the congregation again rose to 180,000. Although this is undisputable, if there are some small-minded people who think that they could not adjust [to ascetic life], it was not like that. At that time, forest dwellers were firm [in practising] the twelve *yon tan* ("trainings") to learn 'Dul ba. According to what has been said [concerning their] basic [standards], the forest dwellers were firm in training [themselves] to learn the renouncement of the life [they had] at that time [by staying] at such places as small hermitage (*g.yam* sic for *dben*); huts with [space that] can accommodate only oneself; woods; rocky caves; caves in erosions; or bird nests. Since there was neither luxury nor wealth similar to the present easy religion, there was no worry not to adjust [to ascetic life]. At that time, it is well known that, as for the congregation, all of those [who composed it] had no disputes".

The report of gNyos lHa nang pa's miracle at Ma pham reached the ears of sKyob pa rin po che,²⁰⁵ so did the report of 'Gar Dam pa's activities in Bal po (see above p.117-118).

It is difficult to make out the decisions taken by sKyob pa rin po che on the course of action to be pursued by his main disciples. His assignment can only be deciphered by the activities his disciples were entrusted to undertake. It could be simply coincidental but dPal chen Chos ye was again sent to Tsa ri, while gNyos lHa nang pa and Chos sdings pa were sent to Gangs Ti se. Chos ye was confirmed to his duty, whereas gNyos and 'Gar Dam pa were not. After the 1208 expedition to Gangs Ti se, gNyos lHa nang pa was sent again to the mountain while there is no more trace of Chos sdings pa in the lands on the "upper side", who was assigned to different duties by 'Jig rten mgon po.

The situation that 'Jig rten mgon po was instrumental in creating in those lands might have led to some excess because in a letter written to his monks residing at Gangs Ti se, U rgyan, Me nyag and Khyi than, sKyob pa rin po che expressed three fundamental concepts which his disciples had to follow:²⁰⁶

205. *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (f.85a lines 3-6): "De'i tshe 'Bri khung pa'i Kham pa sGom chen Rad na la yang chos bsnyan pa gcig Pu rangs na yod pa/ Rad na'i sku'i skod pa de ngo mtshar du gyur nas/ dga' ches te nyin rgyugs mtshan rgyugs su 'Bri khung du phyin te/ chos rje'i spyang sngar/ rje rin po che gNyos kyis mtsho Ma 'phang du byon/ mtsho Ma 'phang dkyil du dkyil krung mdzad de/ klu'i rgyal po Ma gros pa'i pho brang du byon/'", "At that time, 'Bri khung Kham (spelled so) pa sgom chen who had received religious teachings from Rad na (i.e. gNyos lHa nang pa) in Pu rangs [and] had been amazed at Rad na's astonishing performance, went to 'Bri khung travelling day and night. He [reported] to *chos rje* that rje rin po che gNyos went to mtsho Ma 'phang, sat cross-legged in the middle of mtsho Ma 'phang and proceeded to the palace of klu'i rgyal po Ma gros pa (spelled so)".

206. *Gangs Ti se U rgyan Me nyag Khyi than gsum na bzhugs pa'i dge 'dun rnams la sprengs pa* ("Letter to the monks residing at Gangs Ti se as well as U rgyan, Me nyag and Khyi than, altogether three") (p.484 lines 1-2): "Om swasti/ 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po chos kyi rgyal po bcom ldan 'das rDo rje 'chang chen pos/ mGon po Phag mo gru pa rtsa ba dang brgyud pa'i bla ma dam pa rnams kyi sras dam par gyur cing/ rgyud byin gyis brlabs pa Gangs Ti se dang/ U rgyan/ rGya Mi nyag/ Khyi tan gsum gyi rgyal khams/'"; "Om swasti. From 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po, the victorious great holder of the *rdo rje*, to those who became the noble sons of the noble *bla ma*-s of the root lineage of lord Phag mo gru pa and the monks who one-pointedly practise meditation, residents of Gangs Ti se up to the kingdoms of U rgyan, Me nyag and Khyi than, altogether three".

Ibid. (p.486 line 5-p.487 line 4): "Chos kyi rgyal po'i rgyal khams su 'tshe ba med pa tsam ma gtogs/ gdod mtha' bar 'Dzam gling gang na yang rgyal po (p.487) rnams la rdzas dang yo byad kyi dngos po med pas ming btsad ltogs su thogs pa yin/ jo bos kyed rnams la dngos po ster rgyu mi rnyed/ rnyed na yang rgyal po rnams ni bya ba mang ba/ byed pa mang bas nga mi 'dod ces/ Shākya'i sras kyi dge 'dun gyis mi len pa yin/ de sngon phan chad jo bos phyogs thams cad du bskyangs/ da phyin chad jo bos khyod la 'bul ba byed pa thams cad ma len cig/ jo bo la slong 'phro ma byed pa yin/ nga'i jo bo mNga' ris su bzhugs su chug cig/ nga'i bka' ma bcag cig/'"; "There is no kingdom of religious rulers without some problem. Given that, earlier, later and in the intermediate period, altogether three (i.e. at some time), everywhere in 'Dzam gling, the kings (p.487) may have no material resources, [even] those bearing the name of king are bound to feel

- The 'Bri gung pa monks at these localities had not to be too demanding of the local kings who were their patrons;

- They had to remember that 'Jig rten mgon po himself was their ultimate lord, whom they had to listen rather than the local kings;

- Gangs Ti se was the best locality where to meditate, but other great holy places were also good to attain siddhic realisations. The great masters recognised by the bKa' brgyud pa schools as their spiritual inspirators had also meditated in places different from Gangs Ti se.

He urged them to practise preferably in localities of the Tibetan plateau, and discouraged them to favour an easier life and better chances to receive support in Bal po, where they could risk to lose their vow.

The last of the three authoritative instructions leads me to wonder whether gNyos lHa nang pa was right in his criticism of Chos sdings pa's behaviour which created a precedent to

hungry. These lords might have no means to support you. Even if they have, the kings have many activities, and since they have much to do, they might say: "I do not feel like". The monks, sons of Shakya, should not [be willing] to accept [support]. Before, the lords protected all the directions. From now on, no one should accept the offerings given to you by the lords. You should not come up to beg the lords for alms. [You] should allow [yourselves] to reside in the kingdom [of which] I am the lord. Do not disobey my orders".

Ibid. (p.488 line 1-p.489 line 3): "sGom chen pa rnams kyang rang la rgyu rkyen ci 'os tsam yod kyi bar du Ti se sgrub pa byas na legs/ rgyu rkyen med par bsod snyoms dang/ slong phro mang pos thams cad sun phyung ba yin te/ de bcom ldan 'das kyi bkag pa yin/ de nas 'tsho ba ma 'dangs ni Ti ser ma bsdad par/ 'tsho ba sla ba/ dge sbyor 'phel ba/ lHo Bal gyi mthar sdom pa 'tshor ba yin pas/ skad rigs mi geig pa lHo Bal gyi mtha' ma yin pa/ Bod kyi rgyal khams gang yang rung bar sdad nas sgrub pa rtse gcig tu mdzad par zhu/ de yang Ma dha ga yi Byang chub shing drung du/ Thub pa chen pos rdzogs pa'i byang chub brnyes/ slob dpon Tillis rGya gar shar phyogs su/ dpal ldan Nā ro bla ma'i zhabs drung du/ rje btsun lo tsās de dang 'dra ba nyid/ rje btsun Mi la rang gi yul nyid (p.489) du/ Dwags po bla mas dMal gyi Se ba lung/ Phag mo gru pas Dwags lha sGam po ste/ bla ma rnams kyang yul phyogs tha dad du/ sgrub pa'i gnas der grub pa tob pa las/ Ti se 'ba' zhig don du gnier ba ni/ nang pa Sangs rgyas pa la gtan med de/ tha dad dgon pa rnams su thugs dam mdzod/ bu la snying gtam snying por gdams/ rdzogs so//";

"It is better for the meditators to meditate at Ti se unless there is a serious reason [to leave]. Everyone should refrain from all sorts of frequent requests for alms without a [real] reason. This was rejected by the *bcom ldan 'das*. Therefore, if there is not enough sustenance, without staying at Ti se, [you should] diffuse virtuous practice [where] food is easily available. Since one loses his vow by staying all the way down in lHo Bal, the bottom line is lHo Bal with a different language and race. You should perform meditation one-pointedly wherever it is possible to stay in the country of Tibet.

Concerning this, Thub pa chen po perfected enlightenment under the Bodhi tree of Ma ga dha; slob dpon Tilli (i.e. Ti lo pa) [did the same] in East India; rje btsun [Mar pa] lo tsa did the same at the feet of dpal ldan Na ro bla ma; rje btsun Mi la [did the same] in his own land (p.489); [so did] Dwags po bla ma at dMyal gyi Se ba lung; and [so did] Phag mo gru pa at Dwags lha sGam po. Since these *bla ma* obtained siddhahood at meditation places of different localities, pursuing this endeavour at Ti se exclusively is not the fixed approach to Buddhist enlightenment. You should meditate at different monasteries. These instructions are the heartfelt advice to my beloved sons from [the bottom of my] heart. Completed".

be avoided. 'Jig rten mgon po's letter to his disciples is undated and it cannot be said whether the warning was issued before or after their journeys to Gangs Ti se and Bal po. Does his advice to avoid Bal po as much as possible mean that the ties with the freshly established Malla dynasty of the Kathmandu Valley had not been successfully established?

The years after the death of 'Jig rten mgon po

▪ 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas's years in mNga' ris stod

With the death of sKyob pa rin po che in fire ox 1217 the generation of Zhang g.Yu brag pa (1123-1193 or 1194), 'Ba' rom pa Dar ma dbang phyug (1127-1199), Gling ras pa Padma rdo rje (1128-1188), Nyag re Se bo Rin chen rgyal mtshan (?-1200 or 1201), sTag lung thang pa (1142-1210) and gTsang rGya ras (1161-1211) that came after the one of 'gro mgon Phag mo gru pa (1110-1170) and Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193) came to an end.

Several new faces in the ranks of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools, active in mNga' ris, appeared on the horizon in the successive years. This generational change brought about a new phase in bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of the lands on the "upper side". The new 'Bri gung pa emissaries were ambassadors of a shift of perspective in the approach adopted by the bKa' brgyud pa schools towards mNga' ris. Although the established relations between the bKa' brgyud pa and the authorities in Upper West Tibet continued unabated for a while, there was a significant expansion in the choice of powers contacted in order to forge new alliances.

The few years that followed sKyob pa rin po che's death were marked by the consolidation of the bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of these lands and the introduction of contacts with powers beyond the limits of mNga' ris stod to the north and south. A further phase in the bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of the lands on the "upper side" opened up only after the establishment of these ties.

When gNyos Ha nang pa and Chos sdings pa were in Byang thang, mNga' ris stod and Bal po in 1208 and environs, grub thob Seng ge ye shes (1181-1255), who had a major part in the 'Bri gung pa affairs in the Upper West Tibet, had not yet come to the west but was at Tsa ri in those days. He was able to return to 'Bri gung in 1209 after the road had been washed away in 1208, and became the *nye gnas* of 'Jig rten mgon po in the next year.²⁰⁷

This was a turning point in Seng ge ye shes' life. He continued to be the *nye gnas* of 'Jig rten mgon po for six years (1210-1216) (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang*

207. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.450 lines 5-6): "dByar rgun gsum lo do gnyis bzhugs pa'i Me tog ster du lo geig bzhugs/ Yul lung du lo geig bzhugs/ 'Od 'bar du sngon rje btsun lHa sa pas bzhugs pa yin kyang/ de nas lo bdun du lam chad nas med//"; "Of the two years and a summer[, autumn and] winter, altogether three, [that Seng ge ye shes was in Tsa ri] (1206-1208), he spent one year at Me tog steng [and] spent one year at Yul lung. Although rje btsun lHas pa had earlier resided at 'Od 'bar, then, since the road was cut off for seven years, there was no [road] anymore". Ibid. (p.452 line 5): "De nas ston 'Bri gung du byon//"; "He then returned to 'Bri gung in the autumn [of 1209]".

phyug gi rnam thar in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.453 line 5-p.454 line 4), practically until his teacher's death, and thus he was one of the late disciples of sKyob pa rin po che.

This major duty must have enhanced his status in the hierarchy of the 'Bri gung pa. Following the death of 'Jig rten mgon po, Seng ge ye shes shared the responsibility of leading another major wave of 'Bri gung pa to Gangs Ti se, but without being at the head of the expedition. A symptomatic speech later given by him in the presence of the Pu hrang *jo bo* at his court confirms that 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas was its front man, but he was one of a few other important disciples of sKyob pa rin po che who were the dignitaries of the expedition. The others were Dor blo, rDo rje and 'Dan ma Chos seng ('*Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.21 line 6-p.22 line 1).

After the completion of all the funerary rites of sKyob pa rin po che in the same 1217, including the making a *dung rten*,²⁰⁸ Seng ge ye shes set out to the lands on the "upper side" in the expedition headed by 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas who, besides being the nephew of 'Jig rten mgon po, was the main biographer and redactor of one of sKyob pa's main philosophical work, *dGongs gcig yig cha*.

They set out in stages, travelling unconventionally along the northern route from gNam mtsho phyugs mo rather than the more usual and frequented southern route across Gung thang, 'Brong pa and Gro shod. They reached the mountain in the summer of earth hare 1219.

Seng ge ye shes had a hermit disposition, although he did not disdain to care for the secular side too. He was an dBus pa, but was bound to remain in sTod, if not definitively, at least semi-permanently.

208. Another canopy, this time to decorate the funerary room of 'Jig rten mgon po is attributed to gNyos lHa nang pa's patronage by his biography (*gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* p.51 lines 1-11): "Chos rje sku gshes pa'i rjes la'ang/ mkhan po Ratnas gdan sa mdzad pa'i dus na/ chos rje Ratna'i gdung khang la/ gser gdugs bDe mchog lha drug cu rtsa gnyis kyi bkod pa yod pa/ bzo khyad pun su tshogs pa gcig Bal po nas blangs te/ des thog drangs nas/ bKa' brgyud Ratna 'di'i gcig brgyud rjes/ bla mas slob ma la rdzas phun su tshogs pa ster bar byed pa'i skot/ Ratna thog pa mtshan ldan te los Nā ros Mar pa la gnang/ Mar pa'i sras kyi phyag nas 'khyams par gyur pa/ chos rje'i phyag tu byon pa dang Ratna la gnang ba des gtso mdzad nas/ sgo mangs dang gdung khang gi nang du thugs dam gyi lha rten mang po yang phul/ bzhengs pa la yang dngos po bsam gyis mi khyab pa phul/ rten gyi spyang sngar zab chen gyi bla re dang/ phye ma phur ma chen po dang/ rtsi mar gyi mar me chen po kho ra khor yug mtha' po yang btsugs so/"; "Even after the death of the *chos rje*, when Ratna (i.e. gNyos lHa nang pa) acted as *mkhan po*, given that Ratna received from Bal po a canopy in gold with depiction of the sixty-two deities of bDe mchog, made with extraordinary and magnificent workmanship to be placed in the funerary room of *chos rje*. This is a unique item that came to this bKa' brgyud Ratna. On the subjects of the magnificent item that the *bla ma* gave to his disciple, the authentic *ratna* skull given by Te lo to Nā ro pa, [then] given by Nā ro [pa] to Mar pa, which passed from hand to hand of Mar pa's disciples, and which eventually came into the hands of the *chos rje*, was given [by him] to Ratna. [gNyos lHa nang pa] installed many images of deities with this one as the main [object] inside *chos rje*'s tomb which is a [*mchod rten bkra shis*] *sgo mangs*. He offered inconceivable wealth for its making. Above the *spyang snga*'s reliquary, he installed a brocade canopy (*bla re*), and all around it, big vessels with medicinal powder and big butterlamps with melted butter".

Although 'Bri gung gling pa was the head of the 1219 expedition and Seng ge ye shes had a subordinate position, 'Jig rten mgon po's disciple of the late years had enough authority to take his own stance. As in the cases of previous expedition heads, they had a disagreement and broke apart. The equanimous approach of shared leadership worked only theoretically; personality clashes undermined it on every occasion.

The 1219 wave of 'Bri gung pa *ri pa-s* to Gangs Ti se was another symptomatic case of the system adopted by 'Jig rten mgon po originally, which did not grant authority to a single individual since the 'Bri gung pa expeditions were headed by collective leadership.

Once again, the duo composed by 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and Seng ge ye shes was not well balanced. Despite the claims in his biography that he was an ardent meditator, 'Bri gung gling pa was the 'Bri gung ambassador assigned to strengthen the existing links with local powers, create new ones and ease Ghu ya sgang pa's relations locally. He, by the way, was due back to 'Bri gung, even though he spent seven years in mNga' ris stod.

The seven year sojourn of 'Bri gung gling pa in mNga' ris skor gsum (earth hare 1219-wood bird 1225) went beyond strict mystical conduct emphasized in his biography (*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* f.30a lines 5-6). The institutionalisation of the presence of the *ri pa-s* at Gangs Ti se, marked by the appointment of a *rdor 'dzin* in 1215, allowed the 'Bri gung pa to go a step forward. The 1219 expedition headed by 'Bri gung gling pa aimed in particular at establishing diplomatic relations with one power which, at that time, had come on the forefront of the Asian lands of which Upper West Tibet was part.

This was 'Bri gung gling pa's mission to the "shore of the ocean of sand"—the Tarim basin—to meet Jing gir rgyal po's Mongols who had just taken over South Turkestan in those days ('*Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.23 line 3-p.24 line 2).

'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas was the first Tibetan personality recorded in the sources to have gone to meet emissaries of Jing gir rgyal po, the Hor who were to become the sTod Hor. 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas met *gung blon* ("council minister") Sin thig bheg, the representative of the Turkestan Mongols.²⁰⁹ That Shes rab 'byung gnas explained

209. '*Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p.23 line 3-p.24 line 2): "De nas sPu rangs Kho char du bzhugs pa'i dus su/ rNam thar Phyogs bcu Dus gsum ma'i lha bris thugs la 'khrungs pas gtsug lag khang gi gyang log skya bris su btab nas bzhags pas physis 'Bri gung du yang dar ro/ Dus der Gar log dang Bod kyi mtshams Byang gNye gong du 'byon pas/ Gar log gi gung blon Sin thig bheg gis/ bsu brgya chen po dang bcas nas spyang drangs te mjal ba'i tshe/ Byang phyogs rgya mtsho'i 'gram nas Gar log dang Sog po'i rgyal po'i bla mchod pandi ta dang/ blon po la sogs (p.24) pa rnam mjal bar 'ongs pa dang 'dzom pa la chos kyi gnam gyis tshim par mdzad pas/ shin tu dad par gyur te 'bul ba dang rgya gyis so//", "Then, when he was residing at sPu rangs Kho char, as the depiction of the gods of the rNam thar Phyogs bcu Dus gsum ma came into his mind, he made murals of them on the clay walls of the *gtsug lag khang*. As they were painted [there], they were later copied at 'Bri gung. At that time, as he went to Byang gNye gong on the border between [the land of the] Gar log and Tibet, he was invited by Sin thig bheg, the council minister of the Gar log, who gave him a great reception. At the time of the meeting, from the shore of the ocean in the north (i.e. the Tarim basin) the ministers and the *pandi ta-s*, who were the officiating ecclesiastics of the king of the Gar log and the Sog po, came to meet him. At the

Buddhist parables to Sin thig bheg and ecclesiastics of the king of the Gar log and Sog po the Mongols had subjugated is a pious fabrication concealing more mundane affairs. A Hor pa general and Muslim ecclesiasts were not personalities keen to receive Buddhist teachings.

He did not restrict his contacts with the Hor to a favourable relation in terms of politics and secularism but was able to benefit Chos through their support in adherence with the principles adopted by the 'Bri gung pa. He earned for himself the great merit of turning his diplomatic contacts with Jing gir rgyal po's emissaries to boost the fortunes of the Noble Religion in Pu hrang in concrete terms.

▪ 'Bri gung gling pa, the Hor silver and the Pu hrang *jo bo* rNam lde mgon

His meeting with them led to Mongol patronage of Kha char lha khang, originally founded by Khor re and lHa lde with different degrees of involvement in the year of the monkey 996 under the spiritual guidance of lo chen Rin chen bzang po (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu hrang* p.245 and p.258-265). The Hor pa sponsorship of this *lha khang* in Pu hrang is the earliest case of a patronage of a Tibetan temple in sTod I am aware of and, most likely, the only one.

Through the auspices 'Bri gung gling pa was able to procure during his visit to the Hor at the "shore of the ocean of sand", the Pu hrang *jo bo*, rNam lde mgon (aka A tig sman),²¹⁰ could create the most famous and holiest triad of statues in sTod. rNam lde mgon added to the image of 'Jam dpal dbyangs, made in 996 by A shwa dharma and Wang ku la, the silver images of sPyan ras gzigs and Phyang rdor at the sides of the main icon to compose the famous Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum (*Kho car dkar chag* f.10a-11a = p.47 line 7-p.48 line 5).

Sog po merchants approached rNam lde mgon and left their merchandise in his care for three years on the condition that, if they had not returned by then, the king could make use of it. It turned out to be a considerable amount of silver, which rNam lde mgon used to make the two side statues to the Kha char Jo bo.²¹¹

time of their gathering, as he satisfied them with an exposition of Buddhist parables, great faith was born in them and they made large donations".

Shes rab 'byung gnas's biography also treats the meeting in a religious way, but the presence of Sin thig bheg and other ministers suggests a political agenda.

210. *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* adopts the spelling rNam lde mgon instead of the more common gNam lde mgon. This is, in my view, due to a wish of Ngag dbang grags pa or his source to link the etymology of the name of the Pu hrang king to the legend of Dzam bha la and the deity's miraculous gift. The spelling rNam lde mgon suggests rNam thos sras, a manifestation of Dzam bha la.

211. *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* (p.69 line 19-p.70 line 6): "mKhar gong na bzhugs dus Dzam bha la'i zhal gzigs/ (p.70) thengs gcig tshong pa mang po byung nas nor rnam khong sar bcoln nas lo gsum nas nged ma slebs na khyed rang bsname zer nas song ngo/ phyi dus la'ang ma slebs pa'i kha phye nas/ gzigs pas nor dpag tu med pa byung/ khyad par du dngul gyi srang kha thebs pa/ 'Dzam 'Dzam zhes pa'i kha cig can byung/ rNam ldes 'Dzam pa la'i dngos grub du dgongs nas long spyod la/ snying po blangs pa'i phyr lHa ldes bzhengs pa'i dngul sku'i/ g.yas g.yon du de dang ma 'dres pa'i sPyan ras gzigs dang/ Phyang rdor bzhengs/"; "When [rNam lde mgon (aka

A tig sman)] was at the upper [rGyal ti] castle he had the vision of Dzam bha la.(p.70) On one occasion, many traders came. They entrusted him much wealth at his place. They said: "If we do not come back in three years you will keep it". They did not come back later so that he opened [the repository] and looked. There was a quantity of wealth that mind could not [even] conceive. In particular, silver *srang*-s were struck on their surface. They had a 'Dzam 'Dzam [imprint] on their surface. rNam lde [mgon] thought that this was due to the power of 'Dzam pa la (spelled so). In order to respect the sense of these reaches, he made the unique [statues of] sPyan ras gzigs and Phyag rdor to the right and left of the silver image made by lHa lde".

Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum gyi dkar chag (p.23 lines 6-16): "gNam mgon ldes sku mkhar gong du Dzambha la bsrubs pas zhal gzigs/ mi ring par Sog po'i tshong pa gtos che ba byung / nor rnams rgyal po la bcol te lo gsum la nged ni ma slebs pa na khyed rang tshos spyod gcig zer log go/ de nas lo dus la ma slebs pa'i tshe kha bye nas gzigs pas nor rnams kha phye nas gzigs pas bsam gyis mi khyab pa dang khyad par rin po che dngul gyi phung po mi khur bcu bzhi tsam byung ba'i tam ka thams cad la Dzam Dzam zhes pa'i yi ge gsal bar 'dug pa sha stag byung bas rMugs 'dzin gyi dbang arya Dzambha la rnam gnyis kyi sku rgyu dngos su phul bar nges so/ de nas chos rgyal de nyid dang rje btsun 'phags ma sGrol ma rnam 'phrul Jo 'bum rgyal mo gnyis kyi Bi shwa karma'i zol 'dzin pa'i sprul pa'i bzo bo bkug ste/ rje btsun 'Jam dpal dbyangs dang sku tshad gnyis pa'i Thugs rje chen po dang Phyag na rdo rje dngul la gar lugs su sgrub//"; "At the upper [rGyal ti] castle, gNam mgon lde meditated on Dzambha la and had the vision [of the deity]. Not long after, a great number of Sog po traders came. They entrusted much wealth with the king. They said: "If we do not come back in three years you can keep it", and left. Thereafter, they did not come back in that span of years. At that time, [rNam lde mgon] opened [their repository] and looked. There was so much wealth that it was inconceivable and in particular he saw a quantity of precious silver that made fourteen loads a man could hardly carry. There was a clearly visible imprint on all the ingots only saying Dzam Dzam. Being the power of both rMugs 'dzin (a form of Dzambha la) and arya Dzambha la, it was sure that [the wealth] was meant to make statues. Then the *chos rgyal* and and Jo 'bum rgyal mo, the emanation of rje btsun 'phags ma sGrol ma, summoned an artist emanation of Bi shwa karma. He made both Thugs rje chen po and Phyag na rdo rje in the proper rendition, the same height as rje btsun 'Jam dpal dbyangs".

The wealth was silver since it was meant to make statues in the same material of the 996 'Jam dpal dbyangs.

Kho char dkar chag (f.10a-11a = p.47 line 7-p.48 line 5): "gNam mgon (f.10b) ldes sku mkhar gong du Dzam bha lha yi bsnyen pa mdzad pas Dzam lha'i zhal yang gzigs shing/ thengs gcig Sog po'i tshong pa mang po byung nas/ nor rnams khong sar bcol zhing/ lo gsum nas khong rnams yong bar bshad/ gal te ma slebs tshe nor thams cad khyed rang gis dbang mdzod zer shing tshong pa log/ de nas lo dus la tshong pa ma slebs pas nor rnams kha phye nas gzigs pas nor dpag tu med pa yod cing lhag par dngul gyi tam ka mang po la yi ge Dzam Dzam zhes pa'i kha yig gzigs te/ Dzam bha lha yi dngos grub gnang bar mkhyen te/ rgyal po gNam mgon lde rang nyid dang lcam rje btsun sGrol ma'i rman 'phrul Jo 'bum rgyal mo gnyis zhal gros/ bzo bo Bi shwa karma'i rnam 'phrul lha bzo mkhas pa 'ga' zhid yod pa dang rten 'brel 'grigs te/ mnga' bdag 'Khor (p.48) re dang/ lHa lde yab(f.11a) sras kyi bzhengs pa'i Jo bo 'Jam dpal rdo rje'i g.yas su rgyal kun snying rje" rang gzugs 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug dang/ g.yon du rgyal kun nus pa"i rang gzugs gsang bdag Phyag na rdo rje gnyis dngul sku gtso bo dang sku tshad mnyam par dngul gar blugs su bzhengs//", "As gNam mgon (f.10b) lde meditated on Dzam bha lha (sic) at *sku mkhar gong* ("upper rGyal ti castle"), he had the vision of Dzam lha (sic) and, once, since many Sog po traders appeared, they entrusted their merchandise to him, saying that they would return in three

The Sog po merchants of *Kho char dkar chag* who donated their goods to rNam lde mgon were Mongols rather than Muslims, as the terms Sog po could imply, too. That the Hor pa sponsorship, ascribed in legendary terms to Mongol merchants, was granted to Kha char owing to the contacts with 'Bri gung gling pa is supported by the fact in his *rnam thar* that this holy place was the residence of 'Jig rten mgon po's nephew.²¹² The assertions in the literature that, through 'Bri gung gling pa, the Mongols of South Turkestan gave rNam lde mgon the opportunity to be the *sbyin bdag* of the silver statues at the sides of 'Jam dpal dyangs are thus reinforced.

The narrative includes a brief historical remark on the time when they were created. It says that, in order to emulate his father, rNam lde mgon had the two silver images made. Hence, they were cast after the death of sTag tsha Khri 'bar, which occurred between the summer of 1219 and the summer of 1220. However, Shes rab 'byung gnas's 1220 visit to gNyi gong, the "shore of the ocean of sand", is too a strict *terminus post quem* for the making of the side statues of Kha char since rNam lde mgon had to wait for three years before he could avail of the silver left by the Mongol merchants. Hence, the two silver statues of the Kha char brothers to the sides of the image of 'Jam dpal dbyangs jointly casted by A shwa

years, adding: "In case we do not come back, you will own all these goods", the traders left. Then, the traders having not returned within those years, he opened the boxes of merchandise [and] looked [inside]. He saw that there were innumerable treasures and, in particular, many silver coins minted with the letters Dzam Dzam. He realised he had obtained the power of Dzam bha lha (sic). King gNam mgon lde and his wife Jo 'bum rgyal mo, the incarnation of rje btsun sGrol ma, these two, conferred. There were some master artists, the incarnations of artist Bi shwa karma, with whom they were on good terms. To the right of the Jo bo 'Jam dpal rdo rje, made by mnga' bdag 'Khor re and lHa lde, the father and son, the statue of the all-compassionate 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug and, to the left, the statue of the all-powerful lord of secrets Phyag na rdo rje, these two, were made in silver the size of the central image cast in silver".

Kho char dkar chag thus associates rNam lde mgon's wife, Jo 'bum rgyal mo, and her husband with the making of the two silver images. *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum dkar chag* (f.10a line 2-f.10b line 5) has the same account as *Kho char dkar chag*.

On Kha char see the account of the first time the silver Kha char Jo bo statue spoke in *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum dkar chag* (p.18 line 4-p.19 line 3, *Kho char dkar chag* (f.7a-b = p.43 lines 7-14); and Vitali, "Introduction" to *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum dkar chag* (p.VII-XIX).

212. 'Bri gung gling pa had murals painted on the walls of Kha char gtsug lag khang ('*Bri gun gling Shes rab 'byun gnas rnam thar* p.22 lines 3-4). This was carried out before he went to meet the Mongols. Hence, if, as it seems, the making of the two side "brothers" was sponsored by the Mongols, another sub-phase of donation to Kha char has to be recognized, which took place before the two side statues were added to the central Jo bo. Mongol patronage of Kha char occurred in the years before the Mongols began to found Buddhist temples. Works on O go ta's Karakorum palace began after Jing gir rgyal po established the town in 1220, and its Buddhist structure was completed by Mon 'gor rgyal po (Shatzman Steinhard, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongol Road to Dadu" p.60).

'*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a line 4-f.29b line 1) says that Kha char was among other temples given to Shes rab 'byung gnas by the Pu hrang jo bo A tig sman.

dharma and Wang ku la were made sometime after water sheep 1223 and most probably in wood monkey 1224.

Kha char was among other temples given to Shes rab 'byung gnas by the Pu hrang jo bo rNam lde mgon, aka A tig sman ('*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* f.29a line 4-f.29b line 1 see above n.610).²¹³ 'Bri gung gling pa had murals painted on the walls of Kha char gtsug lag khang ('*Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.22 lines 3-4 and below n.462). This was carried out before he went to meet the Mongols and therefore at the beginning of his seven-year residence in Upper West Tibet. Hence, the making of the two side "brothers", sponsored by the Mongols, was a successive sub-phase at Kha char.

On his way to Dol po in 1220, Ri khrod dBang phyug aka Don mo ri pa met 'Bri gung gling pa in Pu hrang.²¹⁴ This was the same year of Shes rab 'byung gnas's meeting with his

213. '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a line 4-f.29b line 1): "De'i rjes su 'Bri gung spyen snga Shes rab 'byung gnas sam 'Bri gung gling pa zhes grags pa de nyid 'khor rab byung lnga brgya dang bcas pa byon zhing bzhugs yul Bya skyibs dang/ Dar lung gi phu'i sgrub phug sogs su bzhugs pas rtogs pa'i yon tan dpag tu med pa brnyes/ rje 'dis Pu rang rgyal po jo bo A tig sman la bDe mchog gi dbang mo che dang rDo rje theg pa'i bskyed rdzogs kyi sgom btap pa'i yon du Pu rang Kho char lha khang dang/ Dam pa rdzong/ Lag phreng thod dkar/ (f.29b) mGon pa Ro ma/ 'Um lo shing phug, Ri bo rtse brgyad/ Li dur bcas rGyang grags pa'i lha 'bangs su phul/'", "Then, 'Bri gung spyen snga Shes rab 'byung gnas otherwise known as 'Bri gung gling pa came with a retinue of five hundred monks. While staying at Bya skyibs and the meditation cave in upper Dar lung, he obtained innumerable signs of wisdom. This lord (Shes rab 'byung gnas) gave the great initiation of bDe mchog and the basics for the meditation stages on *rDo rje theg pa* to the Pu rang king jo bo A tig sman. In return, he was awarded the religious and secular properties of the rGyang grags pa including Pu rang Kho char lha khang and Dam pa rdzong, Lag phreng thod kar, mGon pa Ro ma, 'Um lo shing phug, Ri bo rtse brgyad and Li dur".

Besides confirming that sTag tsha Khri 'bar was dead in 1219 when Shes rab 'byung gnas reached Pu hrang from Central Tibet, the passage enumerates the holy places held by the monks of the 'Bri gung monastery rGyang grags, including Kha char, Ri bo rtse brgyad as far as south at 'Um lo in the Himalayan range. These lines in '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* also establish a range of years—between 1215 and 1219—during which the foundation of rGyang grags occurred.

214. *rDo rje mdzes 'od, bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (p.460 line 4-p.461 line 3): "Nangs par gTsang pa dang slob dpon la gdan bag tsam mi mthun pa 'dug pa la dum par mdzad do/ de nas ston Dol por byon pa'i dus su slob dpon dbon po Sher 'byung bsdud gyin yod pas mjal du byon nas da Pu rangs su mi sdod Sle mi na phar 'gro gsungs pas de ma dga' zer/ ngas Dwags po mang po'i dpon mi yong gsungs pas/ de bden khyod (p.461) gral mgo bya dgos nyen zer te cang mi gsung de ka la bzhengs te byon no/ Pu rangs su byon pa dang bla bzhang gis bshol bas ma gsan pas/ jo bo A tig na re nyid la mi nyan yang slob dpon dbon po la ma dris par 'gro'am zer bas/ ngas dris zin gsungs pas physis khong pa thams cad kyis 'bar bas/ slob dpon dbon po na re de tsam snang thom song nas smra ba ma byung gsung skad do/'", "The following morning, gTsang pa and *slob dpon* having had a little disagreement over [who had] to stay [there to be the leader], he (Ri khrod dBang phyug) settled the dispute. Then in autumn, when he was leaving for Dol po, as he went to see slob dpon dbon po Sher 'byung, who was staying on, he told him: "I am not going to be in Pu rangs now. I am going to Sle mi". [Sher 'byung] said: "I am not happy about this". [Ri khrod dBang phyug added]: "I did not come [here like you] to be the headman of many Dwags po [bKa' brgyud pa]". [Sher 'byung admitted]: "This is true". [Ri khrod dBang phyug concluded]: "You

foreign interlocutors in gNyi gong, which helps to confirm when the event happened. The conquest of Khotan and Southern Turkestan had been undertaken by Jing gir rgyal po's general Jebe Noyan in 1218 and consolidated in 1221.²¹⁵ Those met by 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas probably were Jebe's Mongols.

The establishment of friendly relations with Hor pa dignitaries in Southern Turkestan allowed the bKa' brgyud pa of Upper West Tibet to secure their northern border from the devastating invasions that had threatened and occasionally overthrown local political control and disrupted religious life throughout most of the 12th century.

The diplomatic mission of 'Jig rten mgon po's nephew is indicative of the approach used by the Hor towards Tibet in the years of Jing gir rgyal po's reign. Except from sporadic inroads in the eastern side of the plateau, consequent to the prolonged warfare of the Mongol emperor against the Tangut kingdom neighbouring on A mdo, Jing gir rgyal po did not yet set his eyes on Tibet. That he invaded the plateau in 1206 is a fancy of some Tibetan authors and scholars of the past generations. The grant of silver was an isolated episode that was the expression of the absence of a policy to engage Tibet. The donation reflects the good impression that Shes rab 'byung gnas left on his interlocutors, thus being an approach ad personam in favour of the 'Bri gung pa master's charisma rather than an overall Hor pa policy of those years.

Hence, until the reign of O go ta (1229-1241),²¹⁶ the Hor did not find it necessary to adopt

might be obliged to sit at the head of the row (i.e. to be the local headman of the 'Bri gung pa-s)". [Sher 'byung] did not say anything more. [Ri khrod dBang phyug] got up and left. He [first] went to Pu rangs [smad]. The *bla zhang* (jo bo A tig sman) tried to postpone [his departure] but he did not comply. As jo bo A tig said: "If you do not listen to me, you should not leave without at least asking the *slob dpon dbon po* [for permission]", as he replied "I have [already] asked him", then all of them (A.tig and everyone else) were furious. It is said that the *slob dpon dbon po* (i.e. Shes rab 'byung gnas) exclaimed: "At that time I was dizzy and I did not hear what he said".

215. For a description of Jing gir rgyal po's conquest of Southern Turkestan at the expense of the Buddhist ruler Kuchlug, who had previously dispossessed the Qarakhitay, i.e. the lords of Kashgar and South Turkestan, see Juvaini (Boyer transl., *History of the World Conqueror by 'Ala-ad-din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini* vol.1 p.66-69). The general to whom Jing gir rgyal po delegated the campaign against Kuchlug, the lord of Southern Turkestan, is named Jebe Noyan in the *Secret History* by Rashid-ad-din, while he is called Yeme in Juvaini. Jebe pursued the fleeing ruler of Khotan and Kashgar all the way into the mountains of Badakhshan, where the latter was seized and beheaded (Boyle, "The Mongol World Empire" p.616a-b). The conquest of Southern Turkestan and Khorasan was accomplished between 1218-1221. Kuchlug was killed in the latter year.

For the date of Jebe Noyan's conquest of the Qarakhitay, useful to date the Mongols' conquest of Southern Turkestan, which enabled them to come into contact with the 'Bri gung pa, see Walker, *Jenghiz khan* (p.75-77 and especially p.78). This is a secondary source helpful to calculate the year in which it took place. It occurred five years after events dating to 1213, which fixes the defeat of Kuchlug to 1218.

216. The *bstan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka'chems* in *rLangs Po ti bse ru* (p.447 line 21-p.448 line 10) reads: "ICags pho byi ba'I lo la O ko (p.448) ta yi lung gis Bod yul du/ Hor dmag Li byi ta dang Dor ta gnyis/ snga phyi mngags nas mi rtsa dud grangs rtsis/ Hor khirms 'jags bcug gdan sa

the policy of associating their princes to Tibetan noble families engaged in providing tribute from the estates these Tibetans controlled. The Mongols had not yet established roles and posts to individuals from these families to exercise governance on their behalf.²¹⁷

▪ 'Jig rten mgon po' prophecy about the mission at the "shore of the ocean of sand"
Several years before 'Bri gung gling pa's meeting with Jing gir rgyal po's emissaries, 'Jig rten mgon po foresaw that one of his successors would become the *bla ma* of the Mongols.²¹⁸

Phag gru dang/ 'Bri khung thel gyi zhabs tog sgrub par phul/ Bod yul dBus gTsang mNga' ris skor gsum la/ rgyal khirms chos khirms 'jags pa rje yi drin/ de gong dBus gTsang mgo lung 'Bri khung la/ byas nas sgom pa Shaka rin spyi dpon byed/ gTsang pa'i dpon la rDo rje dpal ba pa/ g Yor po Yar 'brog lho pa gZhon nu 'bum/ mNga' ris skor gsum rnam pa dpa shi rnams/ so sor khirms gcod la ni rje yi bskos/ de lo rje yis Phag gru'i khri dpon la/ lDan ma sgom brTson bskos//"; "In the iron male rat year (1240), by Hor rgyal po O ko ta's order, Hor dmag Li byi ta and Dor ta, these two, as they had been sent earlier and later, made two censuses of the population's homes (*dud*) . The Hor law was established. [The Hor pa] supported gdan sa Phag gru and 'Bri khung thel. Local lords were chosen to establish *rgyal khirms* and *chos khirms* in Bod yul dBus gTsang [and] mNga' ris skor gsum. As the emperor made 'Bri khung the main territory of dBus gTsang, sgom pa Shaka rin [chen] was nominated *spyi dpon* ("supreme headman"). The emperor appointed rDo rje dpal ba to be the gTsang pa *dpon*, gZhon nu 'bum to be the g.Yor po Yar 'brog lho pa's *dpon*, [and] a *rnam pa* (spelled so for *gnam sa*) *dpa 'shi* to be the mNga' ris skor gsum *dpon*. They were appointed leaders to administer the law in their own [territories]. In the same year, the lord appointed lDan ma sgom brTson to be the Phag gru's *khri dpon*".

217 *Si tu bka' chems in rLangs Po ti bse ru* (p.110 lines 1-6) says: "Mon 'gor rgyal po rgyal sar bton 'dug cing/ de dus Bod phyogs 'dir rgyal bu Go dan Byang ngogs pa bdag par 'dug pa la/ Go dan A ka la bla mchod blangs pas/'Bri khung Mon 'gor rgyal po shes/ Tshal pa Se chen rgyal po shes/ Phag mo gru pa rgyal bu Hu la hu shes/ sTag lung pa A ri bho ga shes par 'dug cing/ rgyal rgyud bzhi pos/ khri skor so sor sgos bdag byas par 'dug//", "The throne was given to Mon 'gor rgyal po and, at that same time, rgyal bu Go dan was made lord of Byang ngogs (sic for Byang ngos, not to be confused with Gu ge Byang ngos) in the direction of Tibet. Since [Tibetan] *bla mchod* ("officiating *bla ma*-s") were appointed to Go dan A ka la, the 'Bri khung pa-s were assigned to Mon 'gor rgyal po, the Tshal pa were assigned to Se chen rgyal po, the Phag mo gru pa were assigned to rgyal bu Hu la hu, the sTag lung pa were assigned to A ri bho ga, to these four royal lineages. A leader at the head of each *khri skor* was chosen".

218. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar (p.111 line 7): "Zla ba dgu song ngo dngung lo drug cu tham pa bzhes pa yin no//"; "Nine months elapsed, and 'Jig rten mgon po] turned sixty years old (1202) at that time".

Ibid. (p.112 lines 3-6): "Zhal snga nas kyang nga'i 'di 'dra bar Gar log yul du song na yang khong gi bla' mchod gnas su byed pa yin ngas rDo rje gdan blangs na yang ster re la gle rtsi gsum gyis tshogs Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa lag mthil na yang dbang pa yin gsung ngo skabs der rang du yul rGya gar du dge slong sha mdog dkar po lhung bzed dang bsil byed bsnams pa cig byung pa la khyod su yin byas pas 'Bri gung pa yin gar bzhud byas pas Gar log 'dul du 'gro ji ltar 'dul byas pas Byams pa chen po'i ting nge 'dzin la mnyam par bzhag pas rang dul du 'gro gsung ste de kho na bzhin du byung gsung//"; "[Jig rten mgon po] said: "If someone will go to the land of the Gar log to be my representative, he will be their *bla'i mchod gnas*. If I would ask for rDo rje gdan, I will be given [this holy place]. For the purpose, three [pieces of] musk are sufficient, and if one

This was the prelude to Shes rab 'byung gnas' mission to meet the emissaries of the sTod Hor at the edge of the Tarim basin. The prophecy amounts to another case of seeing matters related to mNga' ris stod from a perspective external to the perceptions coming from the lands on the “upper side”.

sKyob pa rin po che himself did not assign the mission to a disciple in particular. He only said that one of his disciples would become the teacher of the Gar log in the future without specifying when. At that point in time, his nephew Shes rab 'byung gnas—called slob dpon ston Shes in the passage—offered himself for the job mentioned in the prophecy and sKyob pa rin po che promptly agreed.²¹⁹

'Jig rten mgon po's prophecy in water dog 1202 about one of his disciples becoming the Gar log's *bla'i mchod gnas* combined with his failed attempt to see Kha che pan chen, which cannot have happened before 1204 when the Kashmiri master reached dBus gTsang, shows that the choice of 'Bri gng gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas to go on an embassy to the Gar log was made in those years.

No clues are provided why it took so long for 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas to go on his mission. His duties allowed him to proceed to Upper West Tibet in 1219 only after 'Jig rten mgon po's death. Hypothetical explanations are either that sKyob pa rin po che could not establish contacts with the Gar log during his lifetime. This was possible only after his death and the subjugation of the Gar log by Jing gir rgyal po's Mongols. Or else the situation internal to the 'Bri gung pa was not conducive to establishing these relations. More likely, sKyob pa rin po che's participation from distance in the defence of the Tangut kingdom did not favour smooth relations with Jing gir rgyal po's Hor. Only after his death, the Mongol emperor was closer to the 'Bri gung pa.

has the teachings of Sang rgyas in one's hand palm, he will be controlling [those people]”. He added: “At this time itself, there is a *dge slong* with a white complexion carrying a begging bowl and a staff (*bsil byed* sic for *gsil byed*) in the land of rGya gar. He will be asked: “Who are you?” and will reply: “I am a 'Bri gung pa”. He will be asked: “Where are you going?” and [will say]: “I am going to tame the Gar log”. He will be asked: “How will you tame them?”, and [will answer]: “I will go [to the land of the Gar log] so that they will be spontaneously tamed by being absorbed into the meditation on *Byams pa chen po* (the “great compassion”)”. He said that it would happen exactly that way”.

One cannot avoid to note the difference of 'Jig rten mgon po's approach towards the Gar log and the Tangut people. He consented whoever was the disciple to go to Southern Turkestan to be their *mchod gnas*, whereas he did not let 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa become the officiating *bla ma* of the Tangut. Elsewhere soon below, I stress the secular motive that must have led sKyob pa rin po che to insist with 'Gar Dam pa so that he would be free from court obligations in Byang Mi nyag. With the Gar log he did not oppose his nephew Shes rab 'byung gnas to entertain diplomatic relations. But, rather than with them, he interacted with their Hor pa conquerors.

219. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar (p.112 line 6): “'Di la ni slob dpon ston Shes zhus pas kyang min mi gsung ste dgyes par zhal gyis bzhes/””; “With regard to this, slob dpon ston Shes [rab 'byung gnas] asked him [to be chosen] and ['Jig rten mgon po] did not say no. He happily accepted”.

The reference to the Gar log rather than the Mongols in the prophecy of 'Jig rten mgon po issued in 1202, the "shore of the ocean of sand", where 'Bri gung gling pa went, is historically sound, since the land had not yet been conquered by the Mongols and the Gar log were still independent. The use in the passage of the term Gar log rather than sTod Hor is perfectly admissible also from another angle, given that Southern Turkestan is traditionally associated in the Tibetan culture with the Gar log, Turkic populations that succeeded one another in the control of the land. They inhabited the region autonomously for centuries before being subjugated by Jing gir's Mongols and continued to inhabit it under the control of the sTod Hor. To call the land of the Gar log the country conquered by the Hor in the episode of '*Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* in which 'Bri gung gling pa met with Jing gir's emissary reflects a local state of affairs that became obsolete with the Mongol conquest.

▪ Ya rtse the new ally of the 'Bri gung pa

'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas's tactful activity led him to secure ties of friendship with Ya rtse, another raising power on the scene of mNga' ris stod. Ya rtse shared kinship bonds with the genealogy of Pu hrang, its neighbour in the north. The Ya rtse kings of that period were of Pu hrang pa origin. The links 'Bri gung gling pa established in favour of his school were Grags pa lde, the mighty Ya rtse king of those years, by means of a meeting on the shores of Ma pham g.yu mtsho ('*Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.22 line 4-p.23 line 3, '*Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* f.29b lines 1-3). The *lo rgyus* adds that, while 'Bri gung gling pa was at Ma pham, he was met by Ya rtse Grags pa lde, but the passage is to be read that Shes rab 'byung gnas went to the lake to see the king.

▪ 'Bri gung gling pa and Bla ma g.yu ru

'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas accomplished one more epochal innovation that turned Seng ge sgang of Bla ma g.yu ru, the only surviving temple built by lo chen Rin chen bzang po at this holy place, into 'Bri gung pa.²²⁰ Inspection of Seng ge sgang shows it to be the Bla ma g.yu ru temple that Shes rab 'byung gnas worked on, since it contains murals dating to the 13th century and also sculptures and wall paintings dating to the time of *bstan pa phyi dar*.

The local lore, influenced by the historical assessments about Bla ma g.yu ru by the 17th Ba ku la rin po che, neglects entirely '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* which enlightens 'Bri gung gling pa's role in transferring the religious affiliation of old *bstan pa phyi dar* temples to his school's fold.

The 17th Ba ku la, faithfully followed, for one, by the modern author dKon mchog bkra shis, has it that it was an unspecified Zhwa dmar pa who introduced the bKa' brgyud pa

220. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan in '*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* (p.100 lines 2-3) discloses this seminal change of the monastery's religious affiliation that has stayed to this day without further detail: "Ti se dang/ g.Yu .ru sogs kyi dgon gnas kyang 'debs par mdzad//", "[Shes rab 'byung gnas] also founded monasteries and holy places at Ti se and [Bla ma] g.yu ru".

school at Bla ma g.yu ru. This would have not happened before the life of the first one of them, Zhwa dmar Grags pa seng ge (1283-1349).²²¹ However, their assessment places the passage of Bla ma g.yu ru into the 'Bri gung pa fold even later. According to the two authors, Bla ma g.yu ru would have become Karma pa from the first half of the 14th century at the earliest. They add that it turned out to be 'Bri gung pa after the wood pig 1515 foundation of Phyang in Mar yul stod, some 300 years too late. The construction of Phyang is seen by those authors as the decisive step to establish Bla ma g.yu ru as a 'Bi gung pa monastery on a steadfast basis.²²² Given dKon mchog bkra shis's admission that reliable material to confirm their view is absent,²²³ the ties between this Zhawa dmar pa monastery Yangs pa can in dBus and Bla ma g.yu ru are rather inconsistent and the monastery's passage from Karma pa to 'Bri gung pa is not explained. 'Bri gung gling pa's conversion of Bla ma g.yu ru makes other theories insubstantial.

Shes rab 'byung gnas had a further role in securing temples to the 'Bri gung pa. Tsa tsa pu ri lha khang, sited in the vicinity of the A lci temple complex, has a *mgon khang* which used to be a *lha khang* in the past. On one of its wall there is a faded inscription where the name of 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas is decipherable. His role is not definite, so that whether he was responsible for its construction or renovation is obscured by the inscription's bad state of preservation.

Pu hrang pa rule in Mar yul (1215-ca.1235)

▪ dNgos grub mgon (r. 1215-ca.1235)

Mar yul returns to bKa' brgyud pa historical records with lha chen dNgos grub, the last of the

221. The sequence of the early Zhwa dmar pa is:

Zhwa dmar pa Tshul khriims dpal (1096-1132),

Zhwa dmar pa Nam mkha' 'od (1133-1199),

Zhwa dmar pa bKra shis grags pa (1200-1282),

Zhwa dmar pa Grags pa seng ge (1283-1349),

Zhwa dmar pa mKha' spyod dbang po (1350-1405).

The common view in the Karma Kam tshang school is that the first Zhwa dmar was Grags pa seng ge.

222. dKon mchog bkra shis, "g.Yung drung thar pa gling" (in 'Jam dbyangs rgal mtshan ed., *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.636 lines 3-4): "Di nas grwa rgyun yang Byang Yangs pa can gyi dgon pa phebs gsol 'dug//"; "Thereafter there was the custom that a succession of monks from Byang Yangs pa can went to [inhabit] the *dgon pa*".

223. dKon mchog bkra shis, "g.Yung drung thar pa gling" (in 'Jam dbyangs rgal mtshan ed., *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.635 line 17-p. 636 line 1): "Re zhig dgon pa nyams dams par gyur pa de'i tshé Zhwa dmar bas 'dzin skyong dang nyams gso mdzad/ (p.636) 'on kyang da lta Zhwa dmar bas 'dzin skyong mdzad pa'i rtags mtshan sogs khungs ldan ma brnyed//"; "After some time, when this *dgon pa* turned into ruins, the Zhwa dmar pa took hold of it and made a renovation. (p.636) However, at present, reliable material cannot be obtained on such [topics] as indications on the ownership by the Zhwa dmar pa".

rulers mentioned in *La dwags rgyal rabs* before the long gap in this royal genealogy that lasted until rgyal bu Rin chen (on the throne of Kha che 1320-1323). He is known as dNgos grub mgon to the other sources but, an important one, *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*, ignores dNgos grub mgon and passes to mention gZi di khyim, called De khyim in *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa*, the ruler after him.

dNgos grub mgon, the son of jo bo sTag tsha Khri 'bar, was ruling in Pu hrang in wood pig 1215, when the third 'Bri gung pa wave of *ri pa-s* reached his land, and for a remarkably limited time thereafter.

The year of dNgos grub mgon's ascension to the throne of Mar yul can be approximated with the help of events that occurred in Pu hrang during that turn of events:

- Together with his father sTag tsha Khri 'bar and his brother A tig sman, dNgos grub mgon welcomed to Pu hrang the first 'Bri gung pa *rdor 'dzin*, Ghu ya sgang pa in 1215.

- sTag tsha, the Pu hrang *jo bo*, died a few years after in the period between the summer of earth hare 1219 and the summer of iron dragon 1220 (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.402).

- dNgos grub mgon succeeded him on the Pu hrang throne but then abdicated in favour of his younger brother rNam lde mgon/gNam lde mgon (aka A tig sman) at an unspecified time (ibid. p.375 and p.380-381).

- By the year 1219 or 1220, A tig sman was on the throne of Pu hrang, which means that dNgos grub mgon had left in the meantime to become the king of Mar yul. This happened just before 'Jig rten mgon po's nephew arrived in Pu hrang.²²⁴

Hence dNgos grub mgon became the ruler of Mar yul around 1219-1220, soon before the period during which 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187-1241) reached Upper West Tibet (see *'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.23 line 4-p.24 line 2).

The circumstances that led to the appointment of dNgos grub mgon to the throne of Mar yul, although neglected in the literature, had to do with a further diffusion of the 'Bri gung pa

224. *'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p.22 lines 1-4): "Dus der ni dngung lo so gsum bzhes so/ de nas Byang lam brgyud sTod du phebs pas/ jo bo A tig can du phebs/ jo bo 'khor bcas la/ sems bskyed dang dbang bskur gnang/ Phyang rgya'i chen po khrid btab pas ro cig gi rtogs pa 'khrungs te/ mi phyed pa'i dad pa brtan po dang ldan par gyur do/ gzhan yang jo bo 'Bum rgyan dang/ mnga' bdag sTag tsha'i sring mo/ jo jo dGe slong ma la sogs la'ang dbang bskur zhing gdams pa yang gnang//", "At that time ['Bri gung gling pa] was thirty-three (1219). Then he went to sTod via the Byang route. He went [to see] the *jo bo* who bore [the name] A tig. He gave empowerments and *sems bskyed* to *jo bo* and his court. He gave them basic instruction on *Phyang rgya chen po*. Consequently, awareness was born in them, which became a single hearted and steadfast faith. Furthermore, he also gave empowerments and teachings to jo bo (sic for *jo mo*) 'Bum rgyan and jo jo dGe slong ma, the sister of mnga' bdag sTag tsha".

For 'Bri gung gling pa's arrival at Ti se and the dates of his sojourn in West Tibet, see *'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p.31 line 1: "De ltar Ti ser lo bdun bzhugs nas/ bya lor 'Bri gung du byon//", "Hence, having stayed at Ti se for seven years, he returned to 'Bri gung in the bird year (1225)"). See also rDo rje mdzes 'od, *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (p.459 line 6-p.461 line 3; and above n.604); and *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.29a line 4-f.30b line 6).

school in the lands of Upper West Tibet and the Western Himalaya, patronised by the royal family of Pu hrang. In all likelihood, dNgos grub mgon became the king of Mar yul with the consent and support of the powerful 'Bri gung pa several decades after the school has set foot in Pu hrang.

'Bri gung gling pa had no part in the election of dNgos grub mgon in Ma r yul, since he reached Upper West Tibet after this event took place. Nonetheless, although not openly indicated in the sources, dNgos grub mgon, after being appointed ruler of Mar yul, availed himself of the support of 'Bri gung gling pa, who went to La dwags, too. The chronological delta that applies to 'Bri gung gling pa's encounter with dNgos grub mgon in Mar yul can be restricted to after 1220, following his return to Pu hrang after meeting the Mongol emissaries of Jing gir rgyal po at the border between Gu ge Byang ngos and Southern Turkestan (ibid. p.414-416 and above n.209). dNgos grub mgon's appointment as the king of Mar yul coincided with the growth of 'Bri gung gling pa's influence, since Shes rab 'byung gnas had exercised leverage on the sTod Hor.

The bKa' brgyud pa advance into the lands of Upper West Tibet brought a secular change that occurred step by step in mNga' ris skor gsum, from southeast to northwest. As in the case of sKyiid lde Nyi ma mgon's conquest of his kingdom, the starting point of the 'Bri gung pa diffusion was Pu hrang. The bKa' brgyud pa school's extension of power to Mar yul with the appointment of dNgos grub mgon as local ruler was preceded by their settling in Gu ge.

The political affiliation of bKra shis mgon (a local Tibetan?), dNgos grub mgon's predecessor in Mar yul according to *La dwags rgyal rabs*, is unknown and thus there is no ground to say whether he was another 'Bri gung pa and Pu hrang pa loyalist but this hypothesis cannot be ruled out.

There are obvious meeting points between 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and dNgos grub mgon:

- The ruler of Mar yul was a supporter of the school of which 'Bri gung gling pa was an eminent exponent;
- they were both in Mar yul around the same time;
- 'Bri gung gling pa was active in Mar yul smad (i.e. La dwags gsham), the area of the region where dNgos grub mgon was ruling.

These points of contact define a communion of intents that is implicit but not recorded in the sources.

'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas was the 'Bri gung pa catalyst in La dwags gsham owing to his work at Bla ma g.yu ru to make it a 'Bri gung pa monastery.

Tsa tsa pu ri lha khang forsaken, it is not sure whether his activity extended to A lci *chos 'khor* proper. Murals inside lHa khang so ma in the A lci temple complex, which point towards the 13th century and a 'Bri gung pa affiliation, may be the outcome of a religious endowment to this *chos skor*. Judging from this work and proximity of Tsa tsa pu ri to A lci *chos 'khor*, 'Bri gung gling pa could perhaps be credited with a systematic activity of turning old temples of great renown in mNga' ris stod—Kha char, Bla ma g.yu ru and those in the A lci area—into 'Bri gung pa institutions.

Hence the statement in *La dwags rgyal rabs* that dNgos grub mgon rendered great service to 'Jig rten mgon po is validated by other sources. The same text mentions the renovation of an unspecified holy institution founded earlier.²²⁵ The reference to 'Bri gung gling pa's work at Bla ma g.yu ru in Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan's *'Bri gung gser phreng* makes it likely that this temple is the one to which *La dwags rgyal rabs* refers.

Owing to the power they procured to themselves, the 'Bri gung pa dominated the first three quarters of the 13th century in Mar yul. Other members of the bKa' brgyud pa left fundamental traces in the region during those decades, as I show next.

The 'Bri gung pa in mNga' ris: further developments

▪ Seng ge ye shes's move to Dol po

At the end of his meditation practice at Gangs Ti se and Ma pham g.yu mtsho, which covers the sequence of historically significant events that concerned the royal house of Pu hrang,²²⁶ Seng ge ye shes began a new phase in his life.

The next step in grub thob Seng ge ye shes's existence was that he left Pu hrang for other lands of mNga' ris since he decided to distance himself from 'Bri gung gling pa whose gearing of the 'Bri gung pa activities did not suit his religious aspirations. This is one more sign that Seng ge ye shes's concern was ascetic in the most, while those of 'Bri gung gling pa were secular even when he devoted himself to religion (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* *ibid.*).

Unlike the biography of Chos sdings pa, in which the use of the duodenary cycle has been transferred to the *rab byung* calendar with the poor result of giving dates twenty-four years too late, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* dedicated by rDo rje mdzes 'od to the life of his teacher Seng ge ye shes is chronologically accurate, although his activities need to be followed season by season in order to date the years correctly. I have detected only one incongruent statement in the *rnam thar* which refers to the addition of one season in one year.

225. Attribution of these *dgon pa*-s to the 'Bri gung pa is based on different types of evidence. 'Bri gung pa Kha char is documented in the literature and by physical signs; Bla ma g.yu ru by Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan's *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* but no religious cycles in its premises can be attributed to the school; A lci lHa khang so ma appears to be 'Bri gung pa owing to his murals; Tsa tsa puri due to an inscription. The oral tradition of *La dwags* attributes a *bstan pa phyi dar* phase to Wan la and Kan ji but this seems to be an overclaim in order to associate them to Mar yul in the days of lo chen Rin chen bzang po.

226. They were the years after sTag tsha Khri 'bar's death, the transfer of dNgos grub mgon to Mar yul as its king and the ascension to the throne of Pu hrang of his son rNam lde mgon (i.e. jo bo A tig sman) as the single ruler of the kingdom, who had already been coopted to rule by his father (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.460 line 4-p.461 line 3).

In 1220, one year after he had reached Gangs Ti se, where he stayed in meditation, Seng ge ye shes left Pu hrang in order to find more conducive conditions in Dol po. His departure rested on his awareness that the Mon pa lands were territories where he had previously received local support. He did not have previous experiences of Dol po or neighbouring Sle mi and Glo bo but farther to their east in Ku thang (see above p.60).

A tig sman encouraged Seng ge ye shes to carry out hermit activities directly in his kingdom. He paved the way for Seng ge ye shes to provide for the sustenance of *ri pa-s* at Gangs Ti se in iron dragon 1220 with the donation of holy places and an estate. Seng ge ye shes received Rong Yang dkar rdzong from the Pu hrang *jo bo*.²²⁷ The localisation of Yang (or g.Yang: see, e.g., Yang gser and g.Yang khug) is not ascertained but its morphology as *rong* makes it a lower altitude area possibly in the Himalayan range. If so, it would mean that, while the Pu hrang *jo bo* obviously had control of Pu hrang altogether, his authority extended over lower altitude areas. South of his kingdom, altitude diminishes remarkably.

There is no trace of other 'Bri gung *ri pa-s* who preceded Seng ge ye shes to Dol po. The tradition holds that he opened the "door" of Dol po to the 'Bri gung pa (see Mathes, "The Sacred Crystal Mountain in Dolpo: Beliefs and Pure Visions of Himalayan Pilgrims and Yogins" and *Dol po Shel gyi ri bo 'brug sgra'i gnas yig*).

The same passage in *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* says that he stayed at dgon pa rDo rje rdzong of Shes. The event implies that he was responsible for the establishment of the 'Bri gung pa hermitage-monastery at Shes, although it is not directly stated in his biography.

227. 'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus (f.30b line 6-f.31a line 1): "De'i rjes su grub thob chen po Seng ge ye shes byon/ rje 'dis Ti se Shel (f.31a) 'dra'i brag la lo gsum sgrub pa mdzad cing bzhugs skabs/ rgyal ba rGod tshang pa chen po dang mjal/", "After him (i.e. 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas), grub thob chen po Seng ge ye shes came. This *rje* meditated for three years at Ti se Shel 'dra'i brag and, while residing there, met the great rgyal ba rGod tshang pa".

'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus is wrong in saying that Seng ge ye shes came to Gangs Ti se after 'Bri gung gling pa because they travelled together. Seng ge ye shes's meeting with rGod tshang pa is another historical weak point of this text, for rGod tshang pa had left the Gangs Ti se area years before.

Ibid. (f.31a line 5-f.31b line 1): "rJe Seng ye 'dis Pu rang gi rgyal po sTag tsha dang/ A tig yab sras bla zhang blon gsum dang bcas pa la Byang chub sems bskyed kyi sdom pa gnang ba'i yon du Brag la bSam gtan gling dang/ Pu rang rGod khung (f.31b) dgon pa rten mchod cha dang bcas pa dang/ Ti se'i ri pa nams kyi 'tsho thebs su Rong Yang dkar yul zhes bya ba phul/", "This rje Seng [ge] ye [shes] gave the *Byang chub sems bskyed* vow to the Pu rang kings sTag tsha and A tig, the *bla zhang* (a term identifying the Pu hrang rulers) father and son, and their minister, altogether three. In return, he was awarded Brag la bSam gtan gling and Pu rang rGod khung dgon pa including their receptacles and religious objects, and the land of Rong Yang dkar in order to assure a living for the Ti se *ri pa-s*".

A tig sman's disliking Seng ge ye shes's decision to leave Pu hrang led him to improve the living standards of the *ri pa-s* of Gangs Ti se, most likely to convince him that remaining in Pu hrang would be the best option to support the hermit community rather than bring the religious master's disciples away from the core of the kingdom. The Pu hrang *jo bo*'s donation were an attempt to convince Seng ge ye shes not to leave for Dol po.

He lived there all the five years of his stay in Dol po, which fell in the years 1220-1225, with the exception of a single summer.²²⁸ Besides this succinct notion, his biography is laconic on the subject of his endeavours during those years.

▪ Seng ge ye shes's life and deeds (1225-1235)

Literary material not dealing with the life of Seng ge ye shes records events that affected the area in which he had settled or its vicinity. Owing to their magnitude, the events of wood monkey 1224 must have been felt in the borderland where Seng ge ye shes stayed because they disrupted the life of neighbouring regions, although they may have not directly affected Dol po due to its isolation. These events occurred at the time of the death of gNyo s lHa nang pa and subverted many regions of Tibet brought under pressure by different invading armies.

The disruptions of life in the proximity of Dol po pertain to Glo bo and the areas of southern Byang thang (Byang), where the resident 'brog pa clans of Phyag and Nyag were badly harmed.²²⁹

228. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.461 lines 3-4): "De nas Dol po'i ri khrod la byon nas Shes su dgon pa rDo rje rdzong bya bar rgung lo lnga bzhugs/ dbyar gcig Rong chung du yang bzhugs so//"; "Then, having proceeded to Dol po [to stay in] a hermitage, [Seng ge ye shes] spent five years at dgon pa rDo rje rdzong at Shes (spelled so) (1220-1225). He also stayed at Rong chung for one summer".

229. My transliteration of the concerned paragraph from *gNyo s lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* (p.119 line 14-p.120 line 6) is based on the original *dbu med* copy with its original spellings: "'Bri sTag gnyis nang 'khrug byas ste/ bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan bsnyal bas/ sems can pag tu myed pa du kha (f.108a) la bkod de/ chos pa la log lta skyes pa'i rten 'brel gyis gling/ dmad du Gangs kyi ra ba ral nas/ Hor gyi rgyal po'i bu'i dmag rdol/ Mi nyag rgyal po'i pho brang bcom pas/ rGya Bod gnyis kyi mi ya rabs rtso'i 'tsho ba 'gribs/ bTsong kha yog chen bco brgyad la sogs pa 'Kams kyi Byang smad tso bcom pas/ Bi ru dBus su don nas/ rTsang po man chad Byang gi ru sde thams cad brdungs pas/ gser dang tsha bal dang/ sha mar gyi rgyun chad/ sTod du gangs ral nas/ Hor rgyal po Bu mo'i dmag rdol te Blo bo man chad brdungs/ sTod kyi ru sde Chag Nyag la sogs pa ma lus par brdungs pas/ Byang 'khris re khyim la brten pa'i 'Brog pa rtsa ba chad//", "An internal dispute broke out between 'Bri [khung] and sTag [lung]. Since the banner of the teachings was laid down, sorrow affected innumerable human beings. Because of the karmic bonds deriving from the wrong views of the religious practitioners, the troops of the Hor emperor's son invaded the eastern side of the snow mountain ranges, which was laid waste. Since they took the palace of the Mi nyag king, the people and nobles of both China and Tibet suffered a food shortage. The eighteen *yog chen* of bTsong kha (spelled so) [and] the divisions of Byang smad of 'Kams (spelled so) were raided. As the Bi ru (i.e. Be ri) intruded into dBus, all communities to the north of the rTsang po were disrupted. The supplies of gold, salt and wool as well as meat and butter were stopped. The troops of the Hor king Bu mo invaded the snow mountains of sTod, which were laid waste. They disrupted [territories] as far as Blo bo. The communities of sTod, Chag (i.e. Phyag) and Nyag, were completely disrupted. The 'Brog pa-s, who occupied the settlements on each side of Byang, were destroyed from the roots".

In *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.101 lines 14-17), Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan has his own way to introduce an abridged account of the same events: "Phyis mya ngan las 'das pa'i tshes/ Thang lhas kyang mya ngan byas te/ gangs shel ltar dkar ba lo mang po

The accuracy of the date of these simultaneous invasions is confirmed by a double-check with statements in *sTag lung chos 'byung* and *sTag lung pa'i chos srid kyi byung tshul* that concern the year in which the dispute between 'Bri gung and sTag lung, which broke out at that time, happened. The two sTag lung sources validate 1224 as the year in which the dispute took place.²³⁰

spyod pa'i skye mthar rtsod med du grags Hor dmag lhags nas Mi nyag rgyal po bcom pa sogs/ sa'i bcud nyams pa'i ltas mang du byung ngo//"; "Then when [gNyos lHa nang pa] died, even Thang lha mourned him. Mountains immaculate like crystal became hazy for many years. The Hor troops invaded [the kingdom], and the king of Mi nyag was defeated. Many signs occurred of the decline of the potential of the land".

gNyan chen thang lha is the *yul lha* of the area where gNyos lHa nang pa built his monastery of lHa nang.

230. After the outbreak of the controversy, the 'Bri gung pa were satisfied to receive Phod mdo and dropped their opposition to the sTag lung pa project to build their *mchod khang*. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.258 line 16-p.259 line 15) says: "dGung lo sum cu so bzhi pa nyi sgrol byed ces pa shing pho spre'u lo dar la drags kyi tshes gcig rgyal phur 'dzom pa'i nyin nas gtsug lag khang chen mo brtsigs pa la zug Bod nas shing btsal/ rdo nas shing mang du drangs/ dang por 'Bri gung pas cung zad bkag kyang phyis Pho mdo'i gnas gzhi phag tu byung ba la brten/ 'Bri gung pa'i dbon pos Nags shod nas shing 'dren par zhus nas shing bsam gyis mi khyab pa drangs/ shing (p.259) drangs pa rnam la/ 'o skol gyi bka' srol 'di la dpon slob kyi rten 'brel 'dzom dgos/ bKa' brgyud gong ma rnam kyis chos phyir dka' ba dpag tu med pa spyad pa'i rnam thar yang 'o skol gyi 'di la tshang ba yin/ 'dus byas kyi dge ba'i rtsa ba la gtsug lag khang bzhengs pa las bsod nams che ba med/ rGya gar du sTobs ldan gyi rgyal po sogs kyis mchod rten bzhengs pa na gzhan gyi rgyu cha bsre dbang med pas ras la sa gos pa de'i gseb tu sprugs nas cung zad re 'gro e thub lta ba yin par snang/ 'ga' re'i rtog pa la mchod khang bzhengs pa'i bsod nams las mi phyug mang po sbyangs yod snyam pa srid na'ang/ mdzo rnam da lan nas dud 'gro'i lus mi len/ Phag mo gru pa'i gzim spyil chen mo byed dus 'gro mgon rin po ches rten 'brel mdzad de de'i srog chags rnam skye ba phyi ma shar phyogs rdul bral gyi shing du skyes nas smin gron du 'gyur gsungs pa dang 'dra/ nga'i mchod khang 'di la 'dag pa changs gcig bsres pa'i bsod nams kyang dpag tu med/ khyed dka' las byas pa rnam ngo mtshar che ba yin gsungs//"; "When [Rin chen mgon po, the second abbot of sTag lung] was thirty-four in wood male monkey (1224) known as *nyi sgrol byed*, on the best day of the rising [moon], which was a Thursday [with the star] rGyal, the foundations of the *gtsug lag khang* were laid. People looked for wood around Tibet. Much wood was brought from rDo. Though the 'Bri gung pa opposed it for a while at the beginning, given that the locality (*gnas gzhi*) of Phod mdo came into their hands, the 'Bri gung pa's *dbon po* having been requested to bring wood from Nags shod, it was brought in unimaginable quantities. (p.259) [Rin chen mgon po] told those who went to fetch the wood: "The karmic link of the ['Bri gung pa] master and disciples must coincide with this bKa' [brgyud pa] tradition of ours. For the sake of the teachings, the bKa' brgyud *gong ma* (i.e. the great masters of the past) [left] examples of their practice of uncountable hardships. We are purely [following] those [examples]. There is no greater merit than to build the *gtsug lag khang* as the basis of virtue by working unitedly. When the Indian king sTobs ldan was building a *mchod rten*, since it was not possible that others could mix [the mud as] building material, still, [people] mixed earth dirtying their cotton dress [with it] and fitted it (*gseb tu*) into this [*mchod rten*]. It seems that this is the attitude which each [of us] should somewhat go for. In the view of some people, it might be [worthy], for the sake of the karmic merit of building

The reason of the 1224 controversy between 'Bri gung and sTag lung at the time of gNyos lHa nang pa's death was the construction of the main temple at sTag lung that the 'Bri gung pa did not initially see with an eye of favour.

It could have been just coincidental but Seng ge ye shes left in wood bird 1225 (the year after the invasion of Glo bo and southern Byang thang) to return to 'Bri gung.²³¹ On the way, he came across the dreaded brigands of Byang thang. Their identity is not specified in his biography.²³² They could have been any of those recorded in the sources to have infested these lands either before, during or after 1224. Had they been either the Phyang or Nyag—the second of the two are documented as active robbers some time thereafter (*Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* p.468 line 3-p.469 line 3, see below p.188 and n.252)—this could be a sign that they had regrouped after their disruption in 1224.

Seng ge ye shes did better than Chos sdings pa who was obliged to flee from the Nag 'dus Khri tsho bandits in 1208. He confronted the brigands and resorted to a typical method of aversion to avoid their threat. He stiffened them to stone and induced in them such a state of personal disorder that he then used them as porters for his load. Hence, he was transporting goods to 'Bri gung in the best tradition of his school members to provide wealth to the

a *mchod khang* ("religious building"), to cleanse the defilements of many cattleheads. If so, *mdzo* and other cattle (*rnams*) will not receive again the body of quadrupeds. When Phag mo gru pa's *gzim spyil chen mo* was under construction, the 'gro mgon rin po che said something like: "This karmic link will make these animals be reborn in the rDul bral paradise in the east in the next life and will be liberated". By mixing a single handful of mud for my *mchod khang*, uncountable merit will be earned. You, who have undergone hardship, are really extraordinary".

sTag lung pa'i chos srid kyi byung tshul (p.236 lines 3-4) also touches the same events briefly: "gDan rab gnyis pa sKu yal ba chen po'i gtsug lag khang chen srid zhi called dPal 'bar mchod khang dmar po zhes grags pa rab byung bzhi pa'i shing sprel lor bzhengs//"; "The second abbot sKu yal ba chen po [Rin chen mgon po] built dPal 'bar mchod khang dmar po of the *gtsug lag khang srid bzhi* (spelled so for *srid zhi*) in the wood monkey year of the fourth *rab byung* (1224)".

231. Given that Seng ge ye shes reached 'Bri gung on the twenty-fifth of *dbyar zla ba* of 1225 without lengthy stops on the way (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.461 line 6, see n.233 immediately below), I don't think that he had already left Dol po in 1224 as Mathes ("The sacred Crystal Mountain in Dolpo: Beliefs and Pure Visions of Himalayan Pilgrims and Yogins" p.65) says.

232. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.461 lines 4-6): "De nas Dol po nas 'Bri gung du byon pa'i lam kar jag pa byung nas jag pa rnams rengs nas 'dar phri li li 'dug pas/ sgom chen rnams kyis bzung nas Gal gi bar du khres po bkal nas chos bshad sdom pa phog/ sgom ttab/ sgom chen pa mi 'dzoms pa'i mna' bskyal nas btang ngo/ Don mo rir zhag gsum bzhugs so/ dbyar mchod kyi zla ba'i nyi shu 'Bri gung du gdan phebs so//"; "Then, bandits appeared on the way from Dol po to 'Bri gung. But the bandits were petrified and left shivering ('*dar phri li li*). The ascetics (*sgom chen*) caught them and loaded them with baggage until Gal. They were given teachings and bound to a vow. They were made to meditate. After taking an oath that they would not harm ascetics, they were released. [Seng ge ye shes] stayed three days at Don mo ri. On the twenty-fifth of *dbyar mchod zla ba* (i.e. the summer 1225), [Seng ge ye shes] arrived at 'Bri gung".

monastery. It also indicates that Dol po had not been looted because he was able to carry donations to 'Bri gung.

After he received the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow at 'Bri gung, he did not move for one year (1226-1227),²³³ and in the summer of 1227 returned to hermit life, this time turning his attention to retreats of the La phyi area. He stayed at the hermitages around Chu bar during the winter of 1227-1228 until summer of the same year and proceeded to Dol po in autumn (ibid. p.463 lines 1-2).

Another major phase in the hermit life of Seng ge ye shes was inaugurated when he returned to Dol po where he stayed for four years until the autumn of 1232 from the autumn of 1228.²³⁴ His presence did not go undisputed.²³⁵ While the younger generation in the family

233. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.461 line 6-p.462 line 3): "De'i rgun ston smin drug zla ba la/ lo (p.462) mgor byas pa'i smin drug gi zla ba nyi shu rtsa lnga la/ mkhan po slob dpon ston pa mtshan gZhon u shes rab ces bya ba/ las kyi slob dpon yul ba mtshan gZhon nu 'bar zhes bya ba/ gsang ste ston pa dge bshes gNubs mtshan Yon tan grags zhes pas mdzad de bsnyen rdzogs par mdzad do/ de nas 'Bri gung du lo gcig dang zhag bdu bzhugs//"; "During *smin drug zla ba* in early winter (1225), (p.462) on the twenty-fifth of *smin drug zla ba* marking the beginning of the year (1226), he took the *bsnyen par rdzogs pa* vow from the *slob dpon ston pa* whose name was gZhon nu shes rab as *mkhan po*, the local [master] whose name was gZhon nu 'bar as *las kyi slob dpon*, and dge bshes gNubs whose name was Yon tan grags as *gsang ste ston pa*. Thereafter, he spent one year and seven days at 'Bri gung (i.e. until early 1227)".

234. An event of those years created an unbalanced situation affecting the equilibrium between the bKa' brgyud pa schools. After the struggle recorded in *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* at the death of lHa nang pa in 1224 (see above n.230), there was again a strife between 'Bri gung and sTag lung in iron tiger 1230 (see the biography of Ti shri ras pa in *lHo rong chos 'byung* p.217 lines 1-5), which did not lead to any military action although it was extremely close to one.

Another major occasion of disagreement between some 'Bri gung pa and another bKa' brgyud pa school members was the strife between the 'Brug pa and the lHa nang pa (i.e. the members of lHa nang *dgon pa* founded by gNyos lHa nang pa in the gNyan chen thang lha region in an unspecified year) which rGod tshang pa tried to reconcile (*rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma* p.379 lines 3-4). No year in which the discord happened is given in the *rnam thar*.

235. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.463 line 5-p.464 line 1): "Ban de dPal grags bya ba'i bu Mon chung bya ba yon bdag yin/ ban de de'i pha Yun po mthu' ban zhig yod pas khong pa gnyis mthun pas sgom chen pa rnams kyis kho'i mthu zlog byas zer nas sgom chen pa la (p.464) khos mthu byas te/ da ste lo gsum gyi bar du sgom chen pa gsum shi bar yod zer//"; "[Seng ge ye shes's] sponsor was Mon chung, the son of ban de dPal grags. Since the *ban de*'s father, Yun po, was a monk performing *mthu*' (spelled so), the two of them were in unfriendly terms. The ascetics having said that they wished to avert his *mthu*, (p.464) [Yun po] made a *mthu* against the ascetics. [Yun po] said that from then on, during a period of three years, three ascetics would die".

Ibid. (p.464 lines 2-4): "Phyis sgom chen pa gcig dang Ye tshul gnyis la yun ring po nas sgom chen pa de grongs/ Ye tshul la nub gcig gi rmang lam na jo bo Thugs rje chen po bsgoms pas kho'i rgyab na tshur sdig pa gcig gis so btab nas 'dug pa la spyang sngar byon nas bsal ba rmis ps de grag go/ mthu mkhan kho rang yang shi ba yin no//"; "Among an ascetic and Ye tshul, these two, the

which had religious authority in the area supported Seng ge ye shes, the older generation tried to preserve its power by turning hostile to him. One wonders how symptomatic is that there was no hostility during Seng ge ye shes' first sojourn in Dol po but during the second. Was his local enemy aggravated by his return which could have represented, in his view, Seng ge ye shes's persistence in choosing Dol po as his land? Eventually, the anonymous person hostile to Seng ge ye shes was killed in a dangerous game of sorcery.

Seng ge ye shes opened another phase of his life devoted to hermit practice at the string of lands frequented by rje btsun Mid la in the past when he went to Lan de (spelled so for Lan bde) after the winter of 1232. This is the area of sKyid grong towards the Mon pa borderland of present-day Nepal, historically known as Bal Bod, where the notorious Bal po rdzong was located.

Lan bde, crossed by the Lan bde chu and morphologically marking the border between the higher lands and the lower lands, was Jo bo rje A ti sha's favourite area in Mang yul sKyid grong during his one year sojourn, and perhaps in the whole of Tibet, for it reminded him of India (see Vitali, "Historiographical material on early sKyid-grong (gathered from local documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa sources)"). In Lan bde, Seng ge ye shes was quick in questioning the locals about who would grant sponsorship to him. Patronage was secured by one of the locals and grub thob Seng ge ye shes stayed in lower sKyid grong for three years (1233-1235).²³⁶

▪ A time of war in the Himalaya and mNga' ris smad

Major events affected the balance of secular power during those ten years of Seng ge ye shes' activity in the region. The Pu hrang-Ya rtse alliance grew stronger with the support of the 'Bri gung pa and, although it is unclear when this exactly happened because the event is not dated, the Ya rtse ruler (was he still Grags pa lde?) took over control of Dol po. This is stated as part of a speech given by the Tshal pa master Mar lung pa to the king of Ya rtse who crossed Byang thang on his way to invade Gung thang during the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war. The event took place sometime during the years 1235-1239 (for this approximate dating

ascetic died after a long time [affected by the *mthu*]. One night, in a dream of Ye tshul, while he was meditating on Jo bo Thugs rje chen po, a scorpion bit him on his back. After having gone to see the *spyang snga* (Seng ge ye shes), since [Ye tshul] dreamt that [Seng ge ye shes] removed it, he was healed. The *mthu' mkhan* died".

236. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dbang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.464 lines 4-6): "De nas Dol po nas byon te rgun Ku thang gi ra gyams su bzhugs/ de nas Lan der byon pa'i dus su sgom chen pa rnams kyis yon bdag pa bsags nas nged kyis gnas po byed par su spro dris pas/ yon bdag rNga rtseng zhes pa nga spro zer nas khos byas te der lo gsum bzhugs so//"; "After leaving Dol po, [Seng ge ye shes] spent one winter at Ra gyams of Ku thang (1232). Then when he went to Lan de (spelled so), the ascetics having gathered the sponsors, since he asked: "Who is keen to become the host?", yon bdag rNga rtseng said: "I am willing". He did so, and [Seng ge ye shes] stayed three years (1233-1235) there".

see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.447). Dol po passed under Ya rtse, while the role and the position of Pu hrang vis-à-vis this change in the balance of the region overall is not clarified.²³⁷

The tone of the speech given by Mar lung pa to the king of Ya rtse on that occasion was not overtly friendly. The Tshal pa of the lands on the “upper side” were in good terms with Ya rtse. The evidence provided by *Deb ther dmar po* indicates that the Pu hrang Tshal pa kept receiving unabated favour from the local powers during that period (see *ibid.* p.148 lines 2-6). More specific on the matter is another source, *Chos legs kyi rnam thar*, which says that around the same time, but without specifying when with exactitude, the alliance between Gung thang, the Men Zhang tribe of southern Byang thang including the gTso tsho ba and the rTa sga Tshal pa was still flourishing.²³⁸

The state of affairs of the time shows that Tshal pa in mNga' ris, differently from the 'Bri gung pa, had not taken a side in the secular struggles of that historical phase. This approach towards politics is confirmed by the evidence of the successive period when mNga' ris, like the rest of Tibet, came under the control of Sa skya. The Tshal pa, unlike the 'Bri gung pa, did not suffer from this change.

The first Ya rtse-Gung thang war took place around the time when Seng ge ye shes resided in sKyid grong, an area where the Tshal pa were active and had religious establishments (see above p.59). *Gung thang gdung rabs*, as is well known, states that the Gung thang king mGon po lde sought shelter in Mang yul but was eventually captured by the Ya rtse pa and put to death in front of his castle in Gung thang.²³⁹ Does the account imply that Mang yul was

237. Mar lung pa's speech to the Ya rtse king during the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.128a line 4) says: “g.Yog Mon dmag Ko brDol khri ru 'dren//”, “Servile people brought [your] Mon troops to [occupy] the throne of Ko and brDol [po] (spelled so)”.

Someone called Chos grags brought the Ya rtse pa to invade Gung thang according to *Gung thang gdung rabs* (p.93 lines 11-12: “rGyal po de'i sku ring su sPang bzhod Chos grags kyis Ye tsho'i yul nas Mon gyi dmag drangs//”, “During the time of this king (i.e. Gung thang mGon po lde), sPang bzhod Chos grags brought the Mon troops from the land of Ye tsho (Ya rtse)”). Was he among the servile people who helped Ya rtse to take Ko and Dol po? The Ko of the passage refers to Kobang, the Mon pa area south of Glo smad and located at southern border of the Thakhali area. One needs to wonder whether Glo smad too, for reasons of contiguity with Dol po and Ko, passed under the control of Ya rtse.

238. *Chos legs kyi rnam thar* (f.11a lines 4-5): “De tsam gyi dus na/ yon bdag Gung thang kha pa/ bla mchod Tshal pa/ mi sde Men Zhang yin zer ba yig tshang rnying pa 'ga' zhig na 'dug cing/ sngar de ltar yin par bzang/ physis kyang gTso tho bas rTa sga pa la zhabs tog chen po phul 'dug//”; “There is also evidence contained in old documents that, around that time (i.e. the time of gZhon nu seng ge, the third abbot of rTa sga and successor to Dharma bsod nams), the sponsor were the Gung thang Khab pa, the *bla mchod* were the mTshal pa and the *mi sde* were the Men Zhang. In the early days, [things] were organized like this. Even at later periods the gTso tsho ba rendered service to the rTa sga ba”.

239. *Gung thang gdung rabs* (lHa sa ed. p.93 lines 12-14): “'Thab pas ma thub/ mnga' bdag sKyid grong du bros pa mtshams nas zin/ Khab kyi sku mkhar mthong sar bkrongs//”, “As they fought,

conquered after the Ya rtse pa had taken Gung thang? This may have happened in consideration of territorial contiguity.

On the occasion of their meeting, Mar lung pa illustrated to the king of Ya rtse the karmic relation that connected the two of them and the assassinated Gung thang king. Mar lung pa's speech is useful to confirm that the Gung thang king mGon po lde had already been assassinated and the Gung thang kingdom had been taken by Ya rtse.

Despite the fact that the Tshal pa rTa sga ba sided with Gung thang in the period before the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war, a record exists that the king of Ya rtse gave lands and temples in the lands he controlled to Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge, a native of lower Byang thang, well respected in those lands. He received rTe and Kru in Mu khum yul (i.e. the Thakhali country).²⁴⁰

Kru, more commonly spelled Gru, refers to Parbat, a Mon pa area. rTe is the well known place in Glo smad, this place name more often written gTad/bTad. The inclusion of Kru and rTe in the land of Mu khum confirms that this area included Mukhtinath (Chu la me 'bar), as gleaned from *Gung thang gdung rabs* with the precious additional notion deduced from the account in *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* that Mu khum yul extended farther to the south to reach this holy place.

The time of these land donations, in the absence of a date for the meeting of Mar lung pa and the king of Ya rtse in *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.128a line 2-f.140a line 3), can be assessed to after 1235-1239 and before 1241. They occurred after the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war (see above p.59) and, obviously, before the death of Mar lung pa in the latter year (ibid. f.354a line 3).

The extension of Ya rtse's dominions during the early 13th century encompassed a vast expanse of lands, which included Mustang and Dol po, plus Ko and Gru to their south. I cannot establish which lands were under Ya rtse's control farther to west of these territories towards Jumla, but it comprised all the lands from Ya rtse to Mustang and Mukhtinath during that period.

Ya rtse, defeated in the second Ya rtse-Gung thang war, which experienced a military and human disaster, lost its hegemony in sTod. Water ox 1253 is the *terminus ante quem* for the second Ya rtse-Gungthang war (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.752),

The fortunes of the bKa' brgyud pa continued to prosper for the decades to come until Gung thang, emboldened by the raise in power of Sa skya, took control of the contiguous

[mGon po lde] could not defeat them. *mNga' bdag* (mGon po lde) fled towards sKyid grong but was captured at the border and executed in the open space in front of the castle of the Khab [pa]-s (i.e. the Gung thang pa) [in rDzong dkar]."

240. *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.130a line 4): "De nas khong na re/ bla ma nyid dang mjal bsod nams bsags pas/ dbang yon la Mu khum gyi yul rTe Kru dang bcas pa 'bul//", "Then he (the Ya rtse king) said: "Since I am fortunate to have met a *bla ma* like you, in return of your *dbang*, I offer you the entire rTe [and] Kru of Mu khum yul"."

territories of Gu ge and Pu hrang between the years 1277 and 1280.²⁴¹

rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma says that the sTod Hor invaded Glo bo. rGod tshang pa took an active part to stop them from creating further trouble elsewhere by means of *gtor ma*-s and an army of *lha 'dre* and black men.²⁴² These events refer to around 1237.²⁴³

241. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.31b line 5-f.32a line 2) talking about the time of rdor 'dzin Dar ma rgyal mtshan, who led the *Ti se ri pa*-s after the taking over of mNga' ris stod by the Sa skya pa alliance, gives this summary of the situation of the network of holy places controlled by the 'Bri gung pa in the lands on the "upper side": "Di dus kyang ri pa stong du longs par byung zhing/ mNga' ris stod kyi ri sul thams cad 'Bri 'Brug gi sgom chen gyis khyab ba dang/ rGyang grags kyi dgon lag tu/ Nyan ri/ rDzu 'phrul phug/ Ri bo rtse brgyad/ Sle mi Til chen/ Sle mi Kun 'dzo/ (f.32a) Mum ri khrod/ Do bo Shes rdo rje rdzong/ Glo Chu mig brgya rtsa/ lCags ye Ye shes rdzong/ Gro shod rKyang phung/ sPrag Li dur/ Pu rang rGod khung/ Pu rang Kho char lha khang/ Pu rang Shang khrang dpe'u/ Pu rang Brag sKa rag/ Khu nu bSam gtan chos gling rnam rGyang grags pas 'dzin pa yin//"; "At that time too, during his (i.e. Dar ma rgyal mtshan's) time, the 'Bri gung meditators were spread throughout the mountainous ravines of mNga' ris skor gsum in thousands. The branch monasteries of rGyang grags, i.e. Nyan ri, rDzu 'phrul phug, Ri bo rtse brgyad, Sle mi Til chen, Sle mi Kun 'dzom, Mum ri khrod (f.32a) Do bo (sic for Dol po) Shes rdo rje rdzong, Glo Chu mig brgya rtsa, lCags ye Ye shes rdzong, Gro shod rKyang phung, sPrag Li dur, Pu rang rGod khung, Pu rang Kho char lha khang, Pu rang Shang khrang dpe'u, Pu rang Brag sKa rag and Khu nu bSam gtan chos gling are said to have been held by the rGyang grags pa (i.e. the 'Bri gung pa residing at Gangs Ti se)".

242. *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma* (p.287 line 5-p.288 line 1): "Yang sTod Hor Blo bor byung ba'i dus su zlog par zhu zhus pas/ sTod Hor gyi steng na yang 'gro/ tshogs sbyod byed gsung/ byams pa dang/ snying rje zhing khams spyod pa spel sbyang gsum la gnad du snun pa chog gsung/da bla ma dkon mchog gi zhabs tog la stag gi lpags pa gyon nas tshogs sbyod la 'gro/ snang ba thams cad sgyu mar bun long 'gro gsung/ char tshugs bcu bcu gcig la gtor ma chen po gtong/ mdang rmi lam na sTod Hor la lha 'dre dang mi nag po mang po 'dug/ de'i na yang nam mkha' la 'phur nas phyin/ rmis lam du sTod Hor zlog/ da yang de tsug gis nyan pa med gsung/ Nyeg po bya ba'i nu bo zhog byas pas/ nga la gnyen kyis don med gsung/ sTod Hor zlog pa'i le'u nyer gnyis pa'o//"; "Again, when the sTod Hor were in Blo bo, he was requested to avert them. He said: "I will proceed ahead of the sTod Hor and perform a *tshogs [kyi 'khor lo]*. He added: "I will allow myself to focus on the practice, expansion and purification, altogether three, of the realm of benevolence and compassion". He added: "Now, I am going to perform a *tshogs kyi 'khor lo* wearing a tiger skin in order to render service to the *bla ma* and the three jewels. The physical phenomena turn into animated (*bun long*) illusions". He made rain fall, and once every ten [prayers] he cast out a big *gtor ma*. He said: "In the dream of last night, there were many *lha 'dre* and black men against the sTod Hor. (p.288) They went soaring high up in the sky above them. In the dream, the sTod Hor were repulsed. I was reassured by this". Since [A po] said: "I will leave my younger brother Nyeg po with you", [rGod tshang pa] replied: "There is no reason for me to have a kinsman [of yours] with me". This is chapter twenty-two dealing with the aversion of the sTod Hor".

243. Soon before introducing rGod tshang pa's aversion of those defined as sTod Hor, *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma* (p.286 line 3) says: "bZhi bcu zhe dgu yan chad sgrub pa mdzad/ de man chad 'gro don mdzad//"; "[rGod tshang pa] meditated until when he was forty-nine years old (1237). After that he benefitted sentient beings".

Their incursion into Glo bo would thus date to a few years before what the Tibetan tradition considers to have been the first Mongol invasion of Tibet—the one by Dor ta nag po in 1240. I am not entirely reconciled with this assessment of the identity of those who invaded Glo bo. Around the same time, Ya rtse invaded Gung thang, the first of the two conflicts that these two kingdoms fought during those years. In the process, the Ya rtse troops were led by some people to occupy Dol po, Mustang's neighbour. It is rather unrealistic but still possible that the area of mNga' ris where Glo bo is situated had to suffer two foreign invasions during the same years. In the absence of corroborating material, the fact that Mongols intruded from Southern Turkestan into Mustang should be further investigated.

▪ Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od's early years

After studies under several local masters,²⁴⁴ Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od (1203-1288) had

244. In another biography, Don mo ri pa's *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (i.e. his autobiography) (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.489 line 5-p.491 line 5): "Lo ni bcu bzhi lo pa'i tshe/ lHing lo Mang Rum gnyis su bsdad/ dam pa'i chos la slob gnyer byas/ lo ni bcu rgu lon pa'i tshe/ Shakya Be ler bsnyen rdzogs byas/ mkhan po Yongs kyi mkhan po ni/ sTag sgo ba zhes bya ba yin/las kyi slob dpon Mang Rum gyi/ mkhan po yin te de ni/ 'Dul ba mDo' rtsa so sor (p.490) thar/ Kā ri ka dang Kun spyod dang/ bSlab btus spyod 'jug bslabs pa yin/ gsang ste ston pa Mang Rum gyi/ slob dpon Brang khang chen mo ba/ de la Zhi byed Kam lugs dang/ bcom ldan Don yod zhags pa yi/ rgyud dang sgrub thabs gdams ngag bcas/ 'Jam dpal mtshan brjod mDo lugs bslabs/ lHing lo Khang gsar gong ma yi/ slob dpon Zhal ni rNam gsum la/ Shes rab 'grel chung sPyod 'jug dang/ Jo bo'i Chos chung brgya rtsa dang/ mDo' sde skeyes ba'i rabs dang ni/ Kā ri ka dang Kun spyod dang/Jo bo'i lugs Sems bskeyed dang/ Mi g.yo'i dmigs pa skor gsum mnyan/ chos rje'i slob ma Ri khrod pa/ slob dpon Su ston zhes bya ba la/ Khams gsum ma yi byin rlabs dang/ sgrub thabs gdams ngag bcas pa dang/ Chos drug tshig bcad ma yang mnyam/ 'gro ba'i mgon po rin po che/ bla ma Gu zur phug pa la/ dbang bskur bzhi rdzogs yang yang zhus/ dBang sngags rDo rje phur pa yi/ rgyud sde rnams dang sgrub thabs (p.491) dang/ gdams ngag bcas pa ma lus dang/ gSang sngags rNying ma sde brgyad kyi/ rgyud dang sgrub thabs phal cher dang/ rDzogs chen sems sde bco brgyad dang/ Zab mo'i rgyu bzhi gdams ngag bcas/ mDo' sgyu'i gdams ngag phal cher dang/ bsTan srung srog ser gdams ngag dang/ bDud kyi gcod dang A ro yi/ gdams ngag khrid dang bcas pa dang/ rNal 'byor Yo ga'i rgyud dang ni/ sgrub thabs phyag bzhes bcas pa dang/ Na rag dong sprugs gdams ngag bcas/ Phya rgya chen po'i thugs rgyud dang/ Dam tshig chen po'i rgyud dang ni/ rTsa ltung 'grel chen gdams ngag bcas/ Dam tshig gsal bkra lastsogs pa/ Dam tshig gi ni chos rnams dang/ Pha rgyud gdams ngag bcas pa mnyan/; "As for the year, when [I, Don mo ri pa,] reached the age of fourteen (1216), [I] stayed at both lHing lo and Mang Rum and studied the Noble Religion. As for the year, when [I] reached the age of nineteen (1221), [I] took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow at Shakya Be le. As for the *mkhan po*, he was the general *mkhan po* (*yongs kyi mkhan po*) by the name of sTag sgo ba. The *las kyi slob dpon* was the Mang rum *mkhan po*. From the latter [I] learned 'Dul ba, the fundamentals of mDo' (spelled as), *So sor* (p.490) *thar*, *Ka ri ka* and *Kun spyod*, *bsLab btus* and *sPyod 'jug*. The *gsang ste ston pa* was Brang khang chen mo ba, the *slob dpon* of Mang Rum. From the latter [I] learned *Zhi byed* according to the system of Kam; the *rGyud*, *grub thabs* and *gdams ngag* of bcom ldan Don yod zhabs pa as well as 'Jam dpal mtshan brjod according to the mDo tradition. As for the *slob dpon*-s of lHing lo Khang gsar gong ma, [I] listened from the three of them to *Shes rab 'grel chung spyod 'jug* and *Jo bo chos 'byung brgya rtsa*; and as for mDo' (spelled so) *sde skeyes pa'i rabs*, [I listened to] *Ka ri ka*, *Kun spyod*, *Sems*

religious training under Chos sdings pa and another eminent bKa' brgyud pa, Khro phu lo tsa ba. The two masters had some incomprehensions in their interactions.²⁴⁵

bskyed according to the system of Jo bo [rje], and *Mi g.yo'i dmigs pa skor gsum*. From the *chos rje's* disciple Ri khrod pa, known as slob dpon Sum ston, [I] listened to *Khams gsum ma yi dbyin brlabs, sgrub thabs, gdams ngag* and *Chos drug* in verses (*tshig bca'd ma*). From the precious protector of mankind, bla ma Gu zur phug pa, [I] repeatedly received the four complete *dbang bskur*. [From him, I] listened to the various *rGyud sde, grub thabs* and the *gdams ngag* of *gSangs sNgags rDo rje Phur pa*; (p.491) most *rGyud* and *grub thabs, rDzogs chen sems sde bco brgyad* and the *rGyu bzhi* (sic for *rGyud bzhi*) *gdams ngag* of *gSangs sNgags rnying ma'i sde brgyad*; most of the *mDo' sgyu'i gdams ngag, sTan srung srog ser gdams ngag*, and the *gdams ngag* and *khrid* of *bDud kyi gCod* and *A ro*; as for *rNal 'byor Yo ga'i rgyud*, the *grub thabs* and *phyag bzhes* ("practice"), *Na rag dong sprugs* ("the eradication of the root of hell") *gdams ngag*; and as for *Phyag rgya chen po'i thugs rgyud* and *Dam tshig chen po'i rgyud*, instructions on *Dam tshig* and *Pha rgyud gdams ngag*, such as *rTsa ltung 'grel chen gdams ngag* and *Dam tshig gsal bkra'*.

245. Chos sdings pa and Don mo ri pa had a different approach in their relation with Khro phu lo tsa ba. While Don mo ri pa was an obedient and sympathetic young monk who was eager to learn from 'Gar Dam pa (see the next n.247), Chos sdings pa had an antagonist attitude and his *rnam thar* boasts that thrice he defeated the *lo tsa ba* in debate. *Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* (p.443 lines 1-6) reads: "Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po byon pa la/ chos rje dang mjal nas/ khri chen po brtsigs/ bkur ste chen po bgyis pas/ lo tsa ba thugs rgyal skyes nas/ 'Bri gung pa bsod nams che ba yin/ nga chos mkhas pa yin bsam nas/ dge 'dun dus pa la/ nga la chos dri mi yod na dris/ gsung ba la/ dri mkhan ma byung/ de nas chos rje'i zhal nas/ mkhas pa chen po khong 'dra ba byon pa la/ chos zhus dgos pa yin/ zhu mi gang yod chos zhus/ gsung ba dang/ Dam pas thang gsum yar chas pa dang/ dMe 'dor grogs po cig yod pas/ yul phyogs yin bsam nas/ na bza' la mar then/ khyos lo tsa ba mi thub/ khyod la chos gtam ma bab/ nga che ring 'di rnam cig gi nang na/ khyod la a khrel med zer/ Dam pa ma nyan nas/ na bza' sprugs nas yar bzhud pas/ chos rje la phyag dgu 'tshal/ lo tsa ba la phyag drug mdzad nas/ ngas dge' ba'i bshes gnyen chen po la/ chos cig zhu 'tshal bas/ gsung lan legs pa cig gnang bar zhu gsung nas/ chos cig zhus pas/ 'gre log gsung btang bas/ lo tsa ba'i dam bca' bud lo/ de ltar thang gsum bsgro gling mdzad pas/ dam bca' de kun la/ gsum bud nas/ lo tsa bas tshur gzig pas/ a la lā/ khyed 'Jam dbyangs mgon por gda' bas/ ngas chos gtam gyis gar thub gsung lo//"; "Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po having come again after sometime, he met the *chos rje* (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po) who made a big throne [for him]. He was accorded great respect, and the *lo tsa ba* was very proud of it (*thugs rgyal skyes*). He thought: "'Bri gung pa's merit is great. I am a master of religion", and said: "Having gathered the monks, if there is a person who wishes to ask me about religion, he can ask", but no one stood up to ask [anything]. Then, as soon as the *chos rje* said: "A great master like him having come, you need religious instructions. Whoever [wishes] to ask for teachings, he may ask", ['Gar] Dam pa stood up three times. A friend from dMe' dor, who was from his same place, pulled him down by the robe: "You cannot [defeat] the *lo tsa ba*. [The time] has not ripened for you to debate religion. [You] are among those [who say:] "I am big and I am long (i.e. proud empty people)". You are shameless". ['Gar] Dam pa did not listen. He pulled away his robe from him and stood up. He prostrated nine times to the *chos rje*. He prostrated six times to the *lo tsa ba*. He said: "I beg [the permission] to ask for teachings from the great *dge'* (spelled so) *ba'i bshes gnyen*", and asked: "I beg to receive a favourable answer". Having asked for teachings, since [Khro phu] was brought down, the *lo tsa ba's* thesis was uprooted. They likewise debated three times, and [the *lo tsa ba's*] three theses were uprooted. Looking at him, the *lo tsa ba* said: "A la lā, you seem to be like 'Jam dbyangs mgon po. How can I defeat you with my religious debate?'"."

The teachings Don mo ri pa received from Chos sdings pa were according to the 'Bri gung pa education system that included other significant teachings.²⁴⁶ He did not study under Chos sdings pa when 'Gar Dam pa was in mNga' ris stod. He did so at some juncture during a delta of years between 1221, when he received the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow, and 1232, when he went to study under Khro phu lo tsa ba Byams pa'i dpal (1172-1236),²⁴⁷ hence a long time after 'Gar Dam pa had left the lands on the "upper side". The place where he was Chos sdings pa's disciple could have been 'Bri gung. After studying with 'Gar dam pa, Don mo ri pa came back to mNga' ris stod since he gave, in an unspecified year, a demonstration of his *sprul sku* condition to the Pu hrang *jo bo*.²⁴⁸ He then left mNga' ris stod again in 1232 to study under Khro phu lo tsa ba, and spent five years with him at gTsang Bye ma ka ru until Don mo ri pa, his main disciple and biographer who remained with him until his last days, was finally able to join Senge ge ye shes at Byams chub gling in fire bird 1237.²⁴⁹

246. Don mo ri pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (i.e. his autobiography) (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.491 line 5-p.492 line 3): "Mi sde'i slob dpon chen po ni/ mkhas btsun dam pa Chos sdings pa/ Tshad ma rnam nges la stsogs pa/ rTog ge rig pa'i tshogs rnam dang/ mGon po Byams pa'i chos 'ga' dang/ Ye shes gsang rdzogs gdams ngag bcas/ (p.492) 'Jam dpal sdom bzang rgyud dang ni/ grub thabs gdams ngag dbang bskur bcas/ Phag mo chos drug byin brlabs dang/ gdams ngag khyad mchog bcas pa dang/ rNam 'joms rNur lugs gdams ngag bcas/ bKa' gdams Pu to skor gyi ni/ khrid dang gdams ngag ma lus dang/ Kha rag pa yi skor gsum dang/ Do ha skor gsum gdams ngag bcas/ Zhi rMa So Kam gsum dang/ dBu'i ma chos rnam bsblabs pa yin//; "As for the *mi sde'i slob dpon chen po*, from mkhas btsun dam pa Chos sdings pa [I, Don mo ri pa,] learned *rTog ge rig pa'i tshogs*, such as *Tshad ma rnam nges*; a few teachings on mGon po Byams pa; *Ye shes gsang rdzogs gdams ngag*; (p.492) as for 'Jam dpal sdom bzang rgyud, the *grub thabs*, *gdams ngag* and *dbang bskur*, the *sbyin brlabs* of the extraordinarily special *gdams ngag* of *Phag mo chos drug*, the *gdams ngag* of *rNam 'joms* according to the system of rNur (spelled so); as for the cycle of bKa' gdams Pu to, the complete *khrid* and *gdams ngag*, the *Kha rag pa's skor gsum*, the *gdams ngag* of *Do ha skor gsum*; *Zhi byed* [according to the system of] rMa, So and Kam, altogether three, and teachings on *dBu'i ma* (sic)".

The term *mi sde'i slob dpon chen po* qualifies Chos sdings pa as a major teacher of the 'Bri gung pa community.

247. See *Khro phu lo tsa ba chen po'i rnam par thar pa* (p.363 lines 2-3) for his death year.

248. *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.496 line 6): "Dus der rgung lo sum cu bzhes pa'i dus su sku tshe snga ma'i bag chags sbyong na ba [note: Pu rangs kyi bla mchod blon po gsum rnam kyis zhu ba nan can phul nas]//"; "When he was thirty years old (1232), Don mo ri pa gave a performance of recollecting the karmic propensities of his previous life [note: at the pressing request extended by the *bla mchod blon gsum* (i.e. *bla zhang* ("king"), *mchod gnas* and *blon po*)] of Pu rangs".

249. Don mo ri pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar* (i.e. his autobiography) (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.493 line 6-p.494 line 6): "Lo ni sum (p.494) cu lon pa dang/ Tsang gi Bye ma ka rur phyind/ bla ma Khro phu lo tsa la/ bla ma pan chen Shakya shri'i/ lugs kyi Sems bskyed cho ga zhus/ de'i gdams ngag ma lus dang/ bla ma Mi tra dzo' ki yi/ gdams ngag byin rlabs bcas pa dang/ gTsang pa Kun ldan shes rab kyi/ zab par gdams ngag thams cad dang/ gzhan la khyad par 'phags pa yi/ Srung ba'i rig byed rnam gsum bsblabs/ gzhan yang kho bos shes pa'i chos/ thams cad

▪ Seng ge ye shes's deeds, later in his life

After leaving sKyid grong, Seng ge ye shes entered another phase of his retreatant life that lasted for eight years (1236-1244) at sacred localities in the stretch of lands from Chu bar to Ku thang. The main holy places where he resided were Chu bar, Byang chub gling and Ngam pa lung.²⁵⁰

khyod kyi shod cig ces/ sPyi bor phyag bzhag lung yang gnang/ Bye ma kha rur lo lnga bsdad/ rje'i thugs rjes lcags kyus bzung/ lo grangs sum cu rtsa lnga'i tshes/ bya lo dgag dbye'i chos gsum la/ Byang chub gling du rje dang mjal/ rje'i tshad myed thugs rje yis/ rmongs pa bdag la kyang rjes su bzung/ rje sku drin che'o rin po che/ gus pas phyag 'tshal skyabs su mchi/ thugs rje'i byin kyis brlab tu gsol/ zhes par skabs kyi tshigs su bcad do//"; "As for the year when [I] reached the age of (p.494) thirty (1232), [I, Don mo ri pa] went to gTsang gi Bye ma ka ru and received teachings from bla ma Khro phu lo tsa. [I] received *Sems bskyed cho ga* according to the system of bla ma pan chen Shakya shri and its complete teachings, the *gdams ngag byin rlabs* of bla ma Mi tra dzo' ki (spelled so), all the profound *gdams ngag* of gTsang pa Kun ldan shes rab, and the three *Sring ba'i rig byed* which are extraordinarily more noble than others (*gzhan la* spelled so for *gzhan las*). Moreover, [Khro phu lo tsa] said: "You should teach all the teachings I know" and placed his hands on the head of [my] crown. [I] stayed five years at Bye ma ka ru (1232-1237). Due to the hook (*lcags kyus*) of *rje's* compassion, when [I] was thirty-five years old, on the third day of *dgag dbye* of the bird year (1237), [I] met the *rje* (Seng ge ye shes) at Byang chub gling. Owing to *rje's* unlimited compassion, I, the ordinary man, became his follower. "Due to the great graciousness of *rje*, I prostrate to the *rin po che* with my devotion and take refuge [with him]. May I be blessed by [his] compassion". Saying so, this was a [praise] in a few words".

Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.496 line 6-p.497 line 2): "Bla ma Khro phu lo tsa'i (p.497) snyan pa gsal nas/ gTsang gi Bye ma kkar rur byon no/ gnas der yang lo lnga bzhugs pa yin gsung/ bla ma Khro phu lo tsa nas/ bla ma pan chen Shakya shri'i Sems bskyed lastsogs pa chos rnams dang spyi bor phag bzhag nas lung rnams kyang gnang nas/ kho bo shes pa'i chos tams cad shod cig gsung//"; "Hearing the fame of bla ma Khro phu lo tsa (p.497), he went to gTsang gi Bye ma kar (spelled so) ru. He said that he stayed at this holy place for five years (1232-1237). By placing the texts and [his *bla ma's*] hands on the crown of his head, [Khro phu lo tsa] gave him teachings such as bla ma pan chen Shakya shri's *Sems bskyed* and told him: "You should teach all the teachings I know".

250. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dbang phyug gi rnam thar* (in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.465 line 1-p.466 line 2): "Lan de nas yur ma tsam na Chu bar du byon te der lo gcig bzhugs so/ de'i dus na bdag gis Don mo ri nas mi btang ste Bu le'i ri khrod la bzhugs par gdan drangs kyang byon par ma gnang/ slob dpon Byang chub dpal Do mo rir thengs cig byon pa la de la yang zhu ba nan tan du 'bul rogs zhus pa yin te de yang ma gnang ste ma byon/ physis kyi dus na zhal snga nas Bu le de gnas bzang ba/ gzhi bdag Byang chub sems dpa' chos la dkar ba yod par 'dug/ khyod kyis 'bod mi gtang ba'i dus su nga la ltas bzang po bsam gyis myi khyab pa mang po byung gsung/ gzhan yang Bod khams kyi ri khrod la Ti se'i 'og nas Bu le kun yang dga' bya ba yang gsung/ Chu bar nas kyang rin po che'i glegs bam lastsogs pa mang po 'Bri gung du 'bul ba mdzad do/ Chu bar nas dbyar mchod thon nas Teg tser byon no/ gnas po yon bdag 'Bar po rgyal gyis bya so/ (p.466) de dus su yang bdag gis dpal Don mo ri nas Bu le'i ri khrod la gdan 'dren pa la dge slong bzhi sde zhig gis rin po che'i 'jam sdur mang po dang gser dang dar dang ja lastsogs pa phul nas spyen drangs pa yin te byon par ma gnang ngo/ Teg tse nas dbyar mchod thon nas Gangs kyi rgyal po Thig le gyung gi mgul yon tan rin po che thams cad 'byung ba'i gnas dpal Byang chub gling gi dgon par bya'i lo la gdan phab pa yin no/ gnas 'dir bdag tshad med pa'i Thugs

According to a passage in the section of *Ri khrod dbang phyug gi rnam thar* concerning the following years when he was at Ngam pa lung, Seng ge ye shes created the conditions that prevented the Mongols from causing damage to 'Bri gung and Tibet in general. The time frame established in these words indicates that Seng ge ye shes performed this rite of aversion between 1237 and 1241.

The delta of years obviously includes the hectic iron rat 1240 when the invasion of dBus gTsang and contiguous lands by rDor ta nag po took place, which did not harm 'Bri gung. *Ri khrod dbang phyug gi rnam thar* credits Seng ge ye shes rather than sPyan snga rin po che with the merit of sparing 'Bri gung and other localities from the devastation by the Mongols. The news of the havoc caused by the Hor pa invasion reached as far the Himalayan territories

rje chen pos bzung nas/ khrid dang gdams ngag thams cad tshar bar gnang ba yin no/ 'di nas kyang 'Bri gung du rin po ch'i glegs bam dang g.yu mang po dang gser tam brgya rtsa lastsogs pa 'bul ba chen po mdzad pa yin no/ de nas dpal Ngam pa lung Rin chen 'od gsal rdzong du gdan phab ba yin te/ ri khrod 'di nas spyor Bod khams bye brag tu 'Bri gung du Mo gol sngon ma byung ba des gnod pa mi skyel ba'i rten 'brel 'dir mdzad pa yin/ 'Bri gung du yang glang gi lo chos rje'i dus mchod chen mo ras dang (p.467) men dang bur ltang lastsogs pa rgu brgya drug bcu rtsa drug pa yin no/ yang lo gcig tsam na gser gyi Ārya Nyi khri ba dang gser gyi Ārya brGyad stong pa gnyis dang/ gser gyi sdud pa dang/ sil ba gur be gnyis dang rta dang ras lastsogs pa drug brgya ba yin no//"; "[Seng ge ye shes] went from Lan de to Chu bar, more or less (*tsam*) at the season when weeds are pulled out (*yur ma*). Here he spent one year (1236). At that time, I myself (i.e. Don mo ri pa) sent a man from Don mo ri but [Seng ge ye shes] did not accept to come, since he was invited to Bu le'i ri khrod. When slob dpon Byang chub dpal came once to Don mo ri, I myself requested him to help me to extend a pressing request [to Seng ge ye shes]. However, even then he did not accept and did not come. Later, [Seng ge ye shes] said: "That Bu le is a noble holy place. There the *bzhi bdag-s* ("local lords") are Byang chub sems dpa' with immaculate practice of religion. When you sent a man to invite me, many inconceivably noble omens were manifested to me", and added: "Moreover, as for the hermitages in the land of Tibet below Ti se, everyone would like Bu le". From Chu bar too, he offered many [gifts], such as books in precious materials. After the completion of *dbyar mchod* (1236), he went from Chu bar to Teg rtse. His host was yon bdag 'Bar po rgyal. (p.466) At that time again, a group of four monks from dpal Don mo ri offered to him many precious *'jam sdud* (?), gold, silk and tea in order to be invited by me (i.e. Don mo ri pa) to Bu le'i ri khrod, but he did not accept to come. From Teg rtse, after *dbyar mchod* was over (1237), [Seng ge ye shes] settled at Byang chub kyi gling, the holy place where all sorts of precious merit arise, at the neck of Gangs kyi rgyal po Thig le gyung, in the bird year (1237). Since I was conquered by the immense Thugs rje chen po (i.e. Seng ge ye shes), at this holy place I was given all the *khrid* and *gdams ngag* completely. From here too, a great offering was made to 'Bri gung, such as books in precious materials, many turquoises and gold coins in hundreds. He then settled at dpal Ngam pa lung Rin chen 'od gsal rdzong. At this hermitage, he created a karmic conjunction of events by which the earliest Mo gol who will come would not cause harm in the country of Tibet in general and at 'Bri gung in particular. In the year of the ox (1241), on the occasion of the *chos rje's dus mchod* ("['Jig rten mgon po's?] death anniversary"), [he offered] cotton, (p.467) *men* (?), and bales of molasses (*bur ltang*), numbering 966. Moreover, about one year later (1242), [he offered] a gold-written *Arya Nyi khri ba*, two gold-written *Arya brGyad stong pa*, both golden *sdud pa* ("assorted [pieces] of gold"?) and *sil ba gur be* ("various parts of tents"?), horses and cotton, [numbering] 600".

on the “upper side” to the extent that Seng ge ye shes laboured to stop the Mongol devastation and to avert the risk of their troops advancing so far west.

Seng ge ye shes kept sending lavish gifts to 'Bri gung from these areas at the border of the Tibetan world. No clues are given to assess whether it was compulsory for the locals to provide these goods to the 'Bri gung pa or it was sheer devotional enthusiasm. It probably was a combination of the two, in the typical Tibetan tradition.

At the end of eight years spent in retreats to the east of mNga' ris stod, Seng ge ye shes decided to accept the invitation of the Pu hrang pa and to proceed to their land. Leaving Ku thang, he first journeyed along the flatter and thus easier southern Byang thang as far as Glo bo. He encountered bandit horsemen in the tract of land between Ku thang and Glo bo, in particular up to what his *rnam thar* names Tog (lit. “knob”, its northernmost part?) of Glo bo. As had happened several years before, he again subdued the brigands and made them repent. Differently from the previous case, this time his biography identifies them as one hundred gNyag bandits, the same people badly harmed by the 1224 invasion of Glo bo and southern Byang thang (see above p.175).²⁵¹

251. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dbang phyug gi rnam thar* (his autobiography) (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.468 lines 3-p.469 line 3): “De nas Pu rangs na yar bskyod par bzhed nas/ 'brug gi lo ston zla 'bring po'i tshes gsum la bla ma rin po che dang bdag Don mo ri pa ste/ yab sras gnyis kas gdan btegs nas/ Ku thang che yul gyi sNa shod gnas pas bsu ba dang shangs len dang/ Ā rya Nyi khri pa gcig phul/ der bla ma sTag sgo bas bsnyen bkur dang/ slob ma thams cad chos 'brel zhu ru byung ba la gngang/ de nas Ku thang gi byang du byon nas Ku thang ba'i dmag sum bcu tsam gyis Gla bo'i tog bar du gshegs skyel byas pa la Ku thang dang Gla bo'i bar du gNyag gi jag pa rta pa brgya lhag cig byung bas/spyan snga'i zhal nas (p.469) ral gri gcig shubs nas tho la rtse mo sa la tshugs gsung nas rten 'brel zhig mdzad pas/ jag dpon gyis de ma thag tu ske nas g.yu'o che zhig bkrol nas phyag rten du phul nas/ thams cad kyis phyag btsal skyabs 'gro sems bskyed zhus nas/ phar gnod tshur gnod med par khong rnam don che bar mdzad do/”;

“Then, since [Seng ge ye shes] decided to depart upwards to Pu rangs, on the third day of the second autumn month of the dragon year (1244), *bla ma rin po che* and I myself Don mo ri pa, both the father and son, left [together]. The inhabitants of sNa shod of the Ku thang mainland (*che yul*) welcomed us, gave us hospitality and offered us an *Arya Nyi khri pa*. Here, bla ma sTag sgo ba offered hospitality and [Seng ge ye shes] gave teachings to all the disciples who came to receive them. [We] then went to the north of Ku thang. Thirty troops of the Ku thang ba were sent to go up to Gla bo'i (sic for Glo bo'i) Tog. Between Ku thang and Gla bo (sic for Glo bo), over 100 gNyag bandit horsemen appeared. The *spyan snga* having said: (p.469) “Take the dagger out of the sheath and pierce its tip into the ground!”, he established an auspicious conjunction of events, and the chief of the bandits immediately untied a huge turquoise from his neck and put it into [Seng ge ye shes'] hands. Since everyone prostrated and sought teachings on developing the thought of taking refuge, they were of great benefit, since they did not cause harm far and near”.

gNyag is a clan of Byang thang (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.713 where a passage from *gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* referring to the Nyag in 1224 is quoted and *ibid.* p.428-430 for a discussion of gNyag in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* p.77 line 16).

The section on the Tshal pa in *Deb ther dmar po*, found almost *verbatim* in *Gung thang gi dkar chag*, attributes the foundation of 'Jam dpal gling to an unnamed disciple of Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba (*ibid.* p.147 lines 9-13 and *Gung thang gi dkar chag* f.26b line 6-f.27a line 1): “Zhang Nyag

Seng ge ye shes's biography says that he was welcomed to Glo bo with due honour by the dignitary named first Glo bo Zhang drung pa together with the monastic and lay population.²⁵² He is called Zhang drung bTsan phyug in a subsequent passage.²⁵³ His name alludes to his status (*drung*) and the name of his clan (Zhang). Zhang drung bTsan phyug, the ruler of Glo bo of that day, belonged to the [Men] Zhang nomadic tribe of mNga' ris smad and bar settled in southern Byang thang, Glo bo and Mang yul Gung thang (Vitali, "A short history of Mustang", and my "Nomads of Byang and mNga' ris smad. A historical overview of their interaction in Gro shod, 'Brong pa, Glo bo and Gung thang from the 11th to the 15th century").

In further developments in the history of Glo bo, a temple in Mustang was built by [Men]

'Bri ra ba'i slob mas Zhol phug gi dgon pa btab/ 'Or ma Ron Gung thang rnam yon bdag tu gyur nas gdul bya dang 'phrin las rgya che byung zhing/ sKyid rong du 'Jam dpal gling/ (f.27a) Rin po che sPungs pa dang gnyis dgon pa btab nas 'Or ma'i sa 'gag la ka ni'i mchod rten bzhengs//"; "Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba's disciple founded Zhol bu'i dgon pa. Since 'Or ma, Ron and Gung thang became his sponsors, an extensive contribution in favour of the people to be trained occurred. In sKyid rong too, he founded both the monastery of 'Jam dpal gling (f.27a) and Rin po che sPungs pa. He built a *khag ni'i mchod rten* at 'Or ma'i sa 'gag (the "'Or ma gorge"").

Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba Shakya 'od was one of the four disciples of bla ma Zhang g. Yu brag pa, whose names ended in 'od. The others were lHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od, Kha rag pa 'Dul ba 'od and Gra 'jed pa Nam mkha' 'od. He was a student of Sangs rgyas 'bum (see below n.278).

The notion that the gNyag brigands "did not cause harm on the far and near side" refers to their looting activity in Ku thang and Glo bo respectively, but it is not possible to find out in which one of the two territories Seng ge ye shes actually met them, assuming that the near side (Ku thang) was where he came across them.

252. The earlier passage in Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.469 lines 3-4) reads: "De nas Gla bo ru Zhang drung bas rta khrom mang pos bsu ba byas nas zhabs tog byas te chos zhus gzhan yang Gla bo'i gnas dgon mang pos bsnyen bkur dang 'bul ba dang chos 'brel zhu ba mang du byung ba la so so dang 'tshal ba'i gdams ngag gnang ngo/ de nas Dol po bas tshor nas Dol po'i gdan 'dren byung ba la ma gnang//"; "Then, since Zhang drung pa welcomed [us] in Gla bo (sic for Glo bo) with many horsemen, he rendered service [to us] and received teachings. Moreover, [people from] many holy places and monasteries of Gla bo (Glo bo) turned out to give service, make offerings, and receive teachings. They were given a *gdams ngag* suitable for each of them. Then, since the people of Dol po came to know, although [Seng ge ye shes] was invited to Dol po, he did not accept".

253. The second passage (Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.471 lines 1-2) reads: "De nas Zher sKyid kyi thang de nas mnga' bdag rgyal po Bla zhang thams cad kyis bsu ba byas nas sKyid du jo bo rje blon 'bangs gum thams cad kyis Sems bskyed zhus pa'i dus su/ Zhang drung bTsan phyug gi gser 'Bum yang phul//"; "Then, following the welcome by *mnga' bdag rgyal po bla zhang* [of Pu hrng] at this plain between Zher and sKyid (i.e. Zher sKyid kyi bar thang), when the *jo bo, rje blon*-s and subjects, altogether three, all of them, received [teachings on] *Sems bskyed* at sKyid, Zhang drung bTsan phyug offered a gold-written 'Bum".

The Zher sKyid kyi bar thang is the plain between Zher and sKyid, as its name says, in the environs of Kha char lha khang located in another stretch of flat land known as Bye ma thang (*Kho char dkar chag* f.7a-b = p.43 lines 7-14 and f.6a = p.41 lines 15-17, Vitali, "Introduction" to *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum dkar chag* p.VII-XIX).

Zhang blon chen bTsan thog 'bum and consecrated by Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge at an unspecified date. He performed its *rab gnas* after wood tiger 1194, when the Tshal pa master left Tshal Gung thang for the west, and before iron ox 1241 when he died,²⁵⁴ an ample delta of years. *'Phags pa Wa ti'i rnam thar* says that [Men] Zhang blon chen bTsan thog 'bum worked at the renovation of 'Phags pa Wa ti'i lha khang, where the sKyid grong Jo bo was kept.²⁵⁵ The two passages combined together indicate that the area over which [Men] Zhang blon chen bTsan thog 'bum exercised his authority was Glo bo but his sphere of activity reached Mang yul without having control over this territory. Other, secular members of the Men Zhang tribe were active at 'Phags pa Wa ti'i lha khang during later centuries, had great devotion for the temple and the statue by undertaking pious activities including renovations.

While 1241 is the *terminus ante quem* for [Men] Zhang blon chen bTsan thog 'bum's tenure of Glo bo, Zhang bTsan phyug was in control of Mustang in 1244-1245, as *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* shows. Hence, rather than being a successor of bTsan thog 'bum in the Men Zhang lineage, Zhang bTsan phyug must have belonged to the same generation.

When grub thob Seng ge ye shes was heading from Glo bo to Pu hrang in wood dragon 1244, his journey was threatened by the presence in the stretch of Byang thang between Glo bo and Pu hrang by people who the text calls Be ri ru ba ("people from the nomadic encampment of the Be ri").²⁵⁶

254. *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.352a lines 3-4): "sTon gsum zhung gsum Glo bor bsdad/ Zhang blon chen po bTsan thog 'bum/ lha khang bzhengs pa'i rab gnas byas//", "I, [Mar lung pa], spent three autumns in the three main areas of Glo bo. I did the consecration of the *lha khang* built by Zhang blon chen po bTsan thog 'bum".

255. *'Phags pa Wa ti'i rnam thar* (f.19b lines 6-7): "gZugs nams dang/ ka ra shing seng ldeng grang nas/ gtsug lag khang gi zhug bsos/ gras sgo rgyab dang bcas pa ka ra shing la/ sgo 'thil seng ldeng la byas pa/ gtse'i 'ga' byir ra de 'og thog gnyis rtsegs gser zangs du sgrub//"; "As he brought [construction] material, *ka ra* wood [and] teak, [bTsan thog 'bum] renovated the *gtsug lag khang*. With the *ka ra* wood he made the decorated door tympanum. He made the door frame with teak. He completed the roof's 'ga' byir ra (sic for *gandzi ra*) in gilt copper of both the upper and lower floor".

256. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.469 line 4-p.470 line 2)*: "Pu rangs su bskyod pas de dus su Glo bo'i rgyab nas Ma pham gyi 'gram bar du Be ri'i ru ba yod pas/ Zhang drung bas phul ba la stsogs pa Pu rangs pa'i rta sum brgya lhag tsam nor mang po dang bcas pa phyag phyir 'brenge ba la/ Be ris mi thong ba'i rten 'brel mdzad nas Pu rangs su thon/ spyas snga nas rGyas pa sTag sgo nas skyod nas Sle mi (p.470) ru bskyod/ bla ma Don mo ri pa 'khor bcas byang nas Pu rangs su bskyod/ de nas spyas snga nas Sle mir gdan phebs pa la/ Jo bo bla zhang [note: Pu rangs rgyal po yin] thams cad phyag la byon pa yin gsung ba la/ spyas snga nas Sle mi ba la khrom chen po'i bab rdeg byung gi dogs/ nged yang yong khyed 'dir mar mi byong par zhu//"; "When [we] departed to Pu rangs, since the Be ri ru ba were deployed from the back of Glo bo to the bank of Ma pham, with 300 horses of the Pu rangs pa coming along and accompanying the wealth, such as the one offered by Zhang drung pa, since [Seng ge ye shes] created a karmic conjunction of events due to which the Be ris (spelled so) men did not see [us], [we] reached Pu rangs. The *spyas snga* (i.e. Seng ge ye shes) set off from rGyas pa sTag sgo, (p.470) and proceeded by the Sle mi [route]. Bla ma Don mo ri pa with the retinue set off to Pu rangs via Byang. Then, the *spyas snga* having reached Sle mi, he said: "*Jo bo bla zhang* [note: this is Pu rangs *rgyal po*], and all of them (i.e. and his court), are coming to pay homage". The *spyas snga* requested: "I fear that a big crowd might be a disturbance for the Sle mi ba. I will come up; you do not come down here"."

They were the Be ri vagrants and bandits from Khams stod and A mdo whose original land was rMa chen sPom ra.

The Be ri ru ba had resorted to looting the caravans in the area of 'Brong pa because the Pu hrang pa had sent three hundred horsemen to protect Seng ge ye shes' caravan carrying lavish gifts that the master had received from the Glo bo Men Zhang drung, bTsan phyug. The Be ri ru ba were stationed—the *rnam thar* says—from the northern frontier of Mustang up to the bank of Ma pham g.yu mtsho.

The text adds that Seng ge ye shes left for Pu hrang via the rTa sgo pass. Hence, he took a route across the Himalayan range south of the Byang thang plateau. Don mo ri pa travelled on the road across Byang thang. No better detail on the separate routes that Seng ge ye shes and Don mo ri pa took is given in *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar*. The biography only says that Seng ge ye shes went to Pu hrang via Sle mi and Don mo ri pa via lower Byang thang.

Don mo ri pa and the bulk of the caravan did not get in trouble because the source claims that Seng ge ye shes created a karmic conjunction of events due to which the Be ri ru ba did not see Seng ge ye shes's disciples. They thus escaped the risk of being looted of their properties by the bandits. Seng ge ye shes took a more tortuous but safer route across the mountains, while the bulk of the caravan with its goods had to go across the flatter plateau where the Be ri ru ba were positioned because merchandise could travel more easily across the more accessible southern Byang thang.

The deployment of different groups of brigands in southern Byang thang helps a better understanding of the secular situation in the years around 1244 when Seng ge ye shes journeyed between two of the main centres in mNga' ris—Glo bo and Pu hrang—where the Be ri ru ba were harassing locals and travelers in the stretch of Byang thang between those two lands. Other historical indicators document that the power of Pu hrang remained unaffected despite the Be ri ru ba's assertiveness in their area of influence. Sebge ye shes and Don mo ri pa reached Pu hrang without obstacles (see below n.264).

It is less clear whether the authority of the Men Zhang of Glo bo or the Men Zhang who controlled southern Byang thang was not put under pressure. In order to raid the caravans moving from Glo bo to Pu hrang along the southern Byang thang route, the Be ri ru ba must have had some kind of free hand in the area extending from 'Brong pa to Gro shod with Bar yang at its centre, a territory populated and traditionally controlled by the Men Zhang, and farther away up to the Ma yum la.

The history of those years tells of several bandit attacks when the 'Bri gung pa expeditions crossed Byang thang on the way to Gangs Ti se during the first half of the 13th century. Chos sdings pa was threatened by the Nag 'dus Khri tsho in 1208; Seng ge ye shes encountered bandits first in 1224 after leaving Dol po and twice in 1244 by the Nyag and then the Be ri. The picture that one gleans of the situation was that travelling along the route leading to the holy mountain and the lakes in Pu hrang stod was extremely dangerous due to the threat posed by the bandits posted along it to harass people and loot property.

The entire sector of the caravan route across Byang thang spanning from west of Mang yul Gung thang until Ma pham g.yu mtsho was infested by brigands. This was the ground

reality faced by Seng ge ye shes in wood dragon 1244. The gNyag covered the sector to the north of Ku thang up to Glo bo, hence the easternmost part of that stretch of the caravan route; the rest of the route was covered by the Be ri ru ba.

No indication is given that the Be ri ru ba were active in the area in 1208 or, decades later in 1224 when they knocked at the door of Central Tibet with their assault to the establishments of the region.

Another episode on issue of the Be ri ru ba's presence in southern Byang thang is useful to realise that they chose the region for their misdemeanours, although this affair refers to several years later and there is no certainty that they did not move their camp in the meantime.

U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal (1230-1309) interacted with the Be ri, initially creating great suspicion among them and then winning their devotion when he performed a miracle in their favour. On his way to Gangs Ti se in water ox 1253 (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.703), in company of a few fellow bKa' brgyud pa, he crossed southern Byang thang experiencing, like other pilgrims, an acute shortage of food before reaching Dolpo and finally the sacred mountain.²⁵⁷ U rgyan pa's companion sPa tshab pa, tired of the austerities, went to look for food and rest to the Phyag ru ba (spelled Chag ru ba in the *Gangs can rig mdzod* version of the same biography p.50 lines 7-8).²⁵⁸ U rgyan pa continued his journey and, in search of a place where to meditate,²⁵⁹ he came across the Be ri camp situated on the shores of Dar 'og mtsho, at Dar 'og gi Do.²⁶⁰ The reference to Dar 'og mtsho in

257. Was U rgyan pa in Dol po (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.56 lines 3-5), because of the 'Bri gung pa established by Seng ge ye shes were there? This would mean that the rivalries between members of the various bKa' brgyud schools, quite frequent at Gangs Tise, did not exist in more peripheral areas such as Dol po.

258. On the Phyag nomads see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (p.427-429) and *A short history of Mustang (10th-15th century)* (p.70-71), as well as above (p.175 and p.177).

259. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.917 line 15) says that U rgyan pa visited nine of the twenty-four *yul* of the bDe mchog body. See Ehrhard, *Die Statue und der Teempel des Ārya Va-ti bzang-po* (p.284 and p.415-416 n.181) for U rgyan pa's three places in Mang yul, one of them being Shel ri dpal gyu nags ljongs.

260. Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.36 line 6-p.37 line 1): "dPon Srin po gdong pa la ma gir sbra 'ga' zhig byung gsungs pas/ khong na re byung gda' zer/ de nas sbra mang po byung nang par grogs mched gnyis kyis bsod snyoms la byon pas/ byis pa gnyis kyis lug thum gcig bdas nas byung pa la/ ru ba 'di pa su yin dris pas Be ri (p.37) ru ba yin zer/"; "[U rgyan pa] told dpon Srin po gdong pa: "Down there, there are some black tents". He confirmed: "They are there". Then since there appeared many tents [to their sight], the companions having gone there for alms the next morning, they came across two boys grazing one flock (*thum*) of sheep. [U rgyan pa] asked: "Which this *ru ba* is?", and they replied: (p.37) "This is the Be ri ru ba"."

While Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* has Be ri ru ba, bSod nams 'od zer's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.50 line 5-p.52 line 3) spells them Be re ru ba; *O rgyan pa'i rnam thar* in *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.721 lines 5-6) also has Be ri ru ba.

southwest Byang thang, north of Pra dum and west of Dwang ra g.yu mtsho, under the control of the Be ri ru ba in those days is a rare citation of one of the most important lakes dotting the "Northern Plain", often associated with ancient Bon po practice but rarely being a site where masters of the bKa' brgyud schools resided.

It ensues that Phyag ru and Be ri ru were located near one another in the east-west direction in the vicinities of Dar 'og mtsho, because first sPa tshab pa split to go to the Phyag ru ba, then U rgyan pa and his companions reached the shores of Dar 'og mtsho. Hence the Be ri ru ba were north of Bar yang in Gro shod, while the Phyag ru ba were farther away from the lake in the east but still in Gro shod.

The reason for the Be ri ru ba's suspicion they nurtured about U rgyan pa was that they feared emissaries of the people of Du mur, a Mongol known to Tibetan history for his raids in several regions of the plateau.²⁶¹ He had harassed the Be ri soon before U rgyan pa encountered the bandits. U rgyan pa's presence in the land of the Be ri ru ba dates to water ox 1253, while the Be ri ru ba tried to attack Seng ge ye shes's caravan in wood dragon 1244. It cannot be ruled out that, after 1244 and before 1253, they had been weakened by the aggression of Du mur's Mongols.

Seng ge ye shes and Don mo ri pa finally reunited in Pu hrang. But Seng ge ye shes' journey from Sle mi to Pu hrang was again troubled by problems, for he had to experience a devastating earthquake that hit the area when he reached Lan phug. The earthquake was extremely severe to the extent that fissures were produced in the ground. He did not go farther than the plain of Pu hrang between Zher and sKyid, another flatland known as sKyid thang, where Kha char is located. The plain extends towards the north in the direction of sTag la mkhar.²⁶²

Having set off on the journey from Mustang to Pu hrang during the mid autumn month of 1244, Seng ge ye shes and Don mo ri pa remained in this land until sometime in early wood snake 1245, when Don mo ri pa took over as general abbot of the monasteries of Gu ge and

261. *lHo rong chos 'byung (Sangs rgyas yar byon gyi rnam thar* p.498 lines 11-12): "Hor Du mur dBus su byon rgol nas mi thams cad bsha//"; "Hor Du mur came to fight in dBus. He slaughtered all the people". Du mur's inroad into dBus took place between 1236 and 1234 (see my "The Be ri ru ba, a tribe of Tibetan vagrants (with a focus on their brigandage and association with the Hor in the 13th century)", forthcoming).

262. Don mo ripa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.470 lines 2-4): "gSung nas yar bskyod pas/ Lan phug tu gdan phebs tsa na/ sa g.yos chen po zhig kyang byung/ nye gnas rnam kyid mthong snang la/ Klu'i rgyal po Byang chub sems dpa' Ma dros pa sprul chen po geig tu byas nas lung pa phar ka phred la bcad nas/ Pu rangs kyid sKyid yan chad mi gshegs pa'i zhu ba byed pa mthong//"; "Having said so, [Seng ge ye shes] went up. Upon reaching Lan phug, there was a big earthquake. In the vision of the various nye gnas-s, after klu'i rgyal po Byang chub sems dpa' Ma dros pa emanated into a big snake, a land fissure cracked [the earth] across into this side and that side (*phar ka tshur ka phred la bcad*). Due to this, they saw [Ma dros pa] making to him a pressing request not to go farther than sKyid of Pu rangs".

Pu hrang.²⁶³ On the grounds of this appointment, Seng ge ye shes and Don mo ri pa's visit to Pu hrang was planned to accept this important task in mind.

A subsequent passage in *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* attributes to klu'i rgyal po Ma dros pa the responsibility of causing the earthquake in order for Seng ge ye shes to avoid taking up the duty of being the abbot in Pu hrang.²⁶⁴ Hence Don mo ri pa took the place of his teacher since Seng ge ye shes had not interest in being given a permanent role in Gu ge Pu hrang, or at least in Pu hrang.

Summing up the interaction of Seng ge ye shes with the royal court of the Pu hrang *jo bo*, he had not much feeling for the rulers of the land and his entourage (see Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* p.470 lines 1-4, p.478 lines 3-4 and p.478 line 6-p.479 line 3). Despite the *jo bo*-s' wish, Seng ge ye shes never really wanted to stay in Pu hrang, either in 1219-1220 when he left for Dol po, or in 1244-1245, when he displayed signs of his powers.²⁶⁵ Again he did not pay too much attention to the request of the Pu hrang pa in

263. While recording the same events as in the *rnam thar*-s grouped together in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (see above n.257), *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* (p.498 line 5-p.499 line 3) adds this significant step in the religious career of tDo rje mdzes 'od, not found in his other biographies: "De nas 'brug gi lo ston zla ba 'bring po'i tshes gsum/ bla ma rin po che ri khrod pa dang yab sras gnyis ka gdan btengs te/ rGyas pa sTag sgo'i rgyab bar du thabs gcig byon/ de nas spyang snga (p.499) nas rGyas pa sTag sgo nas Sle mi yar byon/ bla ma Don mo ri pa nyid 'khor bcas Byang nas yar byon te/ Pu rangs su gdan phebs so/ dus der rgung lo bzhi bcu rtsa gsum bzhes pa yin skad/ der Pu rangs kyi bla zhang gis zhabs tog chen po yang mdzad/ chos dang gdams ngag mang po yang gang 'tsham zhus nas/ lha mi rnam gnyis kyi mchod pa'i gnas su gyur cing/ Pu Kug gnyis ka'i mkhan po yang mdzad//"; "Then, on the third day of the middle autumn month of the dragon year (1244), bla ma rin po che Ri khrod pa, both the father and son, set off together. They went together (*thabs gcig*) up to the back of the rGyas pa sTag sgo pass. Then, the *spyang snga* (p.499) went upwards to Sle mi from rGyas pa sTag sgo. Bla ma Don mo ri pa with the retinue went upwards across Byang. They reached Pu rangs. At that time, it is said that [Don mo ri pa] was forty-three years old (1245). There, the *bla zhang* (i.e. the king) of Pu rangs rendered them a great service. Since [the king] received a fair amount of many *gdams ngag*, [Don mo ri pa] was the recipient of the worship by both the *lha* [and] *mi* (i.e. religious and lay people). He became the *mkhan po* of both Pu Kug (Pu rang and Gu ge)".

Whereas Gu ge and Pu rang remained separated since they were under different during those years, the religious seat of the two lands was unified owing to the charisma of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od.

264. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.472 lines 2-3): "De dus su nye gnas slob dpon Ri chen seng ges/ kha ning Byang chub sems dpa' Ma dros pas/ sKyid man chad mi skyod pa zhu ba'i rgyu mtshan ci lags zhus pas/ nga de man chad phyin na mkhan po lDem grongs pa'i dod la nga 'gro dgos pa 'dug pas/ de ma bzod nas zhu ba 'bul ba yin gsung//"; "At that time, his *nye gnas*, slob dpon Rin chen seng ge, asked him the reason why Byang chub sems dpa' Ma dros pa requested him not to go farther than sKyid, [Seng ge ye shes] replied: "If I had gone beyond that, I would have been obliged to go as substitute for the dead mkhan po lDem. Since he did not bear that, [Ma dros pa] made such a request".

265. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.471 line 4-p.472 line 1): "De nas Thugs bskyed gnang ba dang/ sa g.yo ba dang rtags

1248,²⁶⁶ to the point that the court had to move away from Pu hrang and see him in Sle mi at the end of the summer practice.²⁶⁷

The next phase in the life of Seng ge ye shes was inaugurated when he settled in Sle mi after his short visit to Pu hrang. He spent three years in Sle mi (1245-1248),²⁶⁸ first residing at Kun 'dzom dgon pa,²⁶⁹ and then founding sgom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas rGyal ba Ye shes rdzong, better known as dgon pa sPya ye Ye shes rdzong, at the cave where, anciently, lo chen Rin chen bzang po used to meditate.²⁷⁰ Hence he revitalised the legacy of lo chen Rin

dang cho 'phrul mang po yang byung ngo/ sKyid du zhag 'ga' gdan chags nas Sle mir skyod pa'i gdan btegs tsam gyi dus na/ Zher pa'i mi thams cad kyis nam mkha' nas dung dang cha lang la stsogs pa'i sgra grags pa thos nas/ nam mkha' la phyogs bzhir bltas pas ci yang ma mthong/ dar (p.472) cig nas spyan nga 'khor bcas byon byung bas thams cad ngo tshar skes so//"; "Then, as soon as [Seng ge ye shes] generated his *Thugs bskyed* (i.e. *Sems bskyed*, "Bodhicitta"), the earth shook, [uncommon] signs and miracles occurred. After staying at sKyid for a few days, upon departure towards Sle mi, all the Zher pa men heard a great noise of conch shells and cymbals from the sky, but they did not see anything in the four directions of the sky. After a while, (p.472) the *spyan snga* and his retinue came, and everyone was astonished".

266. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.478 lines 3-4): "De nas spre'u'i lo la Dol por bskyod grangs mdzad pas/ Pu rangs pas tshor nas gshegs gcog zhus pas ma gsan//"; "Then, in the monkey year (1248), having made preparations to leave [from Sle mi] for Dol po, the Pu rangs pa, having come to know, requested [Seng ge ye shes] to cancel, but he did not listen".

267. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.478 line 6-p.479 line 3): "De nas dbyar (p.479) mchod thon nas Pu rangs bla bzhang thams cad mjal du byon nas Thugs bskyed zhus nas jo bos thugs bskyed kyi me tog gser zho bzhi brgya tham pa'i mandala dang/ chibs bzang po gcig phul/ gzhan btsun mo lastsogs pa rnams kyis kyang gser dang/ men dang/ sman dang/ ras dang/ dar la stsogpa mang po phul lo//"; "Then, when *dbyar* (p.479) *mchod* [of 1248] was over, since the Pu rangs *bla zhang* and all of them (i.e. the king and his court) went to see [Seng ge ye shes], and asked for *Thugs skyed*. In return of the bestowing of *Thugs bskyed*, he was offered a *mandala* made of 400 *zho* of gold and a good horse. Moreover, the queen and the others (*la tsogs pa rnams*) gave him many offerings such as gold, *men* (?), medicinal plants, cotton, and silk".

268. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.477 line 2): "De la Sle mi'i sPya ye Ye shes rdzong gi dgon pa 'dir lo ril po bzhi bzhugs so//"; "With regard to this, he spent at this Ye shes rdzong gi dgon pa of sPya ye in Sle mi three consecutive years [running] into the fourth (1244-1248)".

269. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.472 lines 1-2): "De nas rgun de Sle mi ru chos rje'i bu chen bla ma Kun 'dzom pas [mtshan Blo gros rin chen] Kun 'dzom gyi dgon pa phul nas der gdan chags//"; "Then, that winter (1244-1245), at Sle mi, since the *chos rje*'s great spiritual son (*bu chen*), bla ma Kun 'dzom pa [note: his name is Blo gros rin chen], offered him Kun 'dzom dgon pa, [Seng ge ye shes] settled there".

270. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.472 lines 4-6): "De'i dbyar yang Rig gi phur gdan chags nas ston yang Sle mir bskyod de/ lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang pos bsgrubs mdzad pa'i sa der sgom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas rGyal

chen bzang po and turned the area into a major 'Bri gung pa stronghold.²⁷¹

Seng ge ye shes spent the final eight years of his life in Dol po (1248-1255) on a third sojourn in this region.²⁷² His *rnam thar* is not too rich of details that help to explain a strange

ba Ye shes rdzong rtsig pa'i dus su/ dgon pa Brag 'og gi phug der zhag gcig gi dus na bdag gis bKa' brgyud gyi bla ma rnams kyi lo rgyus sam rnam thar ji ltar gsungs/"; "That spring (*de'i sos ka*) (1245), headed by bla ma Kun 'dzom pa, the people of Sle mi requested *Thugs bskyed*, which [Seng ge ye shes] gave. After staying that summer at Rig gi phu ("upper Rig") (1245), he again went to Sle mi. While he was building sgom phug ("meditation cave") dPal gyi 'byung gnas rGyal ba Ye shes rdzong in this place where lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po had his meditation, when [Seng ge ye shes] spent one night in the cave below the *dgon pa* rock, I myself (Don mo ri pa) made the following request".

For Don mo ri pa's request to write his history of the bKa' brgyud pa see below (p.331) in the text (and n.465).

271. The meditation cave of Rin chen bzang po, over which sPya ye Ye shes rdzong was built by grub thob Seng ge ye shes during his three years sojourn in Sle mi (1245-1248), is briefly mentioned in both the known biographies of Lo chen. *Rin chen bzang po'i rnam thar 'bring po* (p.122 line 2) says that, among the various localities where he died—a show case of local pride—one was 'Om lo brag phug. *Rin chen bzang po'i rnam thar bsdus pa* (p.274 line 3), equally introducing the same places, calls it lHe mi (spelled so) Ca se brag phug. 'Om lo is another and perhaps earlier name of the Sle mi area, spelled in several variants—one of various places where the tradition holds that he died.

272. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.480 line 5-p.481 line 3): "De nas bya lo la 'Bri gung du 'bul ba shin tu che ba gser 'bum gysis sna drangs pa'i rta nyi shu dang bcas zhis 'bul bar mdzad/ de'i rting gi lo yang 'Bri gung du yang chos rje'i gser sku gcig dang/ gser (p.481) gyi 'Phags pa brGyad stong pa gnyis dang/ gser tam chen po gcig dang/ g.yu' bo che brgyad dngul skyogs gnyis/ gser gyi sor gdub gsum/ sil la rta khal gcig/ rta bcu/ Phung gu che'i sku thang gcig/ mang skol gcig gi rgyu men bzhi bcu/ ras dang sman la stsogs pa 'bul bar mdzad/"; "Then in the bird year (1249), he made an extremely large offering to 'Bri gung that consisted of a gold-written '*Bum*, as the main one, together twenty horses. Thereafter, in the rat year (1252), he gave an offering [of items], such as a golden statue of *chos rje*, two sets of gold-written (p.481) '*Phags pa brGyad stong pa*, one big gold coin, eight big turquoises and two silver ladles, three golden rings, one horse-load of *sil la* (spelled so for *sil ba?*), ten horses, one *sku thang* of Phung gu che, forty *rgyu men* (?) to boil tea for the assembly, cotton and medicinal herbs".

Ibid. (p.482 lines 2-5): "De nas stag gi lo la/ dbyar mchod la Dol po'i sgom che pa rnams dang/ yon bdag pa la stsogs pa thams cad tshogs pa'i dus su/ spyan snga nas dpal Phag mo gru pa'i mchod pa byed 'di de sda yan chad/ khyed rang thams cad kyis rgyu ba bton nged kyis lag len byas nas lo mang po byas pa yin/ da sang phod phan chad 'o skol tsho lhan cig tshogs nas mchod pa byed kyin pa yang e yong mi shes/ da phyin chod spyir 'bul ba mi 'dod/ 'Bri gung du 'bul ba skyel ba yang da res yin/ do gcig ston phan chod bsod snyoms kyang mi byed gsung/"; "Then in the tiger year (1254), when everyone such as the ascetics and sponsors of Dol po gathered for *dbyar mchod*, the *spyan snga* said: "You all have been sponsoring this dpal Phag mo gru pa ritual until recently, and I performed it. This continued for many years. Now, I do not know whether I will hold this ritual again after gathering all [of you] at the same time the next year. From now on, I do not want any offerings in general. In particular, I do not want offerings of horses. This is the [last] time (*da res*) that an offering is sent to 'Bri gung. Since autumn I will not make collections of alms".

alternance, until his death, of what are confusedly described as obstructions to his work and lavish gifts to 'Bri gung, meaning that he still attracted great local support.

When still in Sle mi, an episode illustrates the state of affairs of the 'Bri gung pa community residing at holy places away from the school's main centres in Pu hrang. In more remote areas, the small hermit communities established by Seng ge ye shes faced difficulties for their survival.²⁷³ Whether this depended on a scarcity of funds is not allowed to know. However, Don mo ri pa, upon departure for Dol po, asked his teacher to pay particular attention to Sle mi sPya ye Ye shes rdzong and provide for its survival. The next sentence, which says that consequently a small group of ascetics—from five to twelve—was kept all the time at sPya ye Ye shes rdzong, indicates that it was more likely a matter of maintaining a steady community of meditators than of funds. The numbers of monks in Dol po are miles apart from the exorbitant figures given in other sources of the 'Bri gung—and also sTag lung—meditators who frequented the holy places. This is a first sign that the presence of Seng ge ye shes's 'Bri gung pa meditators at the local hermitages was capillary rather than numerous.

No less mysterious is another statement, attributed to Seng ge ye shes himself who, upon reaching the northern border of Dol po via the southern Byang thang route that he took from

Ibid. (p.483 lines 1-4): "De nas mchod pa thon nas nye gnas Shakya 'od 'bul skyel la brdzangs pa la/ bcom ldan 'das bDe' mchog gi gser sku gcig/ Glo bo sTengs chung ba'i dpon pos phul ba'i gser 'bum la stsogs pa gser gyi po ti nyi shu rtsa gnyis/ sil la dos gcig/ gu gul dos gcig/ gser zho bzhi bcu/ gser tam chen po gcig/ dgul gyi thal chen po gcig/ rin po che man shel gyi bum pa gcig/ mu tig chun po nyi shu/ ber bzang po brgyad/ men yug bdun bcu tham pa/ rta bzng po bcu drug/ ras bzhi bcu tham pa/ dzā ti dang srin bal la stsogs pa ka ca phran tshogs mang po dar bcas pa phul lo//"; "After the ritual was over, nye gnas Shakya 'od was sent to take the offerings that consisted of a golden statue of bcom ldan 'das bDe mchog; twenty-two books, such as the gold-written 'Bum given by the chieftain of the Glo bo sTengs chung ba; one load of *sil la* ("cymbals"?); one load of *gu gul* ("incense" or *Tshig mdzod*: "a juice from a wood with medical properties"); forty *zho* of gold; one big gold coin; one big silver coin; a vase made of precious crystal; twenty bunches of pearls; eight good robes; seventy bundles of *men* ("cotton"?); sixteen good horses; forty [bundles of] cotton; nutmegs and cotton wool (*srin bal*, "medical cotton") along with many other small items".

273. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.479 lines 3-6): "De nas Dol por bskyod pa la sPya ye sGom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas Ye shes rdzong nas gdan btegs nas Pha ta'i sgang zhig du sleb pa na/ rin po che Don mo ri pas zhus pa/spyan snga'i dgon pa gzhan thams cad ni gzhan gyis zin pa dka' bar gda'/ Pya ye 'di la sgom chen pa 'ga' re sdod pa'i rten 'brel mdzad par zhu zhus pas/ zhan phyir bsgyur nas dgon pa la gzigs te spyan zim mdzad/ de phan chad sgom chen pa bcug gnyis tsam lnga drug re lo mang po' bar du rgyun mchad do//"; "Then, planning to go to Dol po, since [Seng ge ye shes] left sPya ye sGom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas Ye shes rdzong, upon arrival above Pha ta, rin po che Don mo ri pa made a plea: "Others find it difficult to run all the other monasteries of the *spyan snga*", and repeatedly prayed him to establish a karmic conjunction of events so that a few ascetics could reside at this sPya ye. Turning the face back to see the *dgon pa*, [Seng ge ye shes] looked with radiant eyes. From then on, he never failed [to have] twelve, or else five, or six ascetics [at sPya ye] uninterruptedly for many years".

Sle mi, complained of difficulties despite the fact that the local sponsors—called *gzhi bdag* in the passage, as often is the case in the 'Bri gung pa literature of that period or referring to that period—favoured him.²⁷⁴

The presence of Seng ge ye shes was not welcomed by a part of the monastic community. One of the reasons that led Seng ge ye shes to leave Sle mi and go back to Dol po was to try a reconciliation with his old sponsors whom he scolded and threatened to abandon by returning to Sle mi.

The controversy revolved around one Dol po slob dpon sgom Dar, the son of an unidentified *sgom chen pa chos rje* of Dol po, who were religious masters and the sponsors of Seng ge ye shes. The *grub thob*'s rebuke of the sponsors created panic among them, and led to the disapproval of part of the monastic community gathered there. The sponsors finally interceded with Seng ge ye shes and the monks hostile to him. They came to an adjustment whereby Seng ge ye shes returned to Shes in the same 1248,²⁷⁵ took charge of the place and remained there until his death in wood hare 1255.

The identity of those who did not favour him is again not given to be known. Should the disagreement be understood as religious jealousy among fellow bKa' brgyud pa or members of different religious schools, antagonist of the 'Bri gung pa in Dol po and elsewhere?

The life of Seng ge ye shes, after he left Gangs Ti se in 1219-1220, can be subdivided into several phases with rare travels back to 'Bri gung:

274. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.479 line 6-p.480 line 4)*: “De nas Sle mi nas Byang du byon te Dol po'i la rgyab tu phebs pa dang/ rten 'brel ngan Dol po'i gzhi bdag tsho ni nga la dga' ba yi/ ci tsun yi nam gdangs nas/ (p.480) chos rjes mgur pha bla ma rin chen la gsol ba 'debs zer ba de dbyangs su gyer dang gsung nas/ khong shes pa gsum gyis gyer/ de nas thog mar sKyi steng du byon/ der Dol po'i sgom chen pa chos rje'i bu sgres slob dpon sGom Dar la stsogs pa mang po mjal du byung ba la bka' ba kyon byung ste/ nga'i skyo yin nam/ khyed kyi skyon yin nam/ rten 'brel ngan pa pas phyi shul la bzhud pa yin gsungs pas khong rnams skrags nas/ dge 'dun thugs mi mthun che bar byung lags te/ da spyang snga nas byon pas dun nas phyi bas de tsug mi gsung bar zhu zhus pas der byon pas rang dum la song/”; “[Seng ge ye shes] then went from Sle mi to Byang (i.e. southern Byang thang) and as soon as he arrived at the back of the Dol po pass, he said: “There is a negative karmic conjunction of events. The Dol po *gzhi bdag*-s favour me. Why then [the situation] is like that?”. (p.480) The *chos rje* told [people] to sing the song whose melody says: “Pha bla ma rin chen la gsol ba 'debs” (“[I] pray to the jewel, the father *bla ma*”), and those three who knew it sang [the song]. Then, [Seng ge ye shes] first went to sKyi steng. Here, he scolded the many who had come to see him, such as slob dpon sgom Dar, the elder (*sgres* sic for *bgres*) son of *sgom chen pa chos rje* of Dol po: “Is it my fault? Is it your fault? Since the karmic conjunction of events is bad, I will go back”. They horrified [at that], and this created a major disagreement among the monks. [The sponsors] begged him: “*sPyan snga* has come now to reconcile. [The misunderstandings should be] wiped away: do not say like that!”. The fact that he had gone there led to a spontaneous reconciliation between the factions involved”.

275. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.480 line 5)*: “De nas hes kyi dgon pa pa rDo rje rdzong du spre lo la gdan phab bo//”; “In the monkey year (1248), he went to dgon pa rDo rje rdzong of Shes”.

- a first Dol po sojourn during the years 1220-1225;
- a four year stay at Shes rDo rje rdzong (1228-1232) after going to Dol po in the autumn of 1228;
- a three year sojourn in Lan bde of Mang yul (1233-1235) where he went after the winter of 1232;
- a phase of eight years at holy places in the areas from Chu bar to Ku thang (1236-1244); Chu bar, Byang chub gling and Ngam pa lung were the major places where he stayed;
- the Sle mi phase (1245-1248) after briefly being in Glo bo and then in Pu hrang;
- a third Dol po phase (from 1248 until his death in 1255).

The activities of Seng ge ye shes in the last part of his life were set on a quickly changing background. The bKa' brgyud pa in the lands on the "upper side" could benefit of a period of prosperity induced by the victory of Ya rtse in the first Ya rtse-Gung thang war. The support granted by the Pu hrang *jo bo* to Seng ge ye shes and his disciple Don mo ri pa was part of the favour secured by the Ya rtse-Pu hrang alliance to the 'Bri gung pa.

The strongholds—retreatant? or also secular?—of Seng ge ye shes were Dol po (Shes), sKyid grong (Lan bde), La phyi (Chu bar) and Sle mi (sPya ye), far away from the major hermitage places, with the exception of La phyi. They also were distant from the seats of secular power such as Pu hrang and Ya rtse, the main allies of his bKa' brgyud pa schools in the regions on the "upper side".

But one should not glean a wrong impression about him. He was not completely *bya btang pa*, for his biography amply demonstrates that he was keen to establish *yon mchod* with the local leadership. See, for instance, the Lan bde episode when he was quick in questioning the locals as to who was going to sponsor him. He also kept supplying 'Bri gung with lavish gifts until the end of his life.

Seng ge ye shes's foundations of the two retreat-monasteries of Shes rDo rje rdzong in Dol po and sPya ye Ye shes rdzong in Sle mi were part of the expansion phase of the 'Bri gung pa in the lands on the "upper side" during the period of 'Bri gung pa effulgence.

They were not a substitute for the loss of the more central areas of mNga' ris, such as Gangs Ti se, at the hands of the Sa skya pa as Mathes says in his article ("The Sacred Crystal Mountain in Dolpo: Beliefs and Pure Visions of Himalayan Pilgrims and Yogins" p.80). The establishment of these retreat-monasteries preceded the rise to power of the Sa skya pa who, through their Gung thang pa feudatories, came to own this sector of mNga' ris—inclusive of Dol po, and Sle mi too?—in earth dragon 1268,²⁷⁶ while their takeover of mNga' ris stod occurred only in the crucial years 1277-1280.

276. Glo bo and Dol po were conquered by Gung thang and became part of its districts called the *brgya tsho bcu gsum* not later than 1268 because the constitution of the *brgya tsho bcu gsum* is recorded in *Gung thang gdung rabs* (lHa sa ed. p.99 line 15-p.100 line 1) after 'Bum lde mgon's enthronement in 1267 and before a reference to the *khri skor* system introduced by the Mongols in 1268. The same two lands were also incorporated into the Gung thang *khri skor* as *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.277 line 18-p.278 line 1) says: "mNga' ris rDzong kha'i 'og gi/ Blo Dol rDzong (p.278) gsum khri skor gcig/'", "Blo [bo] Dol [po] and rDzong [dkar] make one *khri skor* under mNga' ris rDzong kha (spelled as for rDzong dkar)".

One more teacher of the sTod Tshal pa

Another master of the sTod Tshal pa left a mark in the history of the lands on the “upper side” during the 13th century. The classification in *Deb ther dmar po* which associates the sTod Tshal pa with Sangs rgyas Tshal pa as their initiator and lHa phyug mkhar pa as their teacher is supplemented by a passage on a further member of this bKa’ brgyud pa school. He had a seminal role in training the sTod Tshal pa. He was Sangs rgyas ’bum and the biography of him in *Deb ther dmar po* on the subject of his sTod Tshal pa disciples does not go any further than mentioning their collective name; Kun dga’ rdo rje does not identify any of them. (ibid. p.133 line 19). Hence it is not given to be known whether he trained both the rTa sga ba and the Pu hrang Tshal pa or else one of the two groups. Sangs rgyas ’bum was a disciple of lHa phyugs mkhar pa who associated him in the undertaking the education of his disciples, not only the sTod Tshal pa.²⁷⁷

The same *rnam thar* contains succinct notions about Sangs rgyas ’bum’s deeds, supported by a few chronological references, some of which remain unsubstantiated, while others help to establish a few points in his life.²⁷⁸

277. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.133 lines 17-21) enumerates his major disciples: “De’i zhal slob ma bla ma Ba lam pa/ spyan snga ba Phyugs pa’i rtogs ldan ’Dag char ba/ jo btsun Sras pa/ lHa rje dGe ’bum lcam sring/grwa pa dGe slong/ slob dpon Ngar phu pa ’Bri ra ba/ rtogs ldan Byang phyi ba/ sPos kha ba, lHa spyil pa Zhang sgom/ bla ma Do pa/ sTod Tshal ci rigs pa dang/ sGang rigs pa lo sogs bu slob mang po byon/”; “[Sangs rgyas ’bum]’s personal disciples who came [to study under him] were bla ma Ba lam pa, spyan snga ba Phyugs pa’s rtogs ldan’Dag char ba, jo btsun Sras pa, lHa rje dGe ’bum and his sister, grwa pa dGe slong, slob dpon Ngar phu pa [and] ’Bri ra ba, rtogs ldan Byang phyi ba, sPos kha ba, lHa spyil pa Zhang sgom, bla ma Do pa, any sTod Tshal [pa] and the sGang rigs pa”.

278. The biography of Sangs rgyas ’bum in *Deb ther dmar po* (p.133 lines 5-22) reads: “sGom bde’i sprul sku Sangs rgyas ’bum ni dGra’i lHo srong su/ gdung rus rJe/ yab lHo Rad mo’i sras su ’khrungs/ mtshan rDo rje ’bum/ dgung lo lnga pa la Zhang rin po che’i Gra phur byon dus/ yab kyi khrid nas sems bskyed chen po thob phyir Grags mdar dbang chen mo thob/ Gung thang du slob dpon Zhang rin po che’i mkhan po bZod pa gnyis la rab tu byung/ Sangs rgyas ’bum du btags/ khrid zhus pa’i rtog pa ’khrungs zhes zer ba dga’/ dgung lo nyi shu rtsa gsum la bsnyen rdzogs kyi mkhan po sngon ma dang cig pa ’dra sku gzhon dus slob dpon Zhe la sogs pa bla ma mang du bsten skad/ physis dpal lHa phyug mkhar pa’i thugs kyi sras su gyur zhing chos mtha’ dag gnan/ zhabs tog mdzad/ shing pho khyi lo la Tshal Yang dgon du gdan sar bskos nas lo lnga mdzad/ chu pho stag lo la Gung thang du dGon sde btap/ bDe mchog gi dkyil ’khor bzhengs nas dBu rtser phul/ lHa sa’i rag gsos ’Bri sTag gi ’dum la byon pa sogs phyag rjes du ma mdzad/ de’i zhal slob bla ma Ba lam pa/ spyan snga ba phyugs pa’i rtogs ldan ’Dag char ba/ jo btsun Sras pa/ lha rje dGe ’bum lcam sring/ grwa pa dGe slong/ slob dpon Ngar phug pa ’Bri ra ba/ rtogs ldan Byang phyi ba/ sPos kha ba/ lHa spyil pa Zhang sgom/ bla ma Do pa/ sTod Tshal ci rigs pa dang/ sGang rigs pa la sogs bu slob mang po byon/”; “sGom bde’s (spelled so for sGom sde) sprul sku Sangs rgyas ’bum was born at lHo Srong of dGra [in] the rJe clan to his father lHo Rad mo. His name was rDo rje ’bum. Aged five, when, in order to receive *Sems bskyed chen mo*, he went to Zhang rin po che’s Gra phu with the guidance of the father, he obtained the great empowerment at Grags mda’.

Deb ther dmar po says that, like lHa phyug mkhar pa, Sangs rgyas 'bum was not from mNga' ris. He too took his vows from Zhang g.Yu brag pa and later became the closest disciple of lHa phyug mkhar pa. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.809 lines 7-8) calls him Nyi zla 'od's *nye gnas*, "personal attendant". He sat twice on the throne of Tshal Yang dgon as abbot. In water tiger 1242, he founded sGom sde at Gung thang, so that Sangs rgyas 'bum is defined as sGom bde'i (spelled so) *sprul sku* in *Deb ther dmar po* after the name of this meditation retreat (ibid. p.133 line 5).²⁷⁹

Among his feats, *Deb ther dmar po* mentions the restoration of the embankment to protect lHa sa from the swelling of the sKyid chu and the service he rendered to 'Bri gung and sTag lung by pacifying a controversy between the two monasteries. But it is not clear from this passage whether *Deb ther dmar po* refers to the discord of 1224 or the next one that broke out in 1230 (on the latter event see *Ti shri ras pa'i rnam thar* in *lHo rong chos 'byung* p.217 lines 1-5), otherwise another one still, since dispute is undated.

The chronology of Sangs rgyas 'bum is established on the grounds of the age he reached when he received the *rab tu byung* vow from Zhang g.Yu brag pa. He was twenty-three years

At Gung thang, he took the *rab tu byung* vow from both Zhang rin po che as *slob dpon* and bZod pa as *mkhan po*. He was given the name of Sangs rgyas 'bum. It is said that he had [spiritual] realisations after receiving *khrid* ("explanations"). When he was twenty-three years old, he took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from, seemingly, the previous *mkhan* [po and] *slob* [dpon]. It is said that, in his youth, he studied with many *bla ma*-s such as *slob dpon dGon Zhe*. Later, he became the closest disciple (*thugs kyi sras*) of dpal lHa phyug mkhar pa and was given complete teachings. He rendered service to him. In wood male dog (1214), he was appointed *gdan sa* of Tshal Yang dgon, which he was for five years (1214-1218). In water male tiger (1242), he founded Gung thang dGon sde (spelled so). He made a bDe mchog *dkyil 'khor* and placed it in the dBu rtse. He left many handprints [of his activity] such as he restored the lHa sa embankment (*rag gsos* sic for *rags gsos*) [and] went to reconcile 'Bri [gung and] sTag [lung]. Many followers came [to study under him], such as his direct disciples *bla ma Ba lam pa*; *spyen snga ba phyugs pa'i* ("cattleman") *rtogs ldan 'Dag char ba*; *jo btsun Sras pa*; *lha rje dGe 'bum* and his sister (*lcam sring*); *grwa pa dGe slong*; *slob dpon Ngar phug pa*; 'Bri ra ba; *rTogs ldan Byang phyi ba*; *sPos kha ba*; *lHa spyil pa Zhang sgom*; *bla ma Do pa*, as well as several groups of sTod Tshal [pa] and the group of sGang. He died aged seventy-five".

279. sGom sde was an independent religious institution rather than a meditation outlet of the Gung thang monastery.

In one case sGom sde, mentioned in the Tshal pa material, is associated together with lHa phyug mkhar (*Deb ther dmar po* p.146 lines 14-16 in reference to *bla ma bZang zar rtsegs*), while, in all the other ones, sGom sde appears by itself. This is the case of one passage referring to donations in which *sgom sde* is listed separately from lHa phyug mkhar in a brief enumeration (e.g. ibid. p.147 lines 6-9 in reference to *Jo btsun Sras pa*). sGom sde is again mentioned separately in the cases of the unnamed disciple of Zhang Nyag 'Bri ra ba, who founded 'Jam dpal gling in sKyid grong according to the Tshal pa documents (*Deb ther dmar po* p.147 lines 11-15). He is also mentioned in the biography of bSam gtan rdzong pa (ibid. p.147 lines 15-17), the fourth Tshal pa summoned by Sangs rgyas Tshal pa after founding rTa sga. Activities focused on sGom sde should be dated to after 1242 and are related to Tshal pa masters whose work is associated with mNga' ris.

old at that time. Given that the last possible occasion for his ordination to have taken place was 1193 (or in 1194 according to another tradition) when bla ma Zhang died, the birth of Sangs rgyas 'bum' cannot have taken place after iron hare 1171. Having lived for seventy-five years, his demise occurred not later than 1245. Since he founded Gung thang sGom sde in 1242, he cannot have died before that date. Hence, he was born between 1168 and 1171 and died between 1242 and 1245.

Among his disciples was jo btsun Sras pa who had an important role in Glo bo and the Kathmandu Valley (see below p.239-242) but he is not considered in the concerned literature to have been part of either the rTa sga ba or the Pu hrang Tshal pa. He is a living example that there were other members of the Tshal pa in mNga' ris, who did not belong to the two groups. Hence lHa phyug mkhar pa delegated Sangs rgyas 'bum to train other disciples active in mNga' ris besides those who were his own students.

The exclusion of at least one of Sangs rgyas 'bum's disciples from the classification in *Deb ther dmar po* of lHa phyug mkhar pa's sTod Tshal pa shows that Kun dga' rdo rje followed a tradition whereby not all those who lived and worked in mNga' ris were considered rTa sga ba or Pu hrang Tshal pa.

A resurgence of the Indo-Iranic power in La dwags: phase one (ca. 1235 to 1257)

▪ Bhag dhār skyabs, the lord of rGya shing lung

The 'Bri gung pa apogee in mNga' ris stod—their power emboldened by Mongol support—brought them to have an important say in Mar yul that extended from the religious field to the control of the secular situation. Nonetheless, despite the influence of the members of the 'Bri gung pa school and their affiliates from mNga' ris stod, the reign of 'Bri gung-oriented king of Mar yul dNgos grub mgon did not produce a genealogical segment of rulers from Pu hrang.

After his reign, one more resurgence of indigenous power occurred in Mar yul smad. Bhag dhār skyabs, a man of Indo-Iranic stock, succeeded dNgos grub mgon and proved to be a powerful lord.

He does not appear either in the lineages of *gDung rabs zam phreng* and *La dwags rgyal rabs* or the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, whose combined reading expands the understanding of the genealogical status in Mar yul. His reign fell during the period not covered by either one of these sources, owing to genealogical gaps. Given that Bhag dhār skyabs is not mentioned in any other ancient historiographical work on the Seng ge kha babs region, his memory is confined to the local lore fuelled by the writings of local authorities of a recent and more distant past.

The only exception to the legendary aura surrounding this personage is the historical inscription on a wall of Wan la gSum brtsegs, written by Shakya'i rgyal po Byang chub dpal

bzang (see Addendum Two for its full text and a translation of mine).²⁸⁰ The epigraph traces Bhag dhār skyabs's life and deeds with great accuracy, besides being an ancient document contemporary with his existence or soon after it. That the Wan la gSum brtsegs inscription was written at the time of the completion of its 'Bri gung pa building work or soon after its conclusion—as I will show—is proved by its assertion that statues of bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s were housed inside the *gsum brtsegs*, whereas they were no more there soon after, at the time of writing the epigraph (see Addendum Two).

The Wan la inscription is structured into two sections that are written in ornated form, typical of the Tibetan literature. One is historical and concerns Bhag dhār skyabs but also deals shortly with his three younger brothers in a reprise after the second section which is physical, dedicated as it is to a description of the Wan la gSum brtsegs and a record of its artists.

The epigraph associates Wan la gSum brtsegs with the 'Bri gung pa, a sign that the religious ascendancy of this bKa' brgyud pa school continued unaffected during the reign of Bhag dhār skyabs. It also conveys that the ascent of Bhag dhār skyabs to unrestrained power in La dwags gsham took place within the charismatic sphere of influence of the 'Bri gung pa in mNga' ris stod during those decades.

Owing to the favourable *las* accumulated in prior existences, Bhag dhār skyabs was born into a ministerial family, which facilitated his surge to a preeminent status. He was supported by local powerful people, rulers and, hagiographically, even the emperor. This indicates a composite situation that led to his appointment. I read in these categories of supporters local Indo-Iranic dignitaries, the nearby lords of Gu ge Pu hrang and, less likely, the Hor emperor whose identity is not ascertained (perhaps Ögodei, r. 1229-1241, if the epigraph is trustworthy).²⁸¹ Bhag dhār skyabs extended his control over a huge expanse of lands in four phases:

- Having surged to the status of lord of rGya shing lung, the area called so in antiquity where Wan la is sited, he first took over La dwags gsham. He held Pu rig and Su ru under his sway up to the extreme west of Mar yul, for he seized Wa kha Khar po che, rKan ji, E nas sku and Su ru. He also took over the area on the upper side of Mar yul/La dwags gsham, for he gained control of A lci and Mang rgyu.²⁸²

280. The colophon of the Wan la inscription reads: "Shākya'i rgyal po Byang chub bzang po bdag gis ni/ thos pa chung ba'i rkyen tshig sdebs ma 'tshal yang/ skye bo blun po nams kyis shes par mi 'gyur gyi/ phal pa nams kyis gzigs na phan sems gyis/ kun mkhyen nams kyis khrel na nongs pa bzod par gsol//"; "I myself Shākya'i rgyal po Byang chub bzang po, although it is not appropriate that I have put [this epigraph] into written form owing to the little that I have heard, [know that] this will not improve the knowledge of the foolish people. Given that, if commoners see [this inscription], may think that it is useful, I beg the learned masters' patience for [any] mistake".

281. Wan la inscription: "sKu mched bzhi'i gcen po chen po khri dpon Bhag dhār skyabs/ sngon tshe bsod nams bas gas pas dal 'byor mi lus thob// las kyi mtshams sbyor bzang bas blon sras gong mar 'khrungs/ smon lam nram par dag pas dam pas chos dang mjal//"; "The eldest of the four brothers, the great khri dpon Bhag dhār skyabs, having accumulated merit, obtained the rarity of a human existence/body. At the final ripening of his *karma*, as an application of it, he was born as a son of a previous minister. Through the impeccable prayers [he recited], he was introduced to the Noble Religion".

282. Wan la inscription: "gZhan la shor ba phug nas chab srid legs par mnan/ Wa kha mkhar po che dang rKan ji man Su ru/ E nas Al lci Mang rgyu mnga' 'og mdzad//"; "As for other [rulers'

- Control of La dwags gsham enabled Bhag dhār skyabs to get into Kha che,²⁸³ his military action described as an inroad. How far he penetrated into the Valley—whether he reached its core or remained at the periphery is not given to be known. No Tibetan was able to invade the Kashmir Valley after the imperial period, rGyal bu Rin chen’s takeover of Kha che being a different historical event that cannot be ascribed to a Tibetan (see below p.320-322). This makes the La dwags pa military achievement quite extraordinary. All the more extraordinary is that, in order to advance into Kha che, Bhag dhār skyabs did not profit from the unsettled situation following the campaign waged into the Kashmir Valley by Hu la hu’s mercenaries, the Qarauna (see below p.222). The takeover of Kashmir by the troops of Hu la hu, who conquered the territory in the activity related to the military steps that led to their lord’s conquest of Baghdad, occurred in successive years.

The Wan la inscription says that, following his inroad into Kha che, Bhag dhār skyabs was appointed *khri dpon*, a title typical of the Mongol organisation. The appointment indicates that some form of the Mongol organisation was adopted in mNga’ ris stod following the meeting of ’Bri gung gling pa Shes rab ’byung gnas with the Mongols in the Tarim desert during his seven years stay in Upper West Tibet. The Hor became the supporters of the ’Bri gung pa; Bhag dhār skyabs, being a ’Bri gung pa loyalist, availed of the appointments that descended from the *yon mchod* established with the emissaries of Jing gir rgyal po. His campaign outside the border of La dwags must have earned him the consideration of the Mongols in the game of enfeeblement of the territories in which they were operating.

The grant of the *khri dpon* status to Bhag dhār skyabs is one of a few signs that he did not live during *bstan pa phyi dar* and, therefore, was not a contemporary of Rin chen bzang po, as held by the 17th Ba ku la rin po che (see n.292).

- The next step in his military campaigns took Bhag dhār skyabs to control Mar yul stod, too, for he reduced the four *ru ba* (“nomadic encampments”) of La dwags Byang thang under his sway.²⁸⁴ The inscription describes this military operation as his conclusive step in his

lands], he intruded straying [into them]. He crushed their power in a brilliant manner. He reduced Wa kha mkhar po che, rKan ji down to Su ru, E nas [sku], Al lei and Mang rgyu under his sway”.

283. Wan la inscription: “Kha che yul du bskyod nas khri dpon mnga’ gsol byas//; “He advanced into the land of Kha che. He was appointed *khri dpon*”.

284. Wan la inscription: “Byang gi ru ba bzhi nas khral thud mang po bsdus/ dpa’ rtsal ldan pas skyes bu gang phyin g.yul las rgyal/ dmag skyon che ’bring ’gran gyi do med byas/ ’gran gyi do byas thams cad rim gyis ’cham la phabs//”; “He collected much taxation and soft cheese from the four *ru* (“nomad camps”) in [La dwags] Byang [thang]. Gifted with bravery, he was victorious in battle against anyone he confronted. He was unrivalled against big and mid-sized troops [which proved to be] useless. He crushed all rivals in succession”.

Although not classifying *ru ba-s* (“nomadic encampments”) specifically and particularly those of antiquity, a geographical classification of the four La dwags Byang thang districts is found in Thub bstan dpal ldan, *La dwags* (p.4 line 9): “sTod Byang thang gi lte gnas ni Numa [Nyoma] yin//”, “The central area of sTod Byang thang has [its main site at] Nu ma [also called] Nyo ma”. The same text (ibid. p.5 lines 4-10) adds: “Byang thang Rong dang La log zer nas khag gsum yod/

expansionistic activity in order to establish his power far and wide but not beyond the limits of La dwags in the east. Nonetheless he was engaged in one more campaign.

- Given his control of Pu rig, his further action was to cross its border and subdue the 'Brog pa (Dāradā) of sBal ti.²⁸⁵ He did not or was not able to move against Gu ge and Pu hrang in mNga' ris skor gsum and take them over, but made his impact felt on these lands.²⁸⁶

The Wan la inscription uses the expression *pho lo sum cu* to mention the length of Bhag dhār skyabs rule over rGya shing lung.²⁸⁷ One should not be misled to read the expression *pho lo sum cu* in the text to mean "thirty male years", like the dictionaries say. If this wrong

Rong gi yul khag che ba kun ni Lig tse/ Hem ya/ Ke re/ gTer ri [Ti ri]/.... Byang thang gi yul khag kun ni Ku yul/ Wam lde/ Chu mur ti/ dKor mdzod/ Ru shod/ mKhar nag kun yin/ La log gi yul che khag ni rDo khul/ Grang rtse/ Shar khul/ Klungs/ Bar ma/ Chu shul/ Man mi rag/ sPang gung/ Pho brang sogs yin//"; "Byang thang is composed of three other districts: Byang thang, Rong and La log. The main areas in Byang thang are Ku yul, Wam lde, Chu mur ti, dKor mdzod, Ru shod (i.e. Rub zhu) and mKhar nag. The main areas in Rong are Lig tse, He mya, Ke re and gTer ri (Ti ri). The main areas in La log are rDo khul, Grang rtse (Brang rtse), Shar kul, Klungs, Bar ma, Chu shul, Man mi rag, sPang gung (Pang gong) and Pho brang".

Hence:

Numa [Nyoma]	Byang thang	Rong	La log
	Ku yul, Wam lde,	Lig tse, He mya,	Do khul, Grang rtse (Brang rtse),
	Chu mur ti, dKor mdzod,	Ke re, gTer ri (Ti ri)	Shar kul, Klungs, Bar ma,
	Ru shod (i.e. Rub zhu),		Chu shul, Man mi rag,
	mKhar nag		sPang gung (Pang gong) and Pho brang

285. Wan la inscription: "sBal ti 'Brog pa la sogs phran tshogs zil gyis mnan//"; "He brilliantly subdued minor entities such as the 'Brog pa (Dāradā) of sBal ti".

286. Wan la inscription: "Gu ge Pu hrang tshun chad mNga' ris bskor gsum la/ ci bsam don du grub pas snyan pa khyod la grags/ dpa' bo'i las stabs smra na tshod dang grangs las 'das//; "He obtained everything he planned all the way to Gu ge Pu hrang in mNga' ris skor gsum. "In terms of fame, you are renowned": the amount of words about his methods of heroic action exceed any count".

That Gu ge and Pu hrang are mentioned together in this passage of the Wan la inscription could be an indication that they were under a single ruler. In the first half of the 13th century Gu ge was fragmented into Gu ge lHo stod and Gu ge Byang ngos, a state of affairs that went back to several previous reigns. Their rulers did not control Pu hrang. It was king Grags pa lde who unified the two Gu ge and Pu hrang under his control. Nonetheless the association of Gu ge with Pu hrang is not a sign that the reigns of Bhag dhār skyabs and Grags pa lde may have been partially coeval. Bhag dhār skyabs, ruled ca. the second quarter of the 13th century, while Grags pa lde (1223-1277) unified the territories on which he ruled ca. 1255 (see below p.263-269). This is enough proof that the expression Gu ge Pu hrang is a stereotype, a classic of the literature.

287. Wan la inscription: "Dam pa'i chos la mos pa shin tu ngo mtshar che/ skye bo mi chos phyogs su lhag par phun su tshogs/ pho lo sum cu lon nas yab mes rgyal srid ni/ Wan las mgo bcas rGya shing lung pa thams cad bskyangs//"; "Having an extraordinarily great faith in the Noble Religion, he followed the *mi chos* of the people in an excellent manner. He protected the ancestral royal power in all land rGya shing, with Wan la at its head, for the lapse of thirty male calendrical years".

interpretation is brought to its consequences, it would imply that those years should be summed up with thirty intercalary female years, which would make sixty years, or perhaps one or two years less. Reading the assertion of the Wan la inscription that Bhag dhār skyabs protected rGya shing lung for thirty *pho lo*, which would make sixty years altogether, is nonsensical nor it should be understood as that he lived for sixty years altogether. Reading the verb *lon* that follows *pho lo sum cu* as the canonical “to reach” would convey the meaning that Bhag dhār skyabs reached the age of sixty when he protected rGya shing lung, which is equally wrong and unrealistic.

Pho lo is an equivalent of *dgung lo* (“years of age”). The sentence simply says that, when Bhag dhār skyabs reached the age of thirty, he began to protect rGya shing lung.

All evidence provided by the historical section of the Wan la inscription confirms in detail that, in Bhag dhār skyabs’s days, the resurgence of the people of rGya stock took place in rGya shing lung, a territory of Mar yul smad/La dwags gsham. They exercised their ascendancy way beyond their area both in the west and the east. Once again, people belonging to the non-Tibetan ethnic layer of the region had gained the upper hand and ruled over an expanded tract of land.

The contents of the epigraph and the historical context are in sharp contrast with the beliefs of the local lore, expressed in some modern works which hold that Bhag dhār skyabs was a contemporary of lo chen Rin chen bzang po.²⁸⁸ The piece of resistance of this view is the *dkar chag* to Bla ma g.yu ru, penned by dKon mchog rang grol nyi ma (1781-1851), the 17th Ba ku la rin po che, who was the head of this monastery,²⁸⁹ excerpts from which I cite in my notes.

According to him, Bhag dhār skyabs was a contemporary of Rin chen bzang po since he was responsible for the invitation of Lo chen to La dwags.²⁹⁰ Quite to the contrary, most

288. Sa phud pa Thub bstan dpal ldan, *La dwags* (p.80 lines 2-5): “gSham phyogs rGya shing Wa mda’i bCu gcig zhal gyi lha khang byin can de ni khrid dpon Bhag dar skyabs kyi sbyin bdag mdzad nas bla ma lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang pos bzhengs par bshad/”; “There is an oral account which says that bCu gcig zhal lha khang in rGya shing Wa mda (spelled so for Wan la) of [La dwags] gsham, which bestows blessings, was built by bla ma lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po with the patronage of khrid (spelled so) dpon Bhag dar (spelled so) skyabs”.

289. dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan (in Kaplanian, “Mythes et legendes sur les origines du peuple du Ladakh” n. X p.263 p.264 lines 20-21): “Te lorgyuspo ngati Yurugi lama chenpo zhiggi mingla Rangdol nyimas zerkan zhiggi lorgyusi nangla thotdiuk/ i lorgyusi spechabo daksa Yuru gonpa nangla yot” (written here according to Kaplanian’s transcription); “On these events a *lo rgyus* was written by the g.Yu ru great bla ma Rang grol nyi ma. Whoever wants to consult it may kindly go to g.Yu ru dgon pa, where the text is kept”.

dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan has based the parts in his oral account dedicated to Bhag dhār skyabs, who he calls the Wan la *blon po*, on this *Bla ma g.yu ru’i dkar chag*. He did not use this work for any other topic he deals with in his report.

290. The anachronistic attribution of the title *khri dpon* to Bhag dhār skyabs by the 17th Ba ku la is an indicator of the historical confusion that misled him in placing this chieftain historically. The Yuan/Sa skya pa title *khri dpon*, used during their domination of Tibet, cannot be applied to *bstan pa phyi dar* when Lo chen lived.

works associate Rin chen bzang po with Ye shes 'od for their common work at Nyar ma. No evidence supports the idea that Rin chen bzang po was in Mar yul at the invitation of this non-Tibetan chieftain. Although Rin chen bzang po was ethnically local to mNga' ris skor gsum rather than a Central Tibetan differently from the kingdom's royalty—he was a native of Rong chung in Gu ge and his family's place was Kha tse in the same region—he was of Tibetan stock unlike Bhag dhār skyabs.

The local lore's association of Bhag dhār skyabs with Lo chen is untenable because the Wan la inscription says that the rGya shing lung chieftain extended his political power to a wide expanse of lands all the way to the border of the other regions of mNga' ris skor gsum in the east. It was the Gu ge Pu hrang royalty which came to exercise its control over the lands of La dwags during *bstan pa phyi dar* and not him. Bhag dhār skyabs lived during the 13th century.

Besides the incongruity of placing Bhag dhār skyabs during *bstan pa phyi dar*, for Nyi ma mgon's dynasty controlled both Mar yul stod and smad, even the extension of Bhag dhār skyabs's dominions is exaggerated in the guide to Bla ma g.yu ru by the 17th Ba kula.²⁹¹ He says that he held sway over the territories that extended from the border of the Kashmir Valley to the whole Mar yul. This is again an untenable claim, disproved by the Wan la inscription which says that he did not control Kha che but advanced temporarily into it.

This set of weak assertions treated as historical facts reinforces my positioning of Bhag dhār skyabs to the third occasion of rGya/Ge sar resurgence, the one in the earlier half of the 13th century when the 'Bri gung pa had a major say especially in La dwags gsham. The rGya/Ge sar resurgence occurred from the 9th century onwards, after the implosion of sPu rgyal Bod,²⁹² until the first half of the 10th century when they were defeated by Nyi ma mgon, and

291. g.Yung drung bla zur Ba ku la dKon mchog rang grol nyi ma, g. *Yung drung dgon dang po ji ltar chags rabs dang da ltar ji ltar gnas tshul gyi rnam dbye bi dza yar tisma* (p.6 lines 4-10): "sNgon thog mar skabs shin tu khri Bhag dhar skyabszhes pa'i dpon po zhig gis Kha che'i sa mtshams nas Mar yul la tshun chad chab srid du bzung ste yod skad/ des mNga' ris bskor gsum na mtshan yongs su grags pa'i lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po gdan drangs te/ Kha che sa mtshams mdud bzhi la nas zung Ti sei' la tshun chad du chod rten brgya dang brgyad/ lha khang brgya dang brgyad bzhengs/"; "During an earlier time, it is said that one chieftain, namely khri dpon Bhag dhar (spelled so without a *chung*) skyabs, ruled [the land] from the border of Kashmir to Mar yul. He invited the renown lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po from mNga' ris bskor gsum. He subdued the four demons (*mdud* sic for *bdud*) of the Kashmiri border and built 108 *mchod rten* and 108 *lha khang* all the way to Ti se".

292. A narrative attributed to one rGyal sras rin po che of difficult identification in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan's *La dwags rgyal rabs rnying pa sprul gyi glog glad* (p.116,1-p.119,5), deals with the rGya pa Jo bo mes Nyi ma who seems to go back to an ancestral time rather than the post imperial period of sPu rgyal Bod. The narrative, most likely a transposition of an oral account into written form, narrates events of remarkable antiquity but it is late, for it mentions He mi dgon pa. The reliability of what is told cannot be ascertained. The tone is eminently legendary and the contents are rather vague. A few elements in the narrative are worthy of consideration although probably filtered down the century without sound bases that can make it historically reliable.

Mes Nyi ma had a castle in Mar yul stod but its identity and location are not disclosed. It may

the other in the 12th century marked by Utpala's takeover that led to a dynastic change.

Another local author assigns a minister styled after Bhag dhār skyabs to deep antiquity and then transfer him to the period immediately before Nyi ma mgon's conquest of Mar yul.²⁹³ In the oral account of dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan transcribed by Kaplanian, focus is on this local minister from Wanle (i.e. Wan la),²⁹⁴ who surged to preeminence after

correspond to gSer khri, the old capital of the pre-Tibetan rGya kingdom. The rGya pa Jo bo had a cadet line in the person of blon bSod, described as an ambitious character, who tried to promote himself although nominally serving his ruler. He built his own castle and achieved to expand control—his own or nominally the rGya pa Jo bo's?—over a large stretch of land, from Nyo ma in La dwags stod all the way to Kha la rtse in La dwags gsham. The account itself disputes the reliability of this territorial conquest, which would have curtailed the dominions of Pu rig A khu, the ruler of La dwags gsham, whose capital was at Mul be. Eventually his ambition led him onto a collision route with mes Nyi ma. Blon bSod had to flee and seek refuge with Pu rig A khu.

The division of lands between the two rulers—*stod* and *gsham*—corresponds to the political state of affairs described in *La dwags rgyal rabs* when sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon moved against La dwags in order to annex it to his kingdom.

The contribution that this narrative provides, supposing it is reliable, is that, despite the centre of the rGya pa kingdom in La dwags stod not being mentioned, the capital of the La dwags gsham kingdom is identified, a fact that does not appear in the historiographical sources dealing with the region.

The account conveys that La dwags gsham enjoyed unity under the Pu rig A khu, ruler of Mul be. This is in contrast with the statement in *La dwags rgyal rabs* that the same territory was split into several principalities in the period preceding sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon annexation of the region. Either Pu rig Akhu from Mul be was the only ruler of the La dwags gsham to find a space in the oral accounts of the elders or one should envisage that *La dwags rgyal rabs* and 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan's account in his *La dwags rgyal rabs rnying pa sprul gyi glog glad* refer to different historical phases.

293. dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan (in Kaplanian, “Mythes et legendes sur les origines du peuplement du Ladakh” n. X p.264 line 17) has a confused reference to a *blon po* from Wanle (i.e. Wan la) not necessarily Bhag dhār skyabs who is wrongly assigned to 10th century: “Tene yul chakste/ lo mangpe stingne pheps/ te tus Wanle lonpo gyapo manpin/ khorang rignasla khaspa tang spao zhik inpin/ tene yulla dzingmo chen dukspasang Wanle lonpos wang cos/ tene Wanle lonpos gyapo zhik gos/ sanne mitangnyampo taps cos/ tene Wanle lonpos rtso coste Potne gyapo zhik zhus/” (written here according to Kaplanian's transcription); “Then the country came into existence. [The Wanle blon po] came after many years (from the foundation of La dwags by local people?). At that time, the Wanle blon po was not the king. He was learned and brave. Then having taken the great fort (*dzingmo* i.e. *'dzing mo*), the Wanle blon po seized power. Then the Wanle blon po was the king. The Wanle blon po wanted a single king ruling (not many petty lords). He discussed the matter with his people and decided to invite a king from Bod”.

Ibid. (n. X p.263 line 27-p.264 line 1): “Tene Wanle lonpo zhikkis wang cos/ te mibo yontani khaspa inpin/ yang wangchen yotpin/ tene te yul tshangmaka wang cos/ khols (p.264) amchi ang shesatpin spon and shesatpin/”; “Later on, Wanle's indigenous *blon po* took over power. He was virtuous and learned. He then brought all the country under his control. (p.264) He was also known as *am chi* and also as *dpon*”.

294. The locality associated with this *blon po* obviously addresses Wan la in La dwags gsham and definitely not Wam le in La dwags Byang thang, where a dGe lugs monastery was built much

people from Gilgit repopulated Mar yul. These events in antiquity are at a great distance from Bhag dhār skyabs's time.

Besides Mul be, Kha la rtse rather than Wan la must have been the ancient capital of rGya shing lung, a status documented by its epigraphs and rock carvings of yore. Similar evidence in the field does not exist at Wan la except oral accounts which prove that this locality, as a secular centre, dates to an early time.

Hence, dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan's account refers to a historical phase way before Bhag dhār skyabs's making of rGya shing lung his centre of power.

If Bhag dhār skyabs, supposing he was the Wanle *blon po*, is placed in a much later period, viz. at the beginning of the mNga' ris skor gsum kingdom, as the oral account also does, this is a most tangible case of no historical reliability. In the next line of the account, dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan stumbles into contradiction, for he says that the Wanle *blon chen*, after becoming king, invited a ruler from Tibet to reign over Mar yul rather than reigning himself.

The statement suggests that he was responsible for the invitation of sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon, which was instead a *suo moto* conquest of the "upper side".²⁹⁵ Purportedly, the *blon po* would have become the king of the whole region, whereas Mar yul did not stop to be one *skor* of mNga' ris until the first half of the 12th century. The incongruence is repeated since, after purportedly inviting Nyi ma mgon to mNga' ris skor gsum which the founder of this dynasty conquered, he then called the mNga' ris skor gsum king's eldest son dPal gyi mgon to Mar yul.

These are views that ignore the evidence provided by the Wan la inscription. They are based, too, on a historiographical neglect of the statement in *La dwags rgyal rabs* that La dwag gsham went through a time of power fragmentation before Nyi ma mgon's takeover. Mar yul smad was fragmented among indigenous people of similar ethnic stock at the time of Nyi ma mgon's conquest, whereas there was a single, major political entity in Mar yul stod. Once again this does not match with the fact that Bhag dhār skyabs, ruling from rGya shing lung, held sway over a vast territory. Nor was Bhag dhār skyabs part of the indigenous resurgence initiated by Utpala because he is not mentioned among the rulers of the period by *La dwags rgyal rabs* in the corresponding segment, which is not lacunose.

To make it consonant with the evidence of *La dwags rgyal rabs* the contradiction in the account of dGe rgan bSod nams skyabs ldan, although interesting, could be read in less absolute terms. By seizing the Chigtan fort, the Wanle *blon po* became the ruler of the area of Pu rig which extended to Wan la, thus reducing numerically the principalities in which Mar

afterwards, Wam le is too far from the events dealt with here both from the geographical and historical viewpoint.

295. These invitations by the Wanle *blon po* and the local people, styled as a spontaneous in the oral account, echo the stereotype which has it that sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon was asked to become the ruler by the people of Upper West Tibet who wanted to have a king who stemmed from the ranks of the *lha sras btsan po* dynasty. Nyi ma mgon conquered Mar yul; Bhag dhār skyabs took under himself vast territorial shares in La dwags to expand rGya shing lung.

yul smad/La dwags gsham was divided among the local Indo-Iranic people who ruled before Nyi ma mgon's conquest, as *La dwags rgyal rabs* says, but this thesis is weak and not supported by any evidence.

Other disputable assertions that attribute Wan la mkhar to Bhag dhār skyabs are mentioned in modern secondary works penned by local authors based on the land's lore. They are not found in any primary source. Rather than ascribing the castle to Bhag dhār skyabs, *La dwags rgyal rabs* says that Nag lug founded Wan la mkhar in earth tiger 1158. Hence Nag lug's castle is the earliest historically documented foundation at Wan la as a major rGya/Ge sar site after notions relating to deeper antiquity. Nag lug's 1158 foundation of Wan la mkhar is thus a plausible but generous *terminus post quem* for Wan la to have been the centre of the resumption of rGya shing lung as the capital area of La dwags gsham which, nonetheless, happened around the second quarter of the 13th century under Bhag dhār skyabs. The purported involvement of the rGya shing minister who built Wan la gSum brtsegs in the construction of Wan la mkhar depends on the anti-historical view that he was a contemporary of Lo chen. It would have unreliably occurred prior to Nag lug who ruled after *bstan pa phyi dar*, which makes the attribution once again unconvincing.

This evidence altogether confirms that Bhag dhār skyabs ruled after dNgos grub mgon.

The temple inscription says that four brothers— Bhag dhār skyabs being the eldest— were all involved in the construction of Wan la gSum brtsegs. Their names are partially recorded. Besides Bhag dhār skyabs, there was an anonymous brother after him; A li dar skya was the third; and the youngest was the one simply named rGyal mtshan in the epigraph, who went to 'Bri gung to pursue his studies.

rGyal mtshan's affiliation with the great bKa' brgyud monastery in dBus is another sign that the reign of Bhag dhār skyabs and Wan la gSum brtsegs belong to a 'Bri gung pa framework. At 'Bri gung rGyal mtshan studied under an unidentified *chos rje*—perhaps dBon rin po che bSod nams grags pa (1187-124, on the throne 1222-1241). rGyal mtshan must have been a *dge bsnyen*, for he is associated in his activity in La dwags gsham with one kha tun sBrong mo (viz. 'Brong mo, hence a nomad woman?) in the upkeep of Wan la gSum brtsegs, a task which was a priority for the couple.

The name A li dar skya, borne by the third of the four brothers involved in the construction of Wan la gsum brtsegs, proves that drung pa A li, a son of Grags pa 'bum lde, was not a Muslim (see *La dwags rgyal rabs* p.37, line13) whereas authors treat him with factionalism. Muslim scholars say he was a prince who embraced Islam (e.g. Zain-ul-Aabedin Aabedi, *Emergence of Islam in Ladakh* p.5). The Wan la inscription shows that the name A li was used by Buddhists, too. A further sign that the name A li did not necessarily address a Muslim is that A li dar skya built a *lha khang* for his younger brother. A li Dar skya also founded lha khang bKra shis thang sman, another temple constructed for his younger brother rGyal mtshan.²⁹⁶ These *lha khang*-s were 'Bri gung pa temples.

296. *Wan la inscription*: “Chen po A li Dar skya rig pa'i gnas lnga mkhyen// nu bo'i don du lha khang bKra shis thang sman bzhengs// e ma dar dang bkra shis bu gnyis pho rtsal phun su tshogs// tha chung shog gi rGyal mtshan 'Bri gung byon nas ni//; “The elder brother, A li Dar skya, who

Furthermore, Bhag dhār skyabs and brothers are attributed a *mchod rten* at Nyo sTag lung mdo (i.e. in La dwags Byang thang at Nyo ma), where a *spur khang* (a “building meant for funerary rites”) was located.²⁹⁷

Given that 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas was active at Bla ma g.yu ru to transfer this temple complex to the 'Bri gung pa, a *terminus post quem* for Wan la gsum brtsegs would be after 1219-1225, the years of 'Jig rten mgon po nephew's sojourn in mNga' ris stod. It is improbable that Wan la gsum brtsegs dates to the years of 'Bri gung ling pa's protracted sojourn in mNga' ris stod, for dNgos grub mgon, who moved to Pu hrang to be its ruler, left his native land not earlier than 1219-1220 (see above p.207). Had the opus of Wan la gSum brtsegs occurred during the reign of dNgos grub mgon in Mar yul, he would have been mentioned.

Opposite, Bhag dhār skyabs is praised for the work, unless Shakya'i rgyal po Byang chub dpal bzang, the author of the inscription, omitted dNgos grub mgon owing to local pride.

As said above (p.171), I suggest that Bhag dhār skyabs ruled during the later part of the second quarter of the 13th century after dNgos grub mgon.

▪ The original founder of Wan la gSum brtsegs

The local lore about Wan la gSum brtsegs holds that it was built jointly by Rin chen bzang po and Bhag dhār skyabs,²⁹⁸ which has to be ruled out on two counts: the deeds of the Indo-Iranic

has learned the five sciences, has built lha khang bKra shis thang sman for the sake of his younger brother. The two young men, who spread around wonder and auspiciousness, had excellent skills typical of males (*pho rtsal*). The youngest rGyal mtshan went to 'Bri gung”.

The line of the epigraph has a pleonastic *gi*. If, otherwise, it would be read, it would stand for: “The banner of the youngest brother went to 'Bri gung”, which does not make sense.

297. *Wan la inscription*: “'Phags pa chos la gtong bar shin tu ngo mtshar che// lha'i bu chung 'dra ba'i sras po bzhi yis kyang// yab kyi drin lan bsab phyir lha khang rim bzhin bzhengs// Nyo sTag lung mdo spur khang steng du yang// mchod rten bzhengs nas mchod pa'i ma she bitsugs//”; “It is truly extraordinary [to see] generosity in favour of the Noble Religion. The four sons, children of the gods, in order to repay the kindness of their fathers have built [this] stepped *lha khang*. Above the *spur khang* at Nyo sTag lung mdo they have built a *mchod rten* and established [the custom of giving] not a few offerings”.

298. dGe dKon mchog bkra shis, “Wa mda” (in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (ed.), *sGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang (The History of the Ladakh Monasteries)* p.663 line 9-p.664 line 4): “Dang po bCu gcig zhal lha khang gi lo rgyus ni/ Wa mda'i blon po Bhag dhār skyabs kyi lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po gdan zhus te/ lha khang 'di nyid bzhengs bcug par mdzad/ 'di ni gzhan lha khang kun dang gtan nas mi 'dra ba dkyil 'khor bzhi du gru bzhi/ sgo bzhi/ rta 'bab bzhi/ de dag rin po che'i tog gis mdzes par brgyan pa/ bzo khyas phul du byung ba zhig bzhugs shing/ 'di'i nang du rten gtso bo ni/ 'Phags pa sPyā ras gzigs bCu gcig zhal thog so gsum (p.664) pa/ g.yas g.yon du Nye ba sras brgyad/ shar sgor sPyan ras gzigs Kha sar pā ni/ nub sgor Thub dbang bzhengs nas bzhugs yod pa thog so gyis re dang/ ldebs ris su rGyud sde bzhi'i dkyil 'khor/ Sangs rgyas stong sku/ bKa' brgyud kyi bla brgyud Bhag dhār skyabs kyi mdzad pa beas bris 'dug//”; “Firstly, the history of the bCu gcig zhal is as follows. The Wa mda' blon po Bhag dhār skyabs invited lo tsa ba Rin chen

dignitary from rGya shing lung and the identity of the individual responsible for the first construction phase of the *gsum brtsegs*.

I have disproved at some length the historically unrealistic thesis that Bhag dhār skyabs, from his home rGya shing lung, accomplished a territorial expansion during *bstan pa phyi dar*. In the 11th century the territories whose control local authors attribute to him—Wa kha mKhar po che, Kan ji, E nas [sku], A lci and Mang rgyu, along with Pu rig, Su ru, sBal ti and La dwags Byang thang at the extremities of the geographical area of La dwags—were held by the mNga' ris skor gsum dynasty (see above p.206-207).

Bhag dhār skyabs accomplished their conquest but not during *phyi dar* because he lived in the 13th century. Hence the two cannot have worked together since they belonged to different periods.

Their historical incompatibility also derives from circumstantial evidence in support of the denial that Rin chen bzang po and Bhag dhār skyabs were contemporaries, found in the inscription inside the Wan la gSum brtsegs, which does not assign any role to Lo chen.

Instead, the inscription on the wall of the *gsum brtsegs* says that Bhag dhār skyabs promoted the construction of the *gsum brtsegs* including its statues and murals. The epigraph links him and the temple with the 'Bri gung pa school in La dwags gsham during the 13th century.

Concerning the attribution of Wan la gSum brtsegs to Rin chen bzang po, this statement is again not reliable but carries with it some acceptable approximation. Wan la gSum brtsegs is another case that transfers its paternity to Lo chen in the belief that several monuments were his opus. He did not actually build them. In collective imagery, Rin chen bzang po is the maker of all temples built during his life and, more in extenso, during *bstan pa phyi dar stod lugs* at large.

An appraisal of Wan la gSum brtsegs provides a more reliable version of the events at this holy place. It was not Rin chen bzang po who originally built the *gsum brtsegs*, as held by a tradition. It was a “Rin chen bzang po'i yang slob” who was responsible for its construction.²⁹⁹

bzang po and requested him to build this *lha khang*. As to this one, differently from all other *lha khang*-s, he constructed it with a peculiar architecture in the shape of a *dkyil 'khor*, a square with four doors, four platforms to dismount from the horse and beautified by means of a precious finial. As for its main *nang rten*, a statue of 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs bCu gcig zhal was built, three floor high. (p.664) To its right and left the eight Nye ba'i sras; next to the eastern door a sPyan ras gzigs kha sar pani; next to the western door a Thub dbang. They were made there, both of them measuring thirty-two *sor*. The murals depict the *dkyil 'khor*-s of *rGyud sde bzhi*, the 1,000 images of Sangs rgyas and the lineage of bKa' bryud *bla ma*-s, ordered by Bhag dhār skyabs to be painted”.

299. “Wa mda' dgon” (dge dKon mchog bkra shis, *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.663,8-p.644,5): “Wa mda' ru lo chen Rin chen bzang pos gzhegs pa'i bCu gcig zhal dang dge Don grub kyis bzhegs pa'i sGom phug dgon zhes pa gnyis yod pas/ dang po bCu gcig zhal lha khang gi lo rgyus ni/ Wa mda'i blon po Bhag dhār skyabs kyis lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po gdan zhus te/ lha khang nyid bzhegs bcug par mdzad/ 'di ni gzhan lha khang kun dang gtan nas mi 'dra ba dkyil 'khor bzhin du gru bzhi/ sgo bzhi/ rta babs bzhi/ de dag rin po che'i tog gis mdzes par rgyan pa/ bzo khyad phul tu byung ba zhi gzhugs shing/ 'di'i nang tu rten gyi rto bo ni/ 'Phags pa sPyan ras

The interaction of Lo chen with his disciples is the outset to assess the expression "Rin chen bzang po'i yang slob". The disciples of Lo chen can be classified in broad terms into groups who received teachings during different phases of Rin chen bzang po's long life. This classification does not help to approximate better the years during which Wan la gSum brtsegs was originally built.

The notion that helps to assign the construction of Wan la gSum brtsegs is that its founder, being a disciple of Lo chen's disciple (*yang slob*), was active after Rin chen bzang po's death or else he would have been a direct disciple of him. He would have studied under Lo chen. There are no classifications of disciples of Lo chen's disciples, who studied under the latter ones in Upper West Tibet. The classification of his disciples in mNga' ris skor gsum divides them into those of Rin chen bzang po himself or else of Lo chen and Lo chung jointly. Those of lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab studied under him after Rin chen bzang po was dead. The studies of the "Rin chen bzang po'i yang slob" took place after Lo chen's demise.

One hypothesis is that this unidentified *yang slob* was a disciple of Mar yul ba dKon mchog brtsegs, a son of the La dwags pa soil, who himself was not an early acolyte of Lo chen.³⁰⁰

gzigs bCu gcig zhal thog so gsum (p.664) pa/ g.yas dang g.yon Nye ba'i sras brgyad/ shar sgor sPyan ras gzigs Kha sar pâni/ nub sgo Thub dbang bzhengs nas bzhugs yod pa thog so gnyis re dang/ ldebs ris su rGyud sde bzhi'i dkyil 'khor/ Sangs rgyas stong sku/ bKa' brgyud kyi bla ma rgyud [note: ldebs ris su bKa' brgyud kyi bla ma rgyud bris yod tshul pa la skyon shor nas phyis slar yang nyams gso byas nas ldebs ris 'di nams bris par nges//] Bhag dhâr skyabs [note: Bhag dhâr skyabs bhag ni skal ba dang bsod nams la 'jug/ dhâr ni 'dzin pa'i don yin/ des na skal 'dzin skyabs zhes so//] kyi (spelled so) mdzad pa bcas bris 'dug/ de yang blon po'i de'i sker rtsig pa'i sgang la bris yod pa'i 'dra bshus do ma ni//"; "The bCu gcig zhal made by lo chen Rin chen bzang po and sGom phug dgon built by dge Don grub, two in all, are at Wa mda'. Firstly, as for the history of bCu gcig zhal, Bhag dhâr skyabs, the minister of Wa mda' requested lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po to stay on. He managed to appoint [Lo chen] to build a *lha khang*. Differently from all other *lha khang*-s he had extraordinary artists to stay consistently there [and work] at it [in the shape] of a *dkyil 'khor* with four corners, four doors, for platforms to dismount from a horse, and with a jewel as a knob with beautiful decorations. Inside it the main statue is 'Phags pa sPyan ras gzigs bCu gcig zhal thirty-three *thog* [in height] with, to the right and left, the eight Nye ba'i sras. A sPyan ras gzigs Kha sar pâni at the eastern door and a Thub dbang at the western door were made and installed [there], both thirty-two *thog* [in height]. The paintings on the walls are the *dkyil 'khor*-s of rGyud sde bzhi, the Sangs rgyas stong sku and the lineage of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s [note: as to a study of the way the bKa' brgyud *bla ma* lineage was painted, this *lha khang* was actually built by a disciple of a disciple of the *lo tsa ba*. The previous wall paintings were damaged and lost so that subsequently they were restored and these murals were actually made by Bhag dhâr skyabs [note: Bhag dhâr skyabs. *Bhag* conveys [the meaning] *skal pa* ("fortune") and *bsod nams* ("merit"); *dhâr* means "to possess", hence it is sKal 'dzin skyabs'] with inscriptions. Concerning them, this minister's inscriptions have likewise peeled out everywhere around on the walls".

300. See, e.g., Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p.75 lines 16-21): "Lo chen 'di la slob ma mang du yod kyang/ lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab/Gur shing brTson' grus rgyal mtshan/ Gra pa gZhon nu shes rab/ Gyi nor Dznya na dang bzhi la thugs kyi srars bzhi zer/ Pu rangs pa An ston Grags rin, rGya Ye tshul/ dGung pa dGe bshes/ Mar yul ba dKon mchog

A typical case was Zangs dkar lo tsa ba 'Phags pa shes rab who went to study under Rin chen bzang po but could not do so, for the master had died in the meantime. He received religious training under lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab. Nonetheless, wood pig 1055, the death year of Rin chen bzang po, is not necessarily the *terminus post quem* for the anonymous *yang slob* to have studied under a disciple of Lo chen.

Going back to the case of Zangs dkar lo tsa ba, he is known to have participated in the Tho ling *chos 'khor* of 1076-1078 and to have founded dKar sha and Phug ta sometime during the 1080s. If a parallelism can be drawn between Zangs dkar lo tsa ba and the anonymous founder of Wan la gSum brtsegs, one should envisage that the foundation of this temple must have taken place during the last quarter of the 11th century but, more prudentially, sometime during its second half.

▪ Religious aesthetics of Wan la gSum brtsegs

Wan la gSum brtsegs bears traces of architectural solutions similar to the famed three-floor building at A lci such as the door frame, although sensibly simpler. I wonder whether Wan la gSum brtsegs was a prototype of A lci gSum brtsegs, although signs of interior decor going back to *bstan pa phyi dar* have been completely obliterated by the 'Bri gung pa renovation.

Wan la gSum brtsegs echoes the similar three-floor temple at A lci in terms of structure, number and typology of the monumental statues chosen for its interior. These may be signs useful to attribute to the temple a *bstan pa phyi dar* origin that was respected in its basic elements but entirely renovated during the 'Bri gung pa period in La dwags gsham. The monumental statues inside Wan la gsum brtsegs, although iconographically related to specimens in the *bstan pa phyi dar stod lugs* temples, display a rendition that is quite apart from those earlier images. Contents inside Wan la gSum brtsegs bear closeness to 13th century religious works. The internal religious programme is in the style popular at the time of the 'Bri gung pa diffusion in the region, marked by a concentration of temples dedicated to the tenets of the school especially in La dwags gsham.

The statues and murals in Wan la gsum brtsegs are stylistically related to the earlier period but aesthetical criterions often are not completely reliable. However, it is impossible that the monumental clay statues, made in a rendition that was not used during *bstan pa phyi dar*, have been restyled during the 'Bri gung pa period by means of a similar material. They were made anew during the years of the 'Bri gung pa control of La dwags gsham. The local tradition's opinion that at least the Thugs rje chen po bCu gcig zhal, one of the three monumental statues inside Wan la gSum brtsegs, was made during *bstan pa phyi dar* is

rtsegs bzhi ni/ Lo chen dang Lo chung gnyis ka'i slob ma yin/"; "This Lo chen had many disciples. However, his spiritual sons were four: lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab, Gur shing brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan, Grab pa gZhon nu shes rab and Gyi nor Dznya na. Pu rangs pa An ston Grags rin, rGya Ye tshul, dGung pa dGe bshes and Mar yul ba dKon mchog rtsegs (spelled so), four in all, were the disciples of both Lo chen and Lo chung".

untenable,³⁰¹ owing to historical and stylistic factors—the “Rin chen bzang po'i yang slob” and three images in the idiom of the murals all datable to the 13th century. There is no trace of *bstan pa phyi dar* evidence concerning the religious cycles in its interior.

A salient aspect of the Wan la inscription is that there is no reference to a previous phase of temple foundation at the *gsum brtsegs* during *bstan pa phyi dar*. Absence to any reference in the epigraph to a building phase prior to the 'Bri gung pa endeavour does not rule out that Wan la *gsum brtsegs* originally was a *bstan pa phyi dar* temple. The architectural resemblances between A lci and Wan la *gsum brtsegs*-s is one point in favour of an early phase for the latter.

A linguistic analysis of expressions adopted in the inscription does not dispel doubts. If the verb *mnyam* (“to share, to be in accord”), which appears in the second *shlokha* of the Wan la inscription,³⁰² is changed into *nyams*, then it would stand for “decay”. This reading would prove that a *lha khang* preexisted the construction of the 'Bri gung *gsum brtsegs*, for the four brothers would have decided to fix the damage of the previous temple. However, the change is unwarranted and there is no reason to read in the sentence any reference, however distant, to the existence of a previous *lha khang*.

Same as nowadays, Wan la *gsum brtsegs* counted three floors in the 13th century, a sign of integrity despite the recent substitution of the heavy original roof, which was squashing the structure, accomplished by Wolfgang Heusgen,³⁰³ for the simple reason that one *shlokha* in the epigraph defines the temple as a *gsum brtsegs*.³⁰⁴

301. dGe dKon mchog bkra shis, “Wa mda” (in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (ed.), *sGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang (The History of the Ladakh Monasteries)* p.663 lines 8-9): “Wa mda' ru lo chen Rin chen bzang pos bzhengs pa'i bCu gcig zhal.... yod//”; “At Wa mda' is.... the bCu gcig zhal made by lo chen Rin chen bzang po.

Tshe ring bkra shis, “Wa mda” (ibid. p.825 lines 5-6): “De bas sngon du lo chen Rin chen bzang po 1040 Wam mda' ru Thugs rje chen po bCu gcig zhal gyi sku bzhengs//”; “Moreover in early times—in 1040—lo chen Rin chen bzang po made the Thugs rje chen po [statue] at Wam mda' (spelled so)”.

302. *Wan la inscription*: “Padma spungs pa lta bu mkhar gyi rtse mo la/ rin chen ze'u 'bru bzhin du gnyen drung bskor ba'i dbus/ dpa' bo bzhin du blon sra sku mched bzhi/ thugs dgongs rtse geig mdzad nas mnyam pa nyid la bzhugs//”; “On the peak of the castle like a pile of lotuses and in its centre, surrounded by kinsmen and officers like precious pollen anthers, four steadfast ministerial brothers like heroes having had this single-minded thought, they stood firm in sharing the same view (or else: to [fix] the decay [of the temple])”.

303. The work that my friend Wolfgang Heusgen carried out on the architecture of Wan la *gsum brtsegs* for eight years before his demise, has shown that the temple and its interior decayed to the present shape in successive phases that are not documented individually either in the literature or in inscriptions.

304. *Wan la inscription*: “Og gzhi bkod pa khyad 'phags gsar rnying lha tshogs bzhengs/ bar khang rnam par rgyal ba'i khang bzang dpe bzhin la/ yang thog gzhal yas khang 'dra'i dpe dang mtshungs pa legs/ Wan las bKra shis gsum brtsegs e ma ho ngo mtshar che//”; “As to the making of the ground floor, it was built with groups of noble old and new deities. The middle floor—an excellent and victorious mansion—is exemplary. The further floor—the *gzhal yas khang*—is an

The *gsum brtsegs* workmanship, praised for its beauty, is compared with that of Bal po, which shows that the artists and artisans of the Kathmandu Valley were held in legendary esteem.³⁰⁵ However, the simile may extend beyond the reputation of the Bal po artists, for murals and statues reflect the cosmopolitan idiom, adopted in the Kathmandu Valley too, executed in the conspicuous Tibetan rendition typical of the 'Bri gung pa in La dwags and other regions of mNga' ris stod.

The four brothers, builders of the Wan la gSum brtsegs, availed themselves of the support by people from all walks of life. Precious items and cattle were donated.³⁰⁶ The author of the inscription, said to be a *che brjod* ("eulogy"), was retributed with one horse, collectively given to him by the artists who worked inside the temple.³⁰⁷ Whether he was Shakya'i rgyal po Byang chub dpal bzang, who wrote the Wan la inscription, and therefore the inscription is

excellent comparable example. Wan la bKra shis *gsum brtsegs* is, *e ma ho*, truly extraordinary". "Byung ba rim bzhin brtsegs pa'i Ri rab zur bzhi'i steng/ sna tshogs rdo rjes mtshan pa rten gyi gzhai yas khang/ gru bzhi rin chen du mas rgyan gyis mdzes par spras/ rtse mo yid bzhin nor bu tog gis nye bar brgyan//"; "Over the square Ri rab built in successive levels, the images [of deities] of this *gzhai yas khang* are decorated with various kinds of [motifs] and *mchod rten*-s. Many jewels in square [patterns] adorned it beautifully with decorations. The finial, a wish fulfilling gem, on its peak completes its ornamentation".

The comparison of Wan la *gsum brtsegs* with the Ri rab, a classic of Tibetan literature, is appropriate inasmuch as the *gsum brtsegs* shares the same square shape with of this mountain, the *axis mundi* of the Buddhist tradition, and 'Ol mo lung ring. Structural affinity goes beyond the stereotype of the simile of the mountains associated with all kinds of buildings, found in the Buddhist and Bon po literature.

305. *Wan la inscription*: "sKyes bu g.yas g.yon gnyis dang ya them ma them dang/ mchod pa'i lha mo rnam dang rin chen shar bu dang/ rta 'bab chos kyi 'khor lo bkra shis rdzas brgyad rnam/ brkos dang 'bur ma la sogs Bal po'i bzo dang mtshungs//"; "The workmanship and three-dimensionality of the images to both left and right, the lintels above and below, the *mchod pa'i lha mo*-s, the precious cornices, the platforms to dismount from horses (*rta 'bab*), the wheels of the doctrine and the eight auspicious symbols are comparable with the Bal po artistry".

306. *Wan la inscription*: "rNam gzhag 'bul ba'i lugs kyang zur tsam brjod pa la/ rkang bzhi dud 'gro rgyal po cang shes rta pho yang/ che chung mtho dma' med pa so bdun 'bul/ gser dngul dar gos sbel ba de bas lhag pa tsam/ g.yag lug mdzo la sogs pa chung phran bsam gyis mi khyab/ zang zing snam gos la sogs ri bo bzhin du spungs//"; "To describe a little the system of giving guidance [and] making offerings, the all-knowing horse lord of the four legged animals was offered by thirty-seven big and small, high and low [people] without a difference among them. An exceeding [quantity of] gold, silver, silk and brocade; an inconceivable [lot of] minor [offerings] such as *g.yag*-s, sheep, *mdzo*-s; wealth, such as woollen cloths and brocade, were accumulated like a mountain".

307. *Wan la inscription*: "dGe bshes gong ma rnam la rnam gzhag rim par phul/ lha bzo gong ma mkhyen pa can rnam 'jig rten dbul ba ste/ che brjod rtsom pa po la yon du du rta zhig sbyin/ gnyen drung dge 'dogs mkhan rnam thar pa'i lam la bkod//"; "The best *dge bshes*-s provided the [religious and iconographic] guidelines one after the other. The best artists, who were knowledgeable, offered one horse to repay the indigent lay author of the *che brjod* ("eulogy"). Relatives, secretaries and those connected to the monks were set on the path of liberation".

termed so in its lines, or he was responsible both for the epigraph and the eulogy, hence two different works, is not detectable from the passage.

In its description of the *gsum brtsegs*, the inscription mentions the existence of an image of rDo rje 'chang on the ground floor and of sPyan ras gzigs together with a Phyag stong 'khor lo sgyur ba on the top floor. At the outset of the 'Bri gung pa phase, statues of bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s were placed in the centre together with rDo rje 'chang and other images, but the depictions of those masters were not there anymore at the time of writing the inscription. The epigraph adds that murals were executed on the basis of a remarkable number of religious systems. It mentions, in particular, a painting of Byams pa, the paradise of 1,000 Sangs rgyas and the *mdzad pa bcu gnyis*.³⁰⁸

Three artists are celebrated for making the images inside Wan la gSum brtsegs,³⁰⁹ but it is

308. *Wan la inscription*: "Kun gyis lta bas mi ngom khyad par du 'phags shing/ brten pa lha'i dkyil 'khor bsam gyis mi khyab cing/ re re mtshan nas brjod na dpag gis mi langs te/ rDo rje 'chang gi dbu mdzad da lta bzhugs kyi bar//"; "In everyone's views [Wan la *gsum brtsegs*] is splendid and particularly noble. Each one of the inconceivable *dkyil 'khor*-s of the deities that are based [there] is identified by name. In the middle of the presently housed [images] with rDo rje 'chang at their head";

"bKa' brgyud bla ma rnams kyi sku gzugs thog mar bzhugs/ pho brang dbus kyi rtse la 'phags pa sPyan ras gzigs/ Phyag stong 'khor lo sgyur ba longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku/ rin chen rgyan gyis spras shing byin rlabs che bar bzhugs//"; "... there were earlier the statues of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s. On top in the centre of this palace are 'phags pa sPyan as gzigs and the image of Phyag stong 'khor lo sgyur ba ("with one thousand hands turning the wheel of the law") which perfected enjoyment (i.e. *longs sku*), finely decorated with jewels and bestowing great blessings".

"... gSang ba'i bdag po dbu mdzad Byams mgon la sogs/ sku gsung thugs kyi rten la ris su bris pa dang/ lugs su blugs pa rnams dang 'bur du gtod pa sogs/ rGyud pa chen po bzhi'i lha tshogs thams cad dang...";

"... the paintings of the images of body, speech and mind, such as the lord of secrets, the head [image], Byams mgon and all the groups of deities of the four great Tantra, such as those cast three-dimensionally", "gSangs sngags gsar rnying rnams kyi dkyil 'khor tshad bar bzhugs/ 'Dul ba mDo sde mNgon pa Phar rol phyin pa dang/ Theg pa chen po'i mDo sde rnam pa sna thogs dang/ thugs dgongs rnam par dag la thugs dam rim par bzhugs..."; "... and various *dkyil 'khor*-s of *gSang sngags gsar rnying* are housed here inside. The various [deities of] 'Dul ba, mDo sde, mNgon pa, Phar rol [tu] phyin pa and Theg pa chen po'i mDo sde are [also] housed here inside one after the other as tutelary deities to the wisdom mind".

"Sangs rgyas stong sku zhing khams bkod pa rnams// mdzad pa bcu gnyis rnams bkod pa phra zhib ngo mtshar che..."; "... the make of the paradise of the Sangs rgyas stong sku, the making of the *mdzadd pa bcu gnyis* are truly extraordinary in accuracy and detail".

309. *Wan la inscription*: "Bi shwa karma'i sprul pa Legs pa'i blo gros dang/ 'Jam dpal sprul pa lha bzo bSod nams kyi//"; "The make of the paradise of the Sangs rgyas stong sku, the making of the *mdzadd pa bcu gnyis* are truly extraordinary in accuracy and detail. They were made by Legs pa'i blo gros, the embodiment of Bi shwa karma, and the artist bSod nams, the embodiment of 'Jam dpal";

"lha'i sprul pa dKon mchog lDo ra pha'u gsum/ bzo'i rig pa'i 'byung gnas mkhyen pa can rnams kyi/ ma g.yengs brtan por sku gsung thugs kyi rten/ rkyen ngan bar chad med par thugs dgongs sgrub par bzhengs//"; "and the divine embodiment dKon mchog ldo ra pha'u ("maker of

unclear whether they were painters, sculptors or both. Their names are preserved for posterity, as most often is the case of masters who provided a service to the Noble Religion. They were Legs pa'i blo gros, the embodiment of the divine artist Bi shwa karma, bSod nams and then dKon mchog whose second name is almost unreadable on the wall bearing the inscription, perhaps rDo rje.

Bhag dhār skyabs, the founder of Wan la gSum brtsegs, ruled during the later part of the second quarter of the 13th century after dNgos grub mgon. The approximate period of the Wan la gsum brtsegs that has come down to the present time falls within the decades when the 'Bri gung pa, celebrated in the inscription inside the three-floor temple, controlled the region during the reigns of dNgos grub mgon, Bhag dhār skyabs and, successively, gZi di khyim/De khyim.

Structural signs still visible at present may point towards *bstan pa phyi dar* for the *gsum brtsegs*'s first foundation. If ever Wan la gSum brtsegs existed already during *bstan pa phyi dar*, it was thoroughly renovated during the 13th century, a restoration that would have obliterated the earlier works.

Wan la would have undergone two building phases, the earliest of the two being *sub iudice*:
 - The first by a disciple of a disciple of lo chen Rin chen bzang po, which puts it to the second half of the 11th century or its last quarter. The architectural structure of the temple would have been laid out at that time.
 - The second was during the period of the 'Bri gung pa tenure of several monasteries and temples in La dwags gsham. Bhag dhār skyabs belonged to this period and was responsible for the opus.

Kha che and U rgyan at the time of the journey of grub chen U rgyan pa

After Gangs Ti se, U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal ventured into the lands of the Indian Northwest in time of war.³¹⁰ It was from his ordeal in Udiyāna that he derived his

the] bricks for the surrounding walls?"), three in all. These masters, from whom art stems, without distractions and steadily made the images of body, speech and mind. Circumstances being not negative and without hindrance, [these artists] made [the images], thus achieving their planned creations".

Forsaking whether they were painters or sculptors or perhaps both, the inscription conveys a sense of hierarchy among the two, with Legs pa'i blo gros the master of the workshop. bSod nams and dKon mchog were his assistants.

310. The antecedents that led U rgyan pa to the land of *mkha' 'gro ma*-s has it that rGod tshang pa, tired of the jealousy of his older disciples towards U rgyan pa who he had recently added among his followers, decided to disperse them all to several meditation places. As a consequence of his Dus 'khor studies under various teachers, the last one being rGod tshang pa, U rgyan pa developed the idea, after his father Jo 'phan's death in water rat 1252, of going to Sham bha la (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyanpa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.719 lines 13-14). rGod tshang pa dissuaded him. He told him that his destiny was to go to U rgyan (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar* in Si tu pan chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.174 lines 6-7).

appellative U rgyan pa. His journey to Udiyāna coincided, as amply discussed by scholarship in the past, with the warfare brought by Hu-la-hu to the Indo-Iranic borderlands.

The events are seen in the literature from the viewpoint of the Hor pa power house besides the few Tibetan works that deal with the events including the biographies of U rgyan pa. Pelliot (*Notes on Marco Polo* vol. II p.189) tells that a Qarauna, namely Sali turyaq, was ordered by Mong 'gor rgyal po in 1252 to set for the conquest of the Indian Northwest, and Kashmir in particular. The campaign was planned as part of the overall design that aimed at the conquest of Baghdad in order to establish one more centre of power, a detachment of the Yuan of China.

Sali turyaq set out in 1253. This is the date that marks the beginning of the military expedition against Kha che, recorded in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* and *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba*.

Mong 'or rgyal po told his general that he had to remain in those lands for the rest of his life. The order has a pregnant signification, for it may have implications on the length of the tenure of Kha che by Hu-la-hu's forces. The reiterated presence of Mongols in the Northwest, inclusive of La dwags, is dealt with elsewhere in this book of mine (see p.306-312), which shows that Hu-la-hu's *ulus*, the Il-Khanid who were established at the end of the campaign that succeeded in taking over Baghdad, had no more part in those events eventually, given the distance of their final objective.

Sali turyaq belonged to the Chagatai—formed in 1261 by their lord Alugu (r. 1262-1266) and sympathisers of A rig bho gha—rather than the Il-khanid according to Pelliot, since he gave his horse to Baraq, the head of the former *ulus*, a metaphor for saving his life. But the Qarauna horde was composed of warriors belonging to different *ulus*-s. Aubin ("L'étnogénèse de Qaraunas" p.79), instead, sees in Sali a possible member of the line of Tolui, to which Hu-la-hu belonged, a reasonable possibility. Hence, this would only imply that the head of the Qarauna would have been a chieftain of that *ulus*.

Alugu (1262-1266), lord of the Chagatai, formed by him in 1261 and sympathisers of A rig bho gha, sent out one Sadai Elci who raided "Hindustan" and made Sali prisoner. This marked the end of the Hu-la-hu derived control of the region, which passed under the Chagatai (ibid. p.82). The event is undated. It obviously fell within the years 1261-1266 when Alugu reigned.

The other perspective of the conflict is from the viewpoint of U rgyan pa who was a witness of how the war unfolded between the contestants. A few Tibetan works besides the biographies of this *grub chen* convey a pale picture of the events in the Indo-Iranic borderlands. Before dealing with U rgyan pa, I look at Pad ma dkar po's *chos 'byung*, a later text that,

In the next year, water ox 1253, U rgyan pa set out to the west and proceeded to southern Byang thang for a first meditation period (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyanpa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.719 lines 14-15 and p.720 lines 17-21).

nonetheless, contains a few ancient and rare historical accounts.³¹¹ The *chos 'byung* has a short but significant treatment of the political situation in Kashmir during the third quarter of the 13th century. It supplements the well known absence of historical records of the Mongol occupation of Kashmir in the Indian documents which has led scholars working on sources from the subcontinent including the various chroniclers of Kashmir to doubt that the Qarahuna or other Mongols ever conquered the Valley.

It was a finding of Karl Jahn that Rashīd al-Dīn includes a chapter on the political situation in Kashmir, written by the local *brahmin* Kāmalaśrī at the request of the Muslim historian (K. Jahn, *Rashid al-Din's History of India* p.lxxxviii-xcv).

Kāmalaśrī mentions two Mongol occupations. The first invasion is not chronologically problematic because the *Rājataranginī of Jonarāja* states that it took place during the reign of the Kashmiri king Rājadeva (1212/3-1235), but the circumstances of the war and the actors involved are not elucidated.

Concerning the second and longer lasting Mongol conquest of Kashmir and its neighbouring territories, the account of Kāmalaśrī in Rashīd al-Dīn does not clarify whether it occurred, as Karl Jahn wonders, during the reign of Rājadeva the second (1252-1273) or during that of Lakshmadeva (1273-1286), the next king on the throne of Kashmir.

On its part, *Pad ma dkar po chos 'byung* only says that Hu-la-hu's Mongols conquered the Valley before undertaking the subjugation of Baghdad and does not give the details found in Kāmalaśrī's account. This Tibetan source is, however, useful to ascertain when the second of the two Mongol invasions of Kashmir took place. It assigns this conquest to the time of Hu-la-hu, during years the Mongol prince was not yet active in Baghdad but no more in the

311. One of these accounts has a year entry missing in the fragmentary *Tun-huang Annals* but preserved in *sGra byor bam po gnyis pa*, from which Padma dkar po extracted it. *Padma dkar po chos 'byung* (Indian ed. p.165 lines 4-7) says: “sGra byor bam po gnyis pa las/ 'di Khri srong lde btsan rang gi sras su 'chad de/ 'di skad du/ rta'i lo la btsan po Khri lde srong btsan pho brang Kyi'i 'On ljang do na bzhugs/ sTod sMad kyī dmag rje dang rkun chen btul/ Gar log gi pho nya phyag 'tshal/ blon chen po zhang Khri zur ram shag dang/ blon Mang rje lha lod la sogs pas bya las gnangs mang po bcad de/ rnga rta dang ba mar phal mo che phyag tu phul/ zhang blon man cad so sor byas//”, “According to *sGra byor bam po gnyis pa*, the sons of this Khri srong lde btsan (sic for Khri lde srong btsan?) died out. In its own words [*sGra byor bam po gnyis pa* says]: “In the horse year, the king Khri lde srong btsan resided at pho brang 'On ljang do of Kyi. The chiefs of the sTod-sMad armies and the big bandits were subjugated. The envoy of the Gar log offered his respects. Blon chen po Khri zur ram shag and blon Mang rje lha lod were able to contribute [their] *bya las* (“duties as members of the state administration”) in a conspicuous manner. A great number of camels, horses and cows was given [to the king]. Each [member of the court] from the rank of *zhang blon* downwards was rewarded”.”

In brief, a couple of immediate and important consequences are:

- the *Annals* of the Yar lung dynasty continued at least until the year horse 814 (but evidence shows that they probably covered at least the period of Khri Ral pa's reign; see Uray, “L'annalistique et la pratique bureaucratique au Tibet ancien” p.159-161);
- entries of the *Annals* were known to later Tibetan culture through the *Mahavyutpatti* well after the only extant (although incomplete) copies of the *Annals* were walled up at Tun-huang.

Hor yul, which makes his military campaign in the Indian Northwest to have happened during the reign of Rājadeva the second.³¹²

A king Rājadeva is mentioned in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* as the lord of most of the territory of U rgyan.³¹³ Two aspects concerning how the sentence is formulated in *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* make a reader propound for his takeover of parts of Udiyāna.³¹⁴ One is that Rājadeva reduced U rgyan under his control (*dbang ba*), which proves that he was not its original king. The other is that he is defined "dpon po yang", hence a ruler that is associated to another ruler, the original king.

The biography adds that the unidentified lord of Kashmir tried to arrest U rgyan pa upon hearing that he might be a Mongol, while Rājadeva welcomed U rgyan pa to his kingdom and helped him in his journey. However, since the king of Kashmir decided to arrest U rgyan pa on the false accusation that he was a spy of the Mongols simply on hearsay without seeing him,³¹⁵ it cannot be ruled out that he was the same Rājadeva whom U rgyan pa met in

312. *Pad ma dkar po chos 'byung* (Gangs chen rig mdzod ed. p.422 lines 6-13) inserts this account in the biography of rGyal ba rin po che (1203-1267, in office 1236-1267): "Hor rgyal po Jing gir gan gyi bu thu bo Hu la gNam the'i sprul pa yin/ 'brug sgra thos pa dang dngangs skrag bsam gyis mi kyab pa skyes pas rGya nag gi rgyal sa mi zin par 'dug ces Sog yul du bskrad pa bsod nams che nas sTod Hor gyi yul thams cad kyi bdag byas/Kha che'ang'og tu chug pa zhig yod pa dis bla'i mchod gnas su bkur/ 'bul mo che lan gsum rgyab/ sTod Hor gyi yul du Kha che'i bzo bos bsgrubs pa'i sku rigs thams cad 'di'i ring Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la sri zhu chen po byas so//"; "His fame having spread, the eldest son (sic) of the Mongol king Jing gir gan, Hu la, the incarnation of gNam the (i.e. rNam thos sras), whose dragon voice caused unconceivable panic upon hearing it, could not occupy the throne of China, so he was sent [on a military campaign] against Sog yul ("the land of the Muslims"). By virtue of his great merit [he had previously accumulated], he became the lord of the entire land of the sTod Hor. He also subjugated Kha che. Hearing about [rGyal ba rin po che's] fame, this one appointed him as his supreme *mchod gnas* ("officiating *bla ma*"). He made great offerings to him thrice. He summoned Kashmiri artists to the land of sTod Hor to make all types of holy images, and great respect was paid to the Buddhist teachings during his time".

313. *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.56 line 1): "Grong khyer de'i dpon po yang Ra dza dhe ba zhes bya ba U rgyan phal che ba la dbang byed pa yin//"; "The head of this city (Ka hu ka, one of the four doors to U rgyan) is Ra dza dhe ba. He controls most of U rgyan".

314. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.4b,3-4): "dPon po yang Râ ja bde ba zhes bya ba/ O rgyan phal che ba la dbang ba zhig (line 4) yod do//"; "An added ruler was Râ ja bde ba who subdued most of O rgyan".

It is not sure whether he corresponded to the king of Kashmir but this is probable.

315. *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.71 line 7-p.72 line 3): "sNgar gyi byis pa so phag (p.72) rdeg pa rnam kyis Hor gyi rtog mi yin par 'dug zhes 'ur bsgrags pa las/ rgyal po snyan du song nas 'dzin mi btang bas/ nam phyed tsam nas nam langs gyi bar du rgyal po la Kha che'i nang mi rnam kyis Hor gyi rteg yi ma yin/ Bod kyi chos pa yin zhes zhu ba byas pas kyang rgyal po ma gsan/ der grong khyer gyi mi kun gyis khrim bdag de la/ khyed kyi bla mchod rgyal pos 'dzin par yod do zhes yang yang snyad pas/ khyim bdag na re 'byon pa 'thad zer nas Kha che ba'i chas su rgyug nas bres nas byon//"; "The children, who had stoned him, (p.72) spread a false rumour

U rgyan. The king did not meet him physically and thus could not ascertain U rgyan pa's identity or was misled by the wrong rumours about his presence in the land.

The biography of U rgyan pa confirms the presence of Hu-la-hu's forces in the Indo-Iranic borderlands. The steps in the advance of the Hu-la-hu's Qarauna troops was that they first conquered Kha che; next to it was the conquest of U rgyan. The Mongol takeover of the Kashmir Valley, inclusive of its north,³¹⁶ which passed under the law of Hu-la-hu is documented by the statement in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* that, soon before the journey of U rgyan pa to the "Western Regions", the population of Shri na ga ra had decreased after it was conquered by the Hor who killed many people.³¹⁷ It also assesses the occupation with chronological precision, showing that, by 1255 and during the following years that correspond to U rgyan pa's sojourn in these territories (1255-1257), the Hor ruled Kashmir and adjoining areas. The reliability of this date is indirectly confirmed by the *Rājataranginī of Jonarāja*, which fixes the beginning of the reign of Rājadeva the second to 1252.

U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa also provides evidence to assess the time of the other step in the Mongol campaign. It says that, when U rgyan pa reached Udiyāna, the Mongols had just conquered U rgyan (Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.54 line 7). Hence, this further advance of the Mongols into the Indo-Iranic borderlands took place soon before 1255 and helps to confirm that the takeover of Kashmir must have occurred between 1252 and 1254.

On U rgyan pa's way back, Srinagar was handled by the local ruler. He must have been Rājadeva who had previously taken control of area of U rgyan but the status quo before the Hor pa invasion was only nominally still existing, for the biography of U rgyan pa says how deep the Hu-la-hu forces (Qarauna) had advanced, at least up to inside the Kashmir Valley. It seems that the Kashmir king continued to have a nominal post as ruler in the two territories (Kha che and U rgyan) he controlled before the Hor's takeover.

saying: "The *grub thob rin po che* is a spy of the Hor". This rumour came to the ears of the king who sent guards to arrest him. From night to dawn, his Kha che host tried to convince the king, pleading: "This *rje* is not a spy of the Hor. He is a Buddhist from Tibet", but the king did not listen. At that time, all the people of the town repeatedly told [U rgyan pa's host]: "Your *bla mchod* is going to be falsely arrested by the king". The host having said: "You must run away", he was made to wear the dress of the people of Kha che [and] fled".

316. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.3a lines 5-6): "De nas Bha ru zhes bya ba tshong 'dus na/ Sang gha ma dhu bu zhes bya'i rgyal po yod do/ yul de ni Kha che'i lho thams cad yin no/ de yan chad la rgyal (line 6) po Hu la hu'i khirms 'dug go//; "Then at the trade mart, namely Bha ru, the ruler was Sang gha ma dhu bu. This land like all [others] are to the south of Kha che. From this point onwards [the territories] were under (line 6) the law of rgyal po Hu la hu".

317. *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.70 lines 2-3): "De nas Shri na gar zhes bya pa'i grong khyer de/ sngon mi 'bum phrag sum cu rtsa drug yod skad/ da ni Hor gyis bcom nas 'bum phrag sum bcu las med zer ba der slebs//"; "He then arrived at the town named Shri na ga ra. It is said it had earlier a population of three million and six hundred thousand. After its capture by the Hor, there were less than three million [people]".

Srinagar and the Valley being lost to the Qarauna, the headquarters of the Delhi Sultanate, the power opposing the Mongols in the war, were deployed at Pra ho ra, south of Kha che; Pra ho ra was the Delhi outpost closest to Kashmir. The details which prove Delhi's presence in the area was that Pra ho ra south of Kashmir was in the hands of the Muslim Ma lig Karadhin.³¹⁸ In the years 1255-1257 of U rgyan pa's stay in the Indian Northwest, Kashmir and contiguous areas were not yet converted to Islam, hence the Pra ho ra outpost was the northernmost locality in the hands of the Sultan of Delhi.

Neither *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* nor the material put together by Pelliot remove doubts whether Hu-la-hu personally took part in the campaign against the Indian Northwest. Pelliot affirms that Sali the Qarauna, was the head of the expedition, personally sent by Mong 'gor rgyal po, the emperor of those days. Pad ma dkar po, too, attributes the campaign to Hu-la-hu but does not clarify whether he was personally at the head of the military contingent (see above n.313).

Hu-la-hu is attributed the foundation of a temple in the area held by him at Ma lod tra, i.e. Ma la ko ti.³¹⁹ The fact that a Hu-la-hu temple was founded at this locality does not imply his presence in the Indo-Iranic borderlands,³²⁰ but it seems that the campaign was directed by him.

318. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.3b line 5): "De'i ya ka na Pra ho ra zer ba'i 'bum tsho bcu bdun yod pa'i grong gyer gcig 'dug ste/ dpon ni Sog po Ma lig Ka rad hi na zer ba 'dug go//; "Above from here, there is a town, Pra ho ra, with one million seven hundred thousand [inhabitants]. Its head is the Muslim Ma lig Karadhin".

Zla ba seng ge (p.51 line 5) has a more unlikely spelling name of the Pra ho ra headman: "Grong khyer de'i rgyal po ni Sog po'i Mi lig Kar dhe na zer bar 'dug//"; "The king of this town (Pra ho ra) is the Sog po Mi lig Kar dhe na".

bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.72 lines 5-7): "Grong khyer chen po/ Sra ho ra zhes bya ba 'bum phrag bdun bcu yod pa 'dug grong khyer de'i dpon po ni Sog po Ma ling Kar zer ba//"; "There are 117,000 inhabitants in the great town Sra ho ra (spelled so). The headman of this town is Sog po Ma ling Kar zer ba 'dug//".

319. *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.4a lines 2-4): "Bha dro la nas nyin gcig gis Ma lod trar sleb/ yul der ra ni Bam de'i bu je ta bhir zer ba la bsangs nas/ rgyags dang dgos la sogs pa rnyed do/ de nas rgyal po Hu la hu'i gtsug lag khang gcig brtsigs gin 'dug go//"; "One day [journey] from Bha dro la [U rgyan pa] arrived at Ma lod tra. At this locality, the *rani* was Bam de'i bu je ta bhir whom I [U rgyan pa] begged and obtained provisions and other necessities. Moreover, a *gtsug lag khang* of rgyal po Hu la hu was in the process of been built".

320. *Padma dkar po'i chos 'byung* (see above n.29) records an otherwise unknown artistic phase promoted by Hu-la-hu and his Phag mo gru pa guru, rGyal ba rin po che. Kha che artists worked under their patronage to produce all sorts of images in the sTod Hor territory. The latter term obviously refers to Chinese Turkestan, which was under Hu-la-hu's control in that period. This phase was thus an artistic outcome originated in the *yon mchod* between Hu-la-hu and the Phag mo gru pa; it was under Tibetan spiritual authority but in an area outside Tibet, and had Kashmiri artists as protagonists.

According to his biography, U rgyan pa witnessed that the Ma la kota (Malot?) temple, sponsored by Hu-la-hu, was under construction in the borderland between Kha che and U rgyan (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.52 line 3). Assessing the date for the Ma la ko ta temple may

The biography of U rgyan pa gives a composite picture of the control of these lands by Mongols and Muslims, which is an insight, not without doubts, into the front of the Mongol military advance.

U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa says that the lands in which Hindus and Muslims cohabited extended from Dza lhan da ra up to the vicinity of the lower course of River Jhelam outside Kha che.³²¹ The lands held by the Muslims encompassed the stretch from the Jhelam to the bank of the Indus. The Hor were beyond the Indus.

This specification of the extension of population's presence in the territories of the Indian Northwest is only apparently terse since it mixes an old distribution of the Hindu people with Muslim presence which had no features of ethnic settlement but concerned the deployment of Delhi Sultanate troops to contain and send back the Hor. Not so convincing is the statement that the Mongols were beyond the Indus, way north of the Kashmir Valley they occupied before U rgyan pa set foot in the Northwest, unless the attack that reduced the population of Srinagar drastically was a raid, followed by a retreat to more solid positions in the north. This is unlikely.

The area where U rgyan pa met Hor pa engaged in building the temple of Ma la ko ti sponsored by Hu-la-hu (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.52 line 3) was well to the south of the Indus. The *rnam thar* therefore shows that the front of the invasion had entered deep inside the Muslim territories and had stabilised enough to allow the Mongols to build a temple there. The biography of U rgyan pa never identifies the powers at stake in the

thus help to identify the years in which the Kha che artists were active under Hu-la-hu's patronage. This should be possible, if one takes into consideration the length of U rgyan pa's sojourn in various places during his pilgrimage towards Swat and the date of Hu-la-hu's conquest of Baghdad (1258). Padma dkar po provides further evidence regarding Kashmiri artists working for Hu-la-hu, who were operating in the land of the sTod Hor. It is found in his treatise classifying Tibetan bronzes (entitled *rTen brtags pa'i rab byed nyung ngu smra mkhas 'dod pa'i kha rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so*), one type of which is that produced by Kha che artists in the land of the sTod Hor.

321. *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.51 lines 3-5): "De nas Sog po'i yul sleb ste/ yul de'i ming ni brjed 'dug gsung/ sa cha de yan chad rGya gar dang Sog po 'dres pa'i yul du 'dug ste/ yul la na Hin du zer rGya gar gyi mi yod/ la la Mur su ra men zer ba Sog po yod/ la la gnyis ka yod gsung/ thang la yod pa'i mi thams cad Mo gol la ngo bltab bar 'dug/ de nas nyi ma cig gis grong cig tu sleb ste/ de'i ming yang brjed 'dug gsung/ de nas Kha che'i chu gzhug yin zer zer ba'i gtsang po cig 'dug/"; "He (U rgyan pa) then arrived at the land of the Sog po. He said he had forgotten the name of this land. This area is the land cohabited by the Indians and the Sog po. Some areas are said to be inhabited by the Hin du and some by the Mur su ra men, who are the Sog po. Some [other] areas are said to be inhabited by both. In the plains of this area all the people have Mo gol physiognomies. Then he arrived at a town one day's distance away. He said he had forgotten its name. After that, there was a river which is known as the Kha che river (i.e. the Jelham)".

Also see *O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing gi lam yig rin chen phreng ba* (f.3b lines 1-5).

This has remarkable ethno-historical importance. It documents that the Delhi Sultanate Muslims controlled lands to the south of the Jelham, inhabited by Hindu subjects. It also documents the extent of Qarauna infiltration into Northwest India.

occupation of the lands traditionally inhabited by the Hindu and Buddhist populations. Nonetheless, the account of the situation helps to recognise with remarkable confidence in Hu-la-hu's Hor and the Delhi Sultanate the authorities which held sway in this stretch of lands. They vied for supremacy in Northwest India during the period.

Indo-Iranic power in Mar yul (1257-1270)

▪ gZi di khyim/De khyim and grub chen U rgyan pa

Further developments that led to a resurgence of religious practice in Mar yul La dwags are rooted in the work undertaken in fire snake 1257 and earth horse 1258 by grub chen U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/ Seng ge dpal (1230-1309). He was in the region on his way back from his journey to U rgyan,³²² the realm of the *mkha' 'gro ma-s* in the Indo-Iranic borderlands (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.389-390).³²³

gDung rabs zam 'phreng resumes its treatment of the rulers of She ye, the historical seat of the kings of Mar yul sited near Gle, at the time of gZi di khyim, called De khyim in the biographies of U rgyan pa,³²⁴ a non-Tibetan monarch of the land, who chose grub chen U rgyan pa as his *bla mchod*.

The master initiated a phase of recruitment of local youths to the two lower monastic vows—he tonsured them or else gave them the *rab tu byung* vow—embarking upon the mission of giving them to one hundred youth every day.³²⁵ The account is also found in

322. Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.76 line 2): “De nas mNga' ris kyi Mar yul du 'byon pa'i tshe/ U rgyan 'khor ba' grub pa thob pa'i rnal 'byor pa gnyis 'dug go zhes grags pa gyur te bla chen De khyim zhes bya ba'i khab du gdan drangs so//”, “Then, when they [U rgyan pa and his companion dPal ye] reached Mar yul of mNga' ris, the fame of the two *mahasiddha yogin-s*, who had gone for pilgrimage to U rgyan, was spread and they were invited to the castle of bla chen De khyim”.

323. No reference to similar activities in Mar yul and contiguous regions by U rgyan pa's teacher rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189-1258) is found in the numerous *rnam thar-s* dedicated to him. rGod tshang pa's presence in La dwags and neighboring regions of River Indus is purely a remnant of local lore, unsupported by any literary material on his life.

The itinerary of rGod tshang pa's journey to Upper West Tibet and the Indo-Iranic borderlands, described with some accuracy in his various biographies, led him to cross lands due south of La dwags. He went from Gangs Ti se and Ma pham g.yu mtsho to Gu ge, and from there to Pi ti Pi cog and Gar zha. He headed farther south and southwest into Indian territory in order to reach Dza lan dara, his final destination. On his way back, he took the same route.

324. The lHa chen po of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.), who reigned after 'Gro mgon according to this source, was gZi di khyim, for he met U rgyan pa. Hence, *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.) has an extremely long genealogical gap that extends from ca. the mid 10th century to the mid 13th century. Practically, the genealogy of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.) begins in the mid 13th century with gZi di khyim.

325. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.107 lines 7-10): “De'i dus su bla chen De khyim gyi dge 'dun gyi tshogs gdan drangs nas/ de nams thams cad kyi thog ma la khri

gDung rabs zam 'phreng published by Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan in *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* which inflates the number to five hundred every day.³²⁶ Though the text does not mention this specifically, it goes without saying that he must have introduced them to the religious system he represented, the doctrine of gTsang pa rya ras and rGod tshang pa. The brief passage in question, also found in various biographies of this master, contains a factual reference to the establishment of the 'Brug pa school in Mar yul. It says that U rgyan pa carried out his activities in various areas of Mar yul, an unsubstantiated statement that does not indicate the territorial extent of his vow bestowing campaign.

U rgyan pa's simile of grazing horses for breeding recruits to his religion, mentioned in the same lines of *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* (see *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter*), is a metaphor for the conversion campaign he undertook on behalf of the 'Brug pa.

gZi di khyim/De khyim tried to convince U rgyan pa to remain in La dwags but met with a refusal because the *grub chen* wished to return east to commemorate his teacher rGod tshang pa (1189-1258) who had died in the meantime (*Zla ba seng ge, U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar*

chen po rtsigs/ bsnyen bkur dpag tu med pa mdzad nas/ Ma yul gces phrug brgya tham pa/ nyi ma gcig la rab tu byung/"; "At that time bla chen De khyim summoned the monks to an assembly. All of them built a great throne beforehand and offered uncountable [expressions of] respect [to U rgyan pa]. Each day [the *grub chen*] bestowed the *rab tu byung* vow upon one hundred cherished children of Mar yul".

326. *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* (in Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan, *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* p.339 lines 6-8) says: "Yab sras 'di nyid kyi dus su mkhas grub U rgyan pas nyi ma re la rab tu byung ba lnga brgya re la bslab pa gang zhing dbu skra bcad/ Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bya ba cher byas so/ de nas Mar yul lung phyogs su phyin lha chen gZi di khyim gyis mchod nas byas/ rta 'tsho ba 'jag ma'i thang la rgyab/ pho zhen log can tshogs pa'i g.yang sa yin/ gsung ngo/"; "During the time of the father and son, mkhas grub U rgyan pa imparted to the *rab tu byung* vow upon 500 novices every day and cut their hairlocks. He gave a greater [impulse] to the teachings of Sangs rgyas. He then went to all localities of Mar yul. lHa chen gZi di khyim made him his *mchod gnas*. [U rgyan pa] said: "To graze a horse, [the animal] should be brought to a grassy plain; it is auspicious that groups of male heretics [are grazed on the monastic vow]".

One term (*pho shen*) used by U rgyan pa in his analogy, which refers to the ordination of monks rather than nuns, is obscure. It reveals a certain dislike on his part for the religious traditions those people had been priorly linked to, probably in tow to their families. It also conveys a sense of fulfilment of the task undertaken, a 'Brug pa mission accomplished.

The concept that U rgyan pa had in mind, viz. the conversion to his religion of these people defined by him as "heretics" is obscure, too. Did he mean that he brought non-Buddhist people into the fold of the Noble Religion since the people who came to populate Mar yul and neighbouring lands amount to several main ethnicities with their own practices?

It is difficult to ascertain the extent, in the eyes of this *grub thob*, of the religious deviance previously pursued by the people converted by U rgyan pa. Were they practitioners of a non-Buddhist creed or of a form of the Noble Religion different from the *rDo rje theg pa* system of the Tibetans? Was his vow-bestowing campaign meant simply to benefit people of his religious charisma?

My view is that his idea that people should be brought to a proper setting (a "grassy plain for the horses") indicates that his campaign aimed at bringing people into the Buddhist fold or else he would have not judged another form of Buddhism as inappropriate.

rgyas pa p.78 lines 5-7). Hence U rgyan pa Rin chen dpa/seng ge dpal was in Mar yul from fire snake 1257 to earth horse 1258.

gZi di khyim/De khyim asked U rgyan pa to receive the monastic vow,³²⁷ but the wish of renouncing royal power that he expressed at that time remained an unfulfilled proposition. This happened before U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal left sTod to rush back to Central Tibet in 1258. gZi di khyim/De khyim continued to be the king of Mar yul despite the statement in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* that he had grown tired of secular life.

The neglect of dNgos grub mgon's reign in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* and the presence of gZi di khyim/De khyim document an attention in this text to the renewed phase of Indo-Iranic resurgence missing in *La dwags rgyal rabs* where a long lacuna follows the Mar yul king of Pu hrang pa origin. The absence of royal generations in *La dwags rgyal rabs* extends to the entire length of this resurgence.³²⁸

The alternation of rulers (from dNgos grub mgon to Bhag dhār skyabs and then to gZi di khyim/De khyim) during a short span of time is proof of one more ethnic change in political control. While the passage from a Tibetan governance to an Indo-Iranic rulership was part of the protracted pattern of secular interplay that occurred time and again in the region. Its occurrence echoes the fragmentation of the political scene elsewhere in mNga' ris stod with several kingdoms existing at the same time but with the difference that the alternation of various rulerships in Mar yul did not create the foundations of new power houses and thus a territorial fragmentation.

After Bhag dhār skyabs removed the authority of Pu hrang and substituted it with his own, local conditions continued to prevent their dominance in Mar yul La dwags despite the overall control of mNga' ris stod by the 'Bri gung pa, which lasted until towards the end of the seventies of the 13th century. The 'Bri gung pa supported the local rulership even if it was no more in the hands of their Pu hrang pa loyalists. Reading the combined evidence provided

327. *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.77 line 6): "De nas btsad po 'khor ba'i chos la yid byung nas rgyal srid spang nas rab tu 'byung bar zhus/", "Then, having become tired of worldly life, he asked [U rgyan pa] to ordain him as he [wanted] to renounce his royal power".

U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa stresses his royal rank on two occasions (called *btsad po* on p.76 line 7 and on p.77 lines 1, 2, 6 and 7; called *jo bo* on p.78 line 5). The fact that he was ready to renounce his throne to become a monk also reveals that he was a ruling monarch.

Before the king claimed that he wished to embrace religious life, by his power, U rgyan pa procured sons to the royal couple and saw their birth (ibid. p.77 line 2): "rJe grub thob rin po che shig gnyis gngang nas 'di gnyis bzung mdzod/ sras po yong gi gsung pas/ gsung bzhin sras po gnyis byung/", "As the *rje grub thob rin po che* (i.e. U rgyan pa) gave her (i.e. the Mar yul queen) two leeches, he said: "Keep these two. You will have sons". In accordance with his words, twins were born".

328. This genealogical gap covers the reigns from gZi di khyim/De khyim, rDi de gin, bKra shis mgon, and Di gin, then interrupted by the anomalous rule of De mur, all of them absent in *La dwags rgyal rabs*, which resumes its royal genealogy with Nyi 'od rdo rje, followed by that of Go de khyim. The rule of these last two kings occurred when the land was under foreign supremacy (see below p.322-324).

by *La dwags rgyal rabs*, the Wan la inscription and *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* results in highlighting that the decade-long season of 'Bri gung pa influence in Mar yul was associated first with the authority of Pu hrang and then with a resurgence of Indo-Iranic power.

The delta of years of this short but intense phase, marked by an interplay between the 'Bri gung pa and the Pu hrang pa and then with this Indo-Iranic power, occurred from after the first half of the 13th century to later than 1257/1258 and lasted until after 1266 when *gZi di khyim/De khyim* was still ruling (see below p.237-238). This Indo-Iranic ruler was succeeded by *Dzi de khyim* at an unprecised time during the third or fourth quarter of the 13th century.³²⁹ *Dzi de khyim of gDung rabs zam 'phreng*—the *Di mgon of rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (*gNam rtse ed.*—was the last of three consecutive Indo-Iranic rulers of Mar yul *La dwags*. After him and during the next two generations there was a brief alternation on the throne. One Tibetan ruler (*bKra shis mgon*) was followed by one local king (*lha chen Di gin*).

Phases in Mar yul during the 13th century:

- direct Pu hrang pa control (*dNgos grub mgon*) under 'Bri gung pa influence;
- Local, Indo-Iranic succession (*Bhag dhār skyabs, gZi di khyim/De khyim* and *Dzi de khyim*) under 'Bri gung pa influence;
- last quarter of the century: dispossession of 'Bri gung pa authority and *Sa skya pa* takeover interrupted by Chagatai rulers who reigned with local subaltern lords.

▪ *Yar ma mGon po* in Nub ra

The 'Brug pa traditionally controlled a stronghold in Nub ra, whose creation dates to the years of a master of the school who was active in *mNga' ris stod* during those years. Indicative of the 'Brug pa control of this region is that the 'Bri gung pa did not have a significant presence in Nub ra, not even a major monastery, nor they availed of preexisting local temples that the school took over.

The opening of holy places' "doors" is described in most cases as the outcome of wondrous performances by great masters, the accomplishment of ulterior behaviours. The circumstances that led to the opening of the "door" of Nub ra *Yar ma mGon po* do not escape such a standard. These performances have been transferred from the local lore into written form by authors from the region of River Sindhu.

'*Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan*, the editor of *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* and author of the piece on this holy place in the same volume, mentions the works on the subject by an

329. A disorderly assessment in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* is found in *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (*gNam rtse ed.*) concerning this segment. This text includes a dubious *Gru sha* (i.e. *Bru zha tsha bo* (the "son of a *Bru zha* mother"), in the lineage of Mar yul *La dwags* of the latter after *gZi di khyim* and before *Di mgon aka rDzi de khyim*. Inasmuch as it echoes *gDung rabs zam 'phreng's* *sGyur chen*, purportedly a son of 'Od lde from a *Bru zha* queen, his name reads as an interpolation and a sediment derived from a similar account but transferred to another period. This *Gru sha tsha bo* is a case of mistaken identity and wrong positioning of *sGyur chen*. Hence, he does not fit in the lineage and should be omitted from the genealogies of the region.

unspecified disciple of rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189-1258), another by mKhas grub rgyal mtshan and a third one by Mi pham bKa' brgyud dPal ldan 'phrin las (see *ibid.* p. 183 lines 5-7).

The modern *gnas bshad* by O rgyan rig 'dzin, entitled *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, shows in its lines an awareness of past material. His treatment of the topic is supported by a few chronological references that, despite some wrong calculations by the author, cannot be purely gratuitous. This evidence suggests that the literary itinerary followed by O rgyan rig 'dzin is based on circumstantial material concerning the opening of the pilgrimage door derived from *gnas bshad*-s. The literary authority mentioned by Nyung stod O rgyan rig 'dzin are the texts by rnal 'byor pa chen po Chos kyi bshes gnyen and the astrologer dPal ldan bsod nams. They hold that rGod tshang pa's disciples, U rgyan pa and Yang dgon pa, were responsible for opening the pilgrimage "door".³³⁰ Penned earlier than O rgyan rig 'dzin's,

330. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.8 line 14-p.10 line 6): "rJe rGod tshang pa Nub ra phyogs kyi brag gzigs nas slob ma gnyis pa 'di ltar gsungs/ lCag ra sa chu yi g.yas phyogs kyi g.yas ma phyogs kyi brag ri nas dpa' bo rTa mgrin sku shin tu (p.9) mtshar ba zhig mjal gyin 'dug/ khyed bu slob gnyis song la dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po phyag bzhi pa'i pho brang gi gnas sgo phye ba'i dus skabs yod gsungs nas chos rje rGod tshang pa La dwags nas Tsa ri phyogs su phebs/ da lta'i lCag ra sa ru bzhugs pa'i dpa' bo rTa mgrin gyi 'bur sku rgyal ba O rgyan pa dang Yang mgon pa gnyis kyi rGod tshang pa la'o che nas Nub rar gzings skabs lCag ra sa sngon la zhal nas thon pa'i rTa mgrin kyi sku mjal ba'i rten 'brel du rting nas bzhengs par mngon 'dug/ 'di ni rtsis ming dPal ldan bsod nams kyi yig cha rnying pa rnal 'byor pa chen po Chos kyi bshes gnyen gyi gsung thor bu zhig gsal/ chos rje rGod tshang pa'i slob ma gnyis lCag ra sa chu'i g.yas phyogs su phebs nas mGon po'i gnas kyi brag 'og du tsher ma'i nags khrod yod pa der bzhugs/ bsnyen sgrub dang mGon por bsangs gsol dang gser skyems sogs phul nas/ phyi lo 1258 rab byung bzhi pa'i lo 53 dus kyi pho nya zhes pa sa pho rta yi lo Bod zla ba dang po'i tshes 4 tho rangs stag gi dus (p.10) la 'Brug stong ldir ba'i skad sgra 'don bzhin mGon po'i zhal khebs phyets te brag mang po zhig brdibs/ nam langs pa'i dus su slob ma gnyis kyi de phyogs su gzigs pa dang rang grub kyi gzhal yas khang dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po yab yum zhal sbyor du bzhugs pa mjal/ zhib par slob ma gnyis kyi bris pa'i gnas yig nang du gsal//"; "rJe rGod tshang pa saw a rock in Nub ra and told his two disciples: "On the right-hand [bank] of the river of lCag (spelled so) ra sa and in the right-hand direction I kept visualising an extraordinary image of dpa' bo rTa mgrin on a rock. (p.9) It is time for you, [my] two disciples to open the door of this holy place, the palace of mGon po phyag bzhi pa". After [saying] that, rje rGod tshang pa left La dwags for Tsa ri. When both rgyal ba O rgyan pa and Yang mgon (spelled so) pa saw the high relief carving of dpa' bo rTa mgrin in the area currently known as lCag ra sa, they said that they established [the holy place] following the karmic nexus of having seen the high relief image of rTa mgrin. This is mentioned in the *gSung thor bu* by rnal 'byor pa chen po Chos kyi bshes gnyen, based on the old document of the astrologer dPal ldan bsod nams. The two disciples of rje rGod tshang pa went to the right-hand bank of the river of lCag ra sa and stayed in the extraordinary grove below the rock that is the palace of mGon po. In the next year, the fifty-third of the fourth *rab byung*, which is earth male horse 1258, known as *pho nya*, at dawn of the fourth day of the first month, (p.10) with a great noise of thousand dragons roaring, mGon po's curtain was unveiled amidst many stones falling [down the cliff]. In that direction, the two disciples saw [the deity] rising in the sky and then saw Ye shes kyi mGon po yab yum in mystic union settled in a self originated paradise. In order to go into this matter more deeply one should consult the *gnas yig* written by the two disciples".

'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan's piece on Yar ma mGon po does not identify those disciples of rGod tshang pa responsible for opening the pilgrimage "door".³³¹

I doubt that rnal 'byor pa chen po Chos kyi bshes gnyen or the astrologer dPal ldan bsod nams are right, given that there is any record in none of the numerous biographies of rGod tshang pa that would substantiate the presence the sTod 'Brug master in Nub ra. Equally unreliable is the inclusion of Yang dgon pa in this episode because his biographies do not contain any reference to his presence in Nub ra either. Conversely, as for the presence of U rgyan pa in Nub ra during his 1257-1258 sojourn in La dwags is a sound historical possibility.

Elsewhere in the same text, O rgyan rig 'dzin holds a confused view that seems to attribute the project of opening the "door" of the Yar ma mGon po pilgrimage to rGod tshang pa. Therefore, he devotes words to a tirade against the scepticism that this master was involved in the devotional reconnaissance of the Yar ma mGon po rock. These passages in his work (*Nub ra'i gnas bshad* p.53 line 15-p.54 line 4) read: "sTod 'Brug gnam gyi skar ma lta bu'i gtso bo/ rgyal ba rGod tshang pa (p.54) mGon po rdo rje zhes rDo rje 'chang dngos sum pa de nyid kyi/ Mang yul gyi gnas kyi gzigs snang gtan la phabs te lung bstan/ ma dag pa'i gdul bya 'ga' res/ rgyal ba rGod tshang pa 'dir ma byon zer yang/ de ni mi bden/"; "The main sTod 'Brug who was like a star in the sky, rgyal ba rGod tshang pa (p.54) mGon po rdo rje, the true rDo rje 'chang, resolved to have a vision of the holy place in Mang yul [to implement gTsang pa rGya ras's] prophecy. A few impure/incorrect people to be trained say that rgyal ba rGod tshang pa did not come here, but this is not true".

It seems, however, that those "few impure/incorrect people to be trained" are right in these authors' assessment.

331. 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan, "Yar ma mGon po" (in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan ed., *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.182 line 11-p.183 line 3): "Di'i gnas sgo ni rje gTsang pa rGya ras kyi sras mthu bo rgyal ba rGod tshang pa chen po la bla mas ji ltar lung bstan ltar khong gis bu chen gnyis la mGon po phyag bzhi pa'i pho brang lung bstan par mdzad/ de nas khong gnyis lCag ra sa'i chu'i g.yas phyogs su phebs pa na ri'i ngos na rTa mgrin gcig gsal por mjal/ der tshogs dang mchod pa mang du phul de'i mtshan phyed tsam la brag de brdibs nas sa 'gul pa sogs 'jigs pa chen po'i ltas sna tshogs byung/ snga dro gzigs dus brag la rang byung du grub pa'i gzhal yas khang dang/ dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po Phyag bzhi pa sku las 'od 'phro zhing gzi brjid dang ldan pa/ dbu steng na chos sku sNang ba mtha' yas byin rlabs kyi gzi 'od 'phro ba/ sku'i mdun na chos po thi dang glegs bam/ de'i steng na sTon pa'i sku/ yum E ka (p.183) dza ti/ de'i dbus steng na sPyan ras gzigs 'gro drug sgrol/ de'i g.yas ngos na bCu gcig zhal sogs shin tu ngo mthsar ba'i sku brnyan rang byon mang du bzhugs/ skal ba dang ldan pa rnam ma nor ma 'khrul bar mjal/"; "As for the "door" of this holy place, according to the prophecy/order by the *bla ma*, rje gTsang pa rGya ras, to his major (*mthu bo* spelled so for *thu bo*) spiritual son rgyal ba rGod tshang pa chen po, the two disciples of those two [teachers'] (i.e. gTsang pa rGya ras and rGod tshang pa) put into practice the prophecy/order concerning the palace of mGon po phyag bzhi pa. Thereafter, those two went to the right side of the lCags ra sa river and saw distinctly a rTa mgrin on the surface of a rock. There they gave a feast (*tshogs* i.e. *tshogs 'khor*) and many offerings. During the middle of the night, that rock collapsed and the earth shook, which caused various conditions of great fear. They look in the morning and, on the rock, there were a spontaneous *gzhal yas khang* and a dpal Ye shes mGon po phyag zhi pa emitting rays of lights and resplendent. Over his head there was chos sku sNang ba mtha' yas emitting rays of light that bestowed blessings. In front of the image there were a religious *po thi* (spelled so) and a *glegs bam*. Above it there was a rTa mgrin; above it the images of sTon pa and yum E ka (p.183) dza ti. In the centre above, [there was] sPyan ras gzigs liberating

The way rGod tshang pa's assignment of the task to his two disciples is a first incongruence in the narrative. rGod tshang pa would have told his two disciples to go to Nub ra after he inspected the locality. Nowhere in the several biographies of rGod tshang pa is there a trace that the sTod 'Brug master was in Nub ra or La dwags. He was at Gangs Ti se but proceeded to Chamba by way of Pi ti and Dril bu ri.

The identification of the two rGod tshang pa's disciples as Yang dgon pa and U rgyan pa by Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, or his authority, is no more than a historiographical obviousness, for it is well-known that those two were important disciples of this sTod 'Brug master.³³²

However, there are substantial differences in this reference to the two disciples. On the one hand, the *rnam thar*-s of Yang dgon pa do not say that he was in any land of mNga' ris stod, such as La dwags or Nub ra, at any time, unless the biographies of him are grossly at fault in neglecting his presence in these lands.

On the other, U rgyan pa had more than a single frequentation of Mar yul stod and Ru thog. He must have contributed to stretch the territorial extent of the 'Brug pa diffusion in this part of mNga' ris stod to Ru thog for reasons of contiguity with Nub ra and U rgyan pa's interaction with the local lords.

U rgyan pa, earlier, sojourned in Ru thog in the winter of 1253-1254.³³³ This occurred

the six realms of life. To its right side [there was] a bCu gcig zhal. There were many extraordinary self-originated images. Provided with karmic merits their vision was flawless and undecieving".

332. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.47 lines 3-6) mentions four disciples of rGod tshang pa but does not omit to include the two major ones: "rJe srid pa gsum nas 'gran zla dang bral ba grub thob yongs kyi gtsug rgyan rGod tshang pa chen po la bu chen rang nyid dang mnyam pa bzhi byung/ de yang O rgyan pa/ Yang mgon pa/ Ni ring pa dang Byil dkar ba//"; "Grub thob rGod tshang pa chen po, the ornament of everyone's crown, unrivalled in the three spheres of existence, had four disciples. They were O rgyan pa, Yang mgon (spelled so) pa, Ni ring pa and Byil dkar ba (spelled so)".

333. Part of the reaction of rGod tshang pa to the jealousy felt by the older disciples towards U rgyan pa, his youngest and most beloved follower, is a historically significant insight into an important locality on the "upper side" which had become a stronghold of the 'Brug pa.

bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.45 line 19-p.46 line 9) reports: "Slob dpon rGyal mtshan (p.46) dge ba'i gsung de/ 'khor gyi rten 'brel la gnod par byug 'dug/ dang po Ru thog du 'khor rgan rgon gcig phu byung 'dug/ yang chos rin po che'i zhal nas/ slob dpon jo btsun nga'i gam du sdad na/ nga thams cad la bka' skyon stong pa zhig tu 'gro/ nyid kyi gam du chos snying nas byed pa zhig min pas mi zug/ 'khor tshang gtug pa yong ba yin gsungs/ yang chos rje rin po che'i zhal nas/ tshogs pa 'di lan cig 'gyes pa yin/ slob dpon jo btsun rang yang lan cig phyir rgyab tu song la/ de nas nga'i drung du bzhugs su byon//"; "Slob dpon rGyal mtshan (p.46) dge ba said: "The [behaviour of the old monks] is noxious to the *karma* of the group [of disciples in general]. At the beginning, this happened only in the group of older [followers] at Ru thog". Again, the *chos rje* (i.e. rGod tshang pa) said: "If the *slob dpon jo btsun* (i.e. U rgyan pa) stays with me, only a rebuke to everyone [in the assembly] will be empty [words]. They should leave. Even if my presence [guarantees] the essence of teachings, [my followers] do not suffer from not practising it, [despite] I came to meet [my] retinue divisions. The *chos rje* added: "The assembly should be disbanded only once.

before travelling all the way to U rgyan (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.566 and n.965).³³⁴ He then was twice in La dwags. The first and more prolonged stay coincided with his appointment as *mchod gnas* of the Mar yul ruler gZi di khyim/De khyim, which he undertook during the years 1257-1258. That Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, or his authority, dates the actualisation of rGod tshang pa's vision of Yar ma mGon po to 1258 rules out the possibility of this master having been in Nub ra since he died in that year but, at the same time, lends validity to U rgyan pa's paternity of the enterprise.³³⁵

The second of the two visits to the same lands was when he returned to La dwags sometime before heading to rDro rje gdan (bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.171 line 14 and p.173 line 2-p.175 line 4). These are facts that make his presence in Nub ra more reliable than a mere possibility.³³⁶

[Therefore] *slob dpon jo btsun* himself, too, should follow suit and leave. He then will come to stay with me".

Hence a community of sTod 'Brug was settled in Ru thog by the years 1252-1253, just before U rgyan pa left for his pilgrimage to U rgyan. Was it Ru thog in mNga' ris or Ru thog in dBus?

This narrative does not explain whether U rgyan pa went to Ru thog in the winter of 1253-1254 to meet the local lord, the sponsor of the sTod 'Brug, on his own or steps had been previously taken to negotiate the establishment of a community of the school at this ancient locality and area perhaps from distance.

334. On the way to Udiyana after being at Gangs Ti se and Ru thog, U rgyan pa followed the course of the Seng ge kha babs which he recorded in his written work (van der Kuijp, "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309) Part II: For Emperor Qubilai? The Garland of Tales about Rivers" and Vitali, *The dGe lugs pa in Gu ge and the Western Himalaya* p.233-235 and n.171-175). Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.53 lines 3-5): "Nub phyogs na Si dhu zhes bya ba'i chu bo chen po bzhi'i ya ba Gangs Ti si'i rgyab seng ge'i khog pa nas 'bab ste/ de nas Mar yul nas gzungs ste/ Zangs dkar dang/ sPu rangs kyi chu rnam 'dus nas/ Kha che'i byang Bru sha'i yul byung nas sTag gzig gi yul la song nas U rgyan gyi yul du yong ba yin zer ro//"; "In the west the Si dhu (i.e. the Sindhu), the most outstanding among the four great rivers, springs from within a seng ge in the back of Gangs Ti si. It then flows from Mar yul to Zangs dkar, sPu rangs (sic for Pu rig) where it mixes with tributaries and, north of Kha che, comes to the land of Bru sha. It flows to the territories of sTag gzig and comes to the land of U rgyan".

335. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin stresses that, almost contemporary with the opening of the Yar la mGon po pilgrimage in 1258, a new road was opened that connected South Turkestan with Nub ra, which must have been instrumental in promoting commercial exchanges (ibid. p.10 lines 9-11: "De skabs su Yar kyen Hor yul gyi rgya lam Se ya can brgyud nas yod pa yin//"; "At that time there was the Se ya can trunk road that connected Yar kyen Hor yul [with Nub ra]").

336. Sa phud pa Thub bstan dpal ldan, although endorsing the involvement of rGod tshang pa, holds the view that U rgyan pa opened the door of Yar ma mGon po and the other holy places in Nub ra, where images of mGon po are found, eight in all. His *dPe thub chags rabs* (p.72 lines 3-7) reads: "Dus rabs 'dir rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje yang La dwags su phebs nas sgrub pa mdzad cing bzhugs/ khong rang gi slob ma grub thob O rgyan pa yang bla mas lung bstan pa bzhin lDum rar ljongs su phebs nas mGon po bka' brgyad rang byon gyi gnas sgo phye bar mdzad//"; "During that century, rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje came to La dwags and sat in meditation. His disciple grub thob O rgyan pa, in accordance with the prophecy/order of his *bla ma*, went to

U rgyan pa's visit to Nub ra must have fallen during one of those two sojourns. His involvement in the opening of the door of the Yar ma mGon po holy place more reliably happened during his sojourn that took place in earth horse 1258 which was inception during the course of the previous year.

Hence, the project of making parts of Nub ra (Yar ma mGon po) a site of the 'Brug pa was a rGod tshang pa's engagement that he inherited from gTsang pa rGya ras. rGod tshang pa received a *lung btsan* from gTsang pa rGya ras that directed him to open the Yar ma mGon po holy site. This account is told by O rgyan rig 'dzin in terms similar to the order passed by sKhyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po to his disciples and focused on Gangs ri, Tsa ri and La phyi.³³⁷ rGod tshang pa, in turn, handed over the task to his disciple U rgyan pa.

The circumstances that led to the opening of the Yar ma mGon po holy place are told in extraordinary terms, reminiscent of *gter ma* rediscoveries. It included a resplendent vision of

the land of lDum ra and opened the "door" of the holy place of the eight self-originated mGon po". The eight mGon po of Nub ra (Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* p.60 line 11-p.63 line 12) are:

mGon po Nag po chen po yab yum at Yar ma (the main one);
 mGon po dkar po at Pa na mig;
 Byams pa mGon po at Byams chen lung pa;
 the mGon po of Lags gzhung lung pa;
 Pa ta mGon po phyag bzhi pa at Rong mdo';
 Klu yi mGon po nā ga ra dzā at Rong mdo' phu;
 mGon po phyag drug pa of bDe skyid, and
 Shu kur mGon po in Shu kur lung pa'i phu.

O rgyan rig 'dzin (*Nub ra'i gnas bshad* p.54 line 14-p.55 line 2), too, holds the view that U rgyan pa indeed went to Nub ra: "Grub thob chen po O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, the spiritually accomplished disciple of rje rGod tshang pa, went to O rgyan in the west. (p.55) He had accomplishments and [uttered] sacred formulas at this holy land. He then came [to Nub ra]".

337. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.47 line 8-p.48 line 2): "De nas dus re zhig rje bla ma 'gro ba'i mgon po gTsang pa rGya ras kyis lung bstan mdzad nas/ Hor Bod kyi sa mtshams Gangs ri dang gNas ri'i dkyil du nub nas yod pa Nub ra bya ba'i yul srin mo gan rkyal du 'gyel ba 'dra ba'i g.yas logs na dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po phyag bzhi pa'i pho brang yod/ de'i gnas sgo phyes pa'i gdul bya bu khyed la yod do gsungs/ bla ma'i lung btsan dang bstun nas rim gyis La dwags su phebs nas rGod tshang phug tu bzhugs/ thugs dam shin tu 'phel zhing lha srin sde brgyad dbang du bsdu/ mkha' 'gro sogs la dbang (p.48) lung man ngag dang 'brel ba sogs mang du mdzad/ bla ma'i lung bstan bzhin Mang yul rdzong gi La'o che'i la thog tu phebs//"; "Thereafter a while, the *rje bla ma* saviour of mankind, gTsang pa rGya ras, issued a prophecy. He said: "At the border between Hor [yul and] Tibet, two in all, in the middle of Gangs ri and gNas ri is the land known as Nub ra. On the right side of the demoness laying supine is the palace of four-armed Ye shes kyi mGon po. Son, you [should benefit] people to be trained by opening the "door" of the holy place". Agreeing with his prophecy in due time, having gone to La dwags, rGod tshang pa stayed in a cave. He expanded his meditation and subdued the *lha srin sde brgyad*. He said he imparted many [teachings] to the *mkha' 'gro-s*, such as *dbang-s*, (p.48) *lung*, *man ngag* and commentaries ('*brel ba* spelled so for '*grel ba*). According to the *lung bstan* of the *bla ma* he went towards La'o che of Mang yul rdzong".

rTa mgrin and an earth tremor with rocks crumbling from the stony surface of the site.³³⁸

What makes of Yar ma mGon po an extraordinary experience for the initiate is the shared belief that a gigantic mGon po phyag bzhi pa can be visualised by means of a mental projection of the deity image onto its rough rock surface. At Yar ma there is no sculpted outline of mGon po phyag bzhi pa. It does not exist. It is the vision of the faithful, which shapes the image of mGon po onto the stony cliff. This is not uncommon. Tibet has a plethora of rocks of indistinct shape that are seen as representations of deities, symbols, mythical animals and other imagery.

The cult of the extraordinary projection of the deity on the rock surface remained a vision of rGod tshang pa for all the time that elapsed from his assignment of the task of locating and opening Yar ma mGon po in Nub ra, to U rgyan pa before his disciple left for U rgyan in 1253. It kept being a vision, told about by a master to a disciple, at least up to 1257/1258 when U rgyan pa was in Mar yul in the role of *mchod gnas* of gZi di khyim/De khyim.³³⁹ Around that time, U rgyan pa visualised the image of mGon po phyag bzhi pa on the surface of the local rock suited to shape the semblance of the deity, thus opening the site to sTod 'Brug pa practice.³⁴⁰

338. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.48 lines 2-13): "De'i rjes su brag phyogs la gzigs nas bu chen bzhi'i nang nas rtogs pa rang dang mnyam pa Yang mgon pa brtul zhugs rang dang mnyam pa O rgyan pa gnyis la lung bstan nas/ chos rje rGod tshang pa Tsa ri phyogs la phebs/ bu chen gnyis lCags ra sa'i chu'i g.yas phyogs nas phebs pa'i rTa mgrin gcig shin tu gsal ba snang/ mGon po'i snyan pa byung ba'i gnas der tshogs mchod sogs mdzad nas/ dgong mo chu'i tshun du bzhugs pa'i mtshan phyed tsam la brag de rdib nas sa g.yo ba sogs 'jigs pa chan po'i lta byung ngo/ tho rangs gzigs pas pas rang grub pa'i gzhal yas khang dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po phyag bzhi pa sku khro bo'i gzi brjid dang ldan pa//"; "Thereafter, having visualised the rock, among his four disciples who had equal personal perceptions, [rGod tshang pa] issued a prophecy to Yang mgon pa and likewise to U rgyan pa who had similar [realisations], two in all. Chos rje rGod tshang pa went to Tsa ri. The two disciples went on from the right bank of the Chags ra sa river and had a remarkably clear vision of rTa mgrin. They made a *tshogs mchod* at that holy place to appease mGon po. They stayed at the near bank of River dGong mo. An omen came around full moon that great fear would be caused, such as an earthquake which would make the rock collapse. At dawn, they looked about. There was, together with his palace, a resplendent image of Four Armed dpal Ye shes kyi mGon po".

339. After leaving for Upper West Tibet in late 1252, U rgyan pa had set out for the Indo-Iranic borderlands in the spring of 1254 (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n.703) but remained at ri bo Gan dho la until 1255 (Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.44-45) and returned first to Mar yul not later than 1257 and then to Bar 'brog rDo rje gling in 1258, for the funerary rites of rGod tshang pa (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.390 and n.630). He thus stayed in the Indo-Iranic borderlands during the years 1255-1257.

340. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.46 lines 11-14): "Chos skyong thams cad mGon po phyag bzhi pa nyid kyi sprul par bstan to/ de lta bu'i dPal Ye shes kyi mGon po'i gnas yig 'byung khungs mdor bsdu tsam zhig smra//"; "Phyag bzhi pa, the mGon po of all *chos skyong* manifested his emanation. Likewise, this is how the origination is briefly described in *dPal Ye shes kyi mGon po'i gnas yig 'byung khungs*".

Its affiliation to the 'Brug pa was a constant that characterised Yar ma mGon po for centuries to come even after Nub ra became a region that received the dGe lugs pa diffusion brought there by sTod Shes rab bzang po and his disciple 'Jam dbyangs rin chen (see my *The dGe lugs pa in Gu ge and the Western Himalaya*).

▪ Unsettled relations in Mar yul and Ru thog

No other great deeds in the lives of outstanding bKa' brgyud pa masters, active in mNga' ris during the next period, are preserved in the sources with the exception of events related to the endeavours of the great U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal.

A first significant episode that involved U rgyan pa and recorded in Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* is a major event that affected the life of the lands on the "upper side". The incident was a first signal of a change in the religious and secular status quo established by the bKa' brgyud pa and the beginning of a decline in their fortunes. U rgyan pa was involved in averting the destructive effects of an invasion on the part of the sTod Hor, headed by the chieftain identified as rDo rje dpal in the biography of the *grub chen*.³⁴¹

The presence of rDo rje dpal at the head of the sTod Hor testifies to the liaisons between them and the bKa' brgyud bloc. rDo rje dpal was the Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon*,³⁴² and it is

341. Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.113 lines 1-3): "De nas yang dpal bDe chen stengs su byon pas brTan ma bcu gnyis la sogs pa Bod yul gyi lha 'dre che dgu 'tshogs te/ nub phyogs nas dmag gi tshogs dpag tu med pa 'ong zhing yod/ de Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa rin po che la gnod cing/ sems can gyi bde skyid brlag par 'gyur ba Hor dmag bzlog gtogs mdzad par zhu/ Bod yul tsam gyi chos pa la khyed las bsam ba'i stobs che ba med pa yin zer/ der rje grub thob rin po che pas thugs kyi 'dus pa btang zhing smon lam dpag tu med pa btab pas/ rDor je dpal zhes bya bas sTod Hor gyi dmag khrid nas 'ongs pas/ rDo rje dpal de nyid lam du shi nas Hor dmag yar la log pa lags skad/'"; "Then, as [U rgyan pa] went again to dpal bDe chen stengs, the nine great *lha 'dre* of Tibet gathered, such as the brTan ma bcu gnyis, and innumerable war troops came from the western direction. These being harmful to the precious teachings of Sangs rgyas and destructive of the peace and happiness of sentient beings, a request came to help averting the troops of the Hor, which said: "Among the religious practitioners of Tibet, there is no one who has greater thinking power than you". Therefore, since the *rje grub thob rin po che pa* addressed innumerable prayers sent from the depth of his heart, the troops of sTod Hor led by rDo rje dpal having come, it is said that rDo rje dpal himself died on the way, and the Hor troops went back".

342. *rGya Bod yig tshang* records that rDo rje dpal was the Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* for the thirteen years 1254-1266 (p.545 lines 12-17): "rGya yul la rdzangs pas/ gong ma yon mchod kyi thugs la btags nas/ Phag gru khri skor mi rabs kyi bar la 'jags pa'i bka' lung bzang po dam rtags dang bcas pa gngang/ yar slebs nas/ de 'phral/ shing pho stag lo la/ khri khang Yar lungs rNam rgyal dang sNe brtsigs/ khri dpon lo bcu gsum byas/'", "He (rDo rje dpal) was sent to China. As he established *yon mchod* with the emperor, he was given a patent and the seal, which assigned the Phag gru *khri skor* to him [and] to his future generations. He returned upwards (to Tibet) [and] at that juncture built the *khri khang* ("the *khri skor* seat") Yar lungs rNam rgyal and sNe [gdong] in the wood male tiger year (1254). He was *khri dpon* for thirteen years".

The death date of rDo rje dpal, given by me as 1266, is supported by the fact that it falls between events in the life of U rgyan pa in his biography for the years 1261 and 1270 (Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p. 98 line 6 and p.118 line 6 respectively).

probably more than coincidental that he met his death during this campaign of 1266 when 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan had returned to Central Tibet for the first time (1265-1267).

rDo rje dpal's getting at the head of the sTod Hor troops depended on the presence of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa in Tibet and the request by the Sa skya pa made to the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa bloc—personally to him and rGyal ba rin po che—to release mNga' ris stod to them in exchange of sNa dkar rtse.³⁴³

The situation was enough threatening to prompt the Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* into action, which indicates that the Sa skya pa did not limit themselves to a simple request, although probably they did not pursue this plan directly, or else an initiative of theirs would have been recorded in the sources.

The deterioration of the situation for the bKa' brgyud pa who controlled the lands on the “upper side”, following the rise to power of the Sa skya pa in coincidence with 'Phags pa's return to Tibet in 1265 led Sa skya to become more outspokenly assertive. It was for the protection of the rights of the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa bloc over the lands on the “upper side” that rDo rje dpal died in circumstances not specified in *Zla ba seng ge's U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa*. mNga' ris stod did not pass under the Sa skya pa at that time but some ten years after.

U rgyan pa's opposition to the sTod Hor, old time allies of the bKa' brgyud pa since 'Bri gung gling pa's get together with them at the “shore of the ocean of sand”, does not imply that he turned his sympathies towards this *ulus*'s rivals, the Yuan of Se chen rgyal po. U rgyan pa's decision in those circumstances was more occasional than programmatic, aimed as it was at preventing havoc caused to the lands of mNga' ris. That he was not in favour of the bloc to which the school bound to be delegated to oversee the Hor pa rule in Tibet belonged is proven by the fact that sBud skra, his *dgon pa*, was eventually burnt down by the Sa skya pa (Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Karma Kam tshang gi gser 'phreng* p.173 lines 5-6).

The intrusion of the sTod Hor has the style of a preventive action to counterbalance the presence of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa, who returned to Tibet as emissary of the Yuan, in case important decisions by the Mongols of China would have been made. The absence of any fierce treatment of the lands they invaded, so customary with the Mongols, was due to the fact that the campaign was focused, too, on an ulterior target, the Indian sector of the Northwest.

After the death of Mo 'gor rgyal po, the unity of the Mongols dissolved, their tribes being in open antagonism, and the Delhi Sultanate regained the territories on their northern border it had lost.

rDo rje dpal was the Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* who spat on the face of Se chen rgyal po (see below n.413) sometime before he met his death at the head of the sTod Hor. This fact confirms that he was a staunch opposer of the policies pursued by the Yuan emperor and that he sided with the Turkestani Mongols against him.

343. See my *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (Addendum Three p.558-560) for a treatment of these events recorded in *Si tu bKa' chems* (p.113 line 11-p.114 line 8).

Following the ascent to the throne of Sultan Ghiyath-ud-din in 1265, the Tughluq of Delhi became embroiled in long lasting warfare against the sTod Hor, who had become their major foe in Khurāsān (see, e.g., Siddiqui, "Politics and Conditions in the Territories under the Occupation of Central Asian Rulers in North-Western India—13th & 14th Centuries" p.288-306).³⁴⁴

The military campaign in La dwags and Ru thog that fell in 1266 is suggestive of the possibility that it was part of a larger sTod Hor design. mNga' ris stod was a strategical alternative front for an attack upon the Sultanate on a different flank from Khurāsān where they were more often involved in warfare.

Nonetheless, an inroad of the Mongols was never a peaceful event but brought havoc to the "upper side". That the situation did not require a sTod Hor military intervention is proved by the fact that they returned back to their land, not because rDo rje dpal had died, which incidentally was due to causes different from any military confrontation. The merit of the return back by the sTod Hor is attributed to U rgyan pa who must have had little influence on the decision. In line with the hagiographic treatment of every great religious master of Tibet, the merit of what is considered an aversion is attributed to U rgyan pa. The presence of the sTod Hor in Tibet was seen as detrimental to the teachings, which proves that the Mongols had left behind themselves a trail of destruction.

That mNga' ris stod was becoming involved in the overall game for supremacy between the Mongols and other powers beyond the rivalry between Sa skya pa and bKa' brgyud pa for supremacy in the region is documented by events unfolding soon after the sTod Hor's abandoned invasion of Tibet. These events personally involved U rgyan pa.³⁴⁵ He returned to

344. Khurāsān covered a considerable expanse of land northwest of the Indus, but authors later than Baranī tend to use this geographical name as a designation for the dominions of the Chaghatai.

345. Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.115 line 7-p.116 line 5): "Slar yang de bla chen De khyim rgyal sa su/ btsad pos gdan drangs chos kyi 'khr lo skor/ long spyod dpag tu med pa rab mchod cing rGyal ba'i bstan pa (p.116) nyin mo ltar mdzad/ de nas bla chen De khyim gyis spyang drangs nas mNga' ris su byon/ dus de tsa na Mar yul de Hor gyis bcom nas Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa snubs te/ dge 'dun thams cad khrims 'cal/ dge slong rnams chung ma len pa la/ rje grub thob rin po ches khrims bzang po btsugs/ bla cen De khyim gyis bteg nas chos kyi bdud rtsi'i char gyis skye 'gro'i tshogs rnams yang dag par tshim par mdzad/ btsun pa lnga brgya'i khrims dus cig la skyar/ nyi ma cig la btsun pa gsar pa phyed nyis brya bcug/ bla chen De khyim gyis chibs brgya/ gser srang brgya/ gos dar brgya yis thog drangs pa'i long spyod dpag tu med pa phul ba lags skad/ mar byon khar Chag tshang Seng ge'i bu mo shi ba'i rnam shes gzigs pa dang/ Ru thog tu sTod Hor gyi gser yig pa dang thug nas bla che can rTog ldan Sher mgon dang dPal seng gnyis btang sbyin bzang po snang/ Sher sgom rgun chang gis gzi nas lhung te shis bas Sher sgom de mis bsad nas shi skyon cig byung pa 'dra/ mgo la rmad kyis dkris byas pa'i nyams thag po cig slebs nas byung gsung/ dPal seng sleb dus rtsis pas shi la thag yongs par 'dug gsung//"; "Again, the *rtsad po* invited him to the *rgyal sa* [of] bla chen De khyim (sic, i.e. *rtsad po* De khyim invited him to his *gdan sa*) and he turned the wheel of the teachings. He was honoured with uncountable wealth. (p.116) He made the victorious teachings shine like the daylight. Then, upon the invitation of bla chen De khyim, he went to mNga' ris. At that time, since this Mang yul had been seized by the Hor, the teachings of Sangs rgyas had been destroyed. All the *dge 'dun* having broken the

Mar yul. His *sbyin bdag*, the Indo-Iranic king gZi di khyim/De khyim, again invited him. gZi di khyim/De khyim had given him much respect and hospitality when he was back from U rgyan and other territories of the Indo-Iranic borderlands before he returned to Central Tibet in 1258 upon hearing about the death of his teacher rGod tshang pa.

U rgyan pa's help was needed because Mar yul had been raided by the sTod Hor. The monks had profited of the havoc created by the invaders to leave monastic life and revert to the status of householders. U rgyan pa engaged in another campaign of bestowing vows like he had done on the occasion of his previous visit to Mar yul.

The sTod Hor also put another land of mNga' ris stod under pressure. U rgyan pa, not oblivious of his other *sbyin bdag*-s, the Bla mkhar *jo bo*-s of Ru thog, with whom he had stayed after his sojourn in Gangs Ti se and before embarking upon his adventure in the Indo-Iranic borderlands, came to rescue. Ru thog, too, was overran by the sTod Hor—and this may be a sign of the route taken by them to reach Upper West Tibet.

The extent of Ru thog's submission to the sTod Hor is unclear. Zi di khyim/De khyim's Mar yul was definitely under them. U rgyan pa met the *gser yig pa* emissary of the sTod Hor. A letter for Indo-Iranic ruler of Mar yul from the sTod Hor emissary, conveyed by two U rgyan pa's disciples not without some misfortune on the way, did not contain too negative orders for Zi di khyim/De khyim.

The events which refer to the years between 1266 and 1270 (for the latter date in Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.118 line 6), occurred soon before the attempted enforcement of the Sa skya pa rule over mNga' ris skor gsum, including Mar yul La dwags. The campaign is a sign that the assertiveness of the sTod Hor over the northern lands of mNga' ris stod contributed to prevent Se chen rgyal po's Mongols' advance in the west through their Tibetan subalterns, but not without difficulties.

*khri*ms (“*Dul ba* rules/vow”) [and] the *dge slong* having taken a wife, *rje grub chen rin po che* restored the noble [religious] law. Since bla chen De khyim supported him, he made the shower of religious nectar anoint all the laymen to their satisfaction. He restored the [*Dul ba*] rules of 500 monks on one occasions. On one day, he admitted [into religion] 150 monks. It is said that bla chen De khyim offered [to him] innumerable wealth with 100 horses, 100 gold *srang*, and 100 [bundles] of brocade and silk as the main ones. At the time of his departure downwards, the consciousness (*rnam shes*, i.e. the defunct's consciousness during the intermediate state) of the deceased daughter of Chag tshang Seng ge became manifest to him (*gzigs pa*) and, at Ru thog, since he met the sTod Hor *gser yig pa*, as he sent both rTog (spelled so for rTogs) ldan Sher mgon and dPal seng to bla chen [De khyim], he gave [them] a *bka' lung* (“orders” by the sTod Hor?) and good gifts [for De khyim]. Since Sher sgom got drunk (*gzi* spelled so for *bzi*) with grape *chang* (“wine”), he died falling [from the horse] (*lhung te shi bas*). [U rgyan pa] said: “It seems that something went wrong with Sher sgom otherwise he died killed by a man. It happened that he appeared [in my vision] in miserable conditions with a bandage around his head”. He added: “If the time of dPal seng's arrival is calculated, he came only after [Sher sgom's] death”.

Jo btsun Sras pa and grub chen U rgyan pa

Jo btsun Sras pa was one of those bold and enterprising bKa' brgyud pa who brought their activity beyond the extreme reaches of the Tibetan world.

Jo btsun Sras pa is among the Sangs rgyas 'bum's disciples listed at the end of this teacher's biography. His name is spelled jo btsun sPras pa in the brief *rnam thar* of this Tshal pa master in *Deb ther dmar po*, but it is probable that jo btsun Sras pa, found in the list of Sangs rgyas 'bum's acolytes, is the correct one.³⁴⁶

His part in the affairs undertaken by the Tshal pa in the lands on the "upper side" concerns Glo bo and the Newar world. He is recorded as the Tshal pa who built the monastery of dPal ba Me rtse. He also founded Bla shod dgon pa at gTad,³⁴⁷ the place donated by the Ya rtse king to Mar lung pa shortly before 1241 (see above p.181). Thal pa jo btsun Sras pa set up there a *dBu ma* school.

It is not known whether relations existed between Mar lung pa and jo btsun Sras pa, and whether Sangs rgyas 'bum's disciple took the responsibility of establishing a Tshal pa institution at gTad after Mar lung pa received the site from the major power of the area of that period. The construction of a Tshal pa monastery at gTad—an ancient village situated in Glo smad ("Lower Mustang") with an interesting architecture and a local dialect of obscure origin (the Se skad)—confirms that the Tshal pa were widely dispersed in Glo bo in their bid to spread their influence in this part of the Himalayas at the limit of the non-Tibetan (Thakali) lands and beyond.

Jo btsun Sras pa's contributions included a major restoration of 'Phags pa Shing kun in the Kathmandu Valley. Among other works, he selected a huge tree at the Sing ga la forest frequented by the disciples of rje btsun Mid la (see above n.11) and the sTag lung pa (see above p.144-147 and n.190), felled it and replaced the *stupa's* old consecrational wooden

346. The reasons for preferring the spelling jo btsun Sras pa can be reduced to the consideration that, if reference had been made in the name of this disciple of Sangs rgyas 'bum to the locality of sPras in 'Phan yul, his name would have been written sPras pa jo btsun and not vice versa. The spelling sPras pa jo btsun is, in my view, a clerical error found in the edition that I have consulted. Various instances of the spelling sPras and its derivative sPras pa appear in *Deb ther sngon po*, all invariably in reference to this locality in 'Phan yul (see, for example, *Deb ther sngon po* p.723 line 17, p.725 line 2, p.726 line 6, p.728 line 1, corresponding to dGe 'dun chos 'phel-Roerich transl., *Blue Annals* p.615, 617, 618, 619 respectively) and not, for the reason mentioned above, to this Tshal pa master.

347. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.146 lines 19-21): "Rin po che gDan sa pa'i slob ma Jo btsun sPras pas sTod phyogs su byon/ dPal ba me rtse'i dgon pa btab/ Blo smad gTad bla shod kyi dgon pa btab nas dBu ma'i bshad sgra btsugs/"; "Rin po che gDan sa pa's (i.e. Sangs rgyas 'bum's) disciple Jo btsun sPras pa went to sTod. He built dPal ba me rtse'i dgon pa. He built Bla shod kyi dgon pa at Blo smad gTad and introduced a school of *dBu ma* [there]".

pole in its interior. *Deb ther dmar po* supposes that the original *srog shing* was set up by the great 'Phags pa Klu sgrub (Nagarjuna).³⁴⁸

A *dkar chag* to 'Phags pa Shing kun has an account of a restoration that is strikingly similar. It does not mention jo btsun Sras pa. It says that one bla ma dBus pa and his disciples, with the support of patrons from Tibet—*dge bshes*-s of dBus gTsang and dpon chen Shakya bzang po—and from the Kathmandu Valley—the Bal po 'ba'ro-s—as well as from Gangetic India—the *kha kur*-s (*thakur*-s) of rGya gar—restored it by substituting the *stupa*'s *srog shing* which was in a bad state of decay.³⁴⁹

348. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.146 line 21-p.147 line 6): “sGom bsgrub kyis rgyud smin par mdzad nas Bal yul du byon/ Bal por 'gro don chen po byung nas 'Phags pa Shing kun gyi srog shing (p.147) 'Phags pa Klu sgrub kyis btsugs pa'i srog shig brjes ba la Sing ga nags na srog shing gsum yod pas gcig breg pa'i Shing kun gyi srog shing brjes/ gdugd bkal/ sku dkar gsol/ rdo ring btsugs/ 'gro don dang 'phrin las dpag tu med pa grub 'dug/ Bal po'i rgyal po dang/ ba' ro rnam kyis bkra shis sgo mang phul/ ras la sogs pa'i 'bul ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa dang bcas pa nas yar byon pas Ra sha ma se ru sku gshegs/”; “After he made people ripe for inner realisations by performing meditation, he went to Bal yul. In order to benefit sentient beings in Bal po and to change the *srog shing* of 'Phags pa Shing kun (p.147), this being the *srog shing* erected by 'Phags pa Klu sgrub, he went to the Sing ga forest, where there were three trees [useful] for the *srog shing*, and cut one of them. He replaced the *srog shing* of Shing kun. He put up an umbrella, offered a whitewash [to the *stupa*] and erected a *rdo ring* (spelled as). He accomplished uncountable feats for the benefit of sentient beings. The Bal po'i *rgyal po* and 'ba'ro offered him a *bkra shis sgo mang*. After he was given cotton and many extraordinary offerings, while proceeding upwards (*yar*), he died at Ra sha ma se”.

If one recalls that normally this pole functions as the structural core of a *stupa* above the *bum pa*, then the entire upper part of the Swayambhu *stupa* was evidently rebuilt. The *rdo rings* celebrating the event is no longer extant.

Points of contact between Nagarjuna and Bal po extend to the stone statue of Gur mGon po inside its temple at Tundhikel in Kathmandu said to have been made by the great Indian masters together with other images of the deity (see Vitali, “Indian crossovers to Tibet: flights of statues and masks, holy mountains and sacred scriptures”).

349. *'Phags pa Shing kun kyis dkar chag* (p.86 lines 2-5): “Der re zhig nas srog shing chag ste/ dpon chen Shakya bzang pos gser bre chen gsum dang gser srang lnga bcu phul/ gzhan yang dBus gTsang gi dge bshes Bal po'i 'ba' ro rGya gar gyi khra kur gyis nor mang po phul nas/ bla ma dBus pa yab sras kyis srog shing btsugs/ srog shing gi rtsa ba la mdo bdun srid du mdom bdun bcu rtsa gnyis yod do/ rten de la 'Das pa'i Sangs rgyas dang Ma 'ongs pa'i Sangs rgyas stong 'byung bar 'gyur ro/ de dag myang ngan las 'das pa'i ring srel nam 'dir bzhugs par lung bstan no/”; “Here, some time later, the *srog shing* broke down. dPon chen Shakya bzang po offered three *bre chen* of gold and fifty *srang* of gold. Moreover, since the *dge bshes*-s of dBus gTsang, the Bal po 'bha'ro-s and the *khra kur*-s of rGya gar offered much wealth, bla ma dBus pa, the father and sons, raised the *srog shing*. The *srog shing* measured seven *mdo* (sic for 'dom) at the base (*rtsa ba*). It was seventy-two *mdom* (sic for 'dom) in height. The 1,000 Sangs rgyas of the Past and [1,000] Sangs rgyas of the Future turned out to visit this sacred receptacle. There is a prophecy that the relics of the [Exalted Beings] will be preserved here after their death”.

'Phags pa Shing kun kyis dkar chag (p.82 line 7-p.83 line 2) is at variance with *Deb ther dmar po* in that it does not attribute the construction of the Swayambhu *stupa* to 'Phags pa Klu sgrub: “De

Although a definitive correspondence between the two accounts cannot be ascertained, the proximity of details is remarkable.³⁵⁰ There are some conspicuous points of contact between jo btsun Sras pa and the anonymous bla ma dBus pa:

- Jo btsun Sras pa being a Tshal pa, his school had its centre in dBus;
- bla ma dBus pa changed the *srog shing*; jo btsun Sras pa did likewise;
- Jo btsun Sras pa and bla ma dBus pa must have been active roughly in the same period. It is hardly tenable that there were two massive restorations of Swayambhu within a short distance of time, and undertaken by Tibetan spiritual masters, unless exceptional circumstances made it necessary.

Points of difference are a few:

- There is no trace of Shakya bzang po in the account of *Deb ther dmar po*. Could this be a case of sectarian pride that led this source to record only the contribution of the bKa' brgyud pa and neglect the one by the Sa skya pa?
- the involvement of the Bal po king and the 'ba' ro in jo btsun Sras pa's restoration was indirect, while bla ma dBus pa benefited of the personal participation of the 'ba' ro-s in the Shing kun project;
- the rGya gar *thakur*-s had no role in the restoration of jo btsun Sras pa.

The dates of jo btsun Sras pa's life and activities are not given in *Deb ther dmar po*, including his work at 'Phags pa Shing kun. Assuming that the two accounts refer to the same restoration, one could try to use the evidence provided by the dated events in the life of dpon chen Shakya bzang po to attempt an approximation of the years of the Swayambhu restoration

dus Sangs rgyas kyi sprul pa dge slong Dznyana sidhi zhes bya ba ting nge 'dzin la bzhugs so/ de dus rgyal po Bhi sa de ba zhes bya (p.83) bas Dznyana sidhi la chos dbang mang po gsan/ rten khyad par can 'Phags Shing kun 'di bzhengs so/ dkon nyer Dznyana sidhis mdzad/ mchod rten gyi ming ni Gho ma la sam gha ta zhes bya'o//"; "At that time, dge slong Dznyana sidhi (spelled so), the incarnation of Sangs rgyas, stood in the state of meditation. At that time, king Bhi sa de ba (p.83) received many teachings and empowerments from Dznyana sidhi. He built this extraordinary receptacle 'Phags pa Shing kun. The *dkon gnyer* was Dznyana sidhi. The *mchod rten* was named Gho ma la sam gha ta".

The same *dkar chag* adds some cosmic features of the *stupa* (ibid. p.83 lines 5-6): "'Phags pa'i 'og na Klu'i pho brang yod/ de'i steng na rus sbal gson po cig yod/ de'i steng na srog shing btsugs yod pa'i rtsa ba la mdom bdun yongs mdo bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis yod//"; "Below 'Phags pa [Shing kun] there is the Klu'i pho brang. Over this there is a living tortoise. The *srog shing* was erected over it, being seven *mdom* (spelled so for 'dom) at the base (*rtsa ba*), being forty-two *mdom* (spelled so for 'dom) in height".

Hence, the height of the *stupa* was raised almost double than before to an improbable dimension (one 'dom corresponds to the length of the two arms opened and stretched) that far exceeds the present one. Also see Ehrhard, "Further Renovations of the Swayambhunath Stupa (from the 13th to the 17th Centuries)" (p.17 n.10).

350. see Von Rospatt in his "On the Conception of the Stupa in Vajrayana Buddhism: the Example of the Swayambhuchaitya of Kathmandu", in which he stresses the similarities between the details provided by the two sources.

by bla ma dBus pa. The only vague chronological evidence relating to jo btsun Sras pa's life is the date of the foundation of sGom sde by his teacher Sangs rgyas 'bum (1242), since donations were sent to this holy institution after jo btsun Sras pa's death while he was returning to Tibet. He was carrying a *bkra shis sgo mangs* and other precious items gifted by the king of Bal po and the 'ba' ro-s after the completion of the restoration.³⁵¹

No corroboration, provided by the life of Shakya bzang po, helps to place the restoration to which he donated substantial funds within the set of his life's activities. The only useful clue is the indication derived from his appointment as *dpon chen* since he is attributed this title in 'Phags pa Shing kun kyi dkar chag. Even this raises some complications, since he was appointed to this post of Sa skya *dpon chen* from 1244, when Sa skya pandi ta left for the lands controlled by the Mongols. He then became the dBus gTsang *dpon chen* in 1268. It is not clear to which one of the two appointments 'Phags Shing kun gyi dkar chag, by mentioning his status, refers to. However, the few chronological details about them give reason to think that jo btsun Sras pa and Shakya bzang po were roughly contemporaries. Thus, these meeting points reinforce the probable identity between jo btsun Sras pa and the anonymous bla ma dBus pa who worked on the restoration with the support of the *dpon chen*. The good relations between the Tshal pa and the Sa skya pa may have made it possible even after Shakya bzang po took over control of Tibet on behalf of Se chen rgyal po.³⁵²

A conservative *terminus post quem* for the Swayambhu restoration undertaken by jo btsun Sras pa is the mid 1240s, given the evidence that gifts were sent to sGom sde, founded in 1242, after his demise, and the appointment of Shakya bzang po as Sa skya *dpon chen* in 1244. But it can have taken place any time after 1268 when Shakya bzang po became dBus gTsang *dpon chen* until his death in 1275.

Jo btsun Sras pa was active in the lands on the "upper side" way after his rTa sga ba colleagues Dharma bsod nams, bSam gtan rdzong pa and Tshang 'dur ba had begun to leave traces of their labours in the territories under their ascendancy. The foundation of Bla shod dgon pa at gTad in Mustang must have been subsequent to those of bSam gtan rdzong pa and Yang brag (see p.61-62).

351. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.147 lines 6-9): "Tshong 'dus pa'i bla ma dpon gyis pur sbyangs/ pur sbyang sa mchod rten bzhengs/ dBu rtse chen mo 'Jam dbyangs gser sku phul/ sGom der bkra shis sgo mang phul nas/ Be tse dang Khyung rten gnyis ka nas sGom sder phul ba na rim nzhin bskyal/"; "The bla ma [and] dpon of the Tshong 'dus pa performed the cremation [of jo btsun Sras pa]. They built a *mchod rten* with the ashes of the cremation. They offered a golden statue of 'Jam dpal dbyangs to the dBu rtse chen mo (at Tshal Gung thang?). Having offered the *bkra shis sgo mang* [given by the Bal po king to jo btsun Sras pa] to sGom sde, they sent [other] offerings to sGom sde in succession, for they [forwarded] the images of both Be tse (i.e. Beg tse) and Khyung".

Given that I do not adopt the spelling sPras pa for reason that I have adduced above (n.347) and thus that his name is not based on a toponym, I wonder whether jo btsun Sras pa was a native of Tsong 'dus mgru mo.

352. See below (n.413) for further insight into the association between the Tshal pa and the Sa skya pa to support the candidacy of Se chen rgyal po around 1261 against A ri bo gha, favoured by the other bKa' brgyud pa.

His activity in Glo bo and Bal po must have brought him into contact with the rTa sga ba, but the place he holds in *Deb ther dmar po* puts him in a different—subsequent—wave of Tshal pa in the lands on the “upper side”.

The biographies of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal are crucial in setting the matter whether there was a single restoration of 'Phags pa shing kun during the period or there were two son firm grounds.

The biographies of this *grub chen* say that one bla ma dBu ma pa rather than dBus ma pa, an acquaintance of U rgyan pa, on his way back to Tibet from the Kathmandu Valley, drowned in a water course at an obscure locality.³⁵³

The spelling bla ma dBu ma pa brings this individual who died on the way from Bal po to Tibet closer to jo btsun Sras pa. Bla ma dBu ma pa is a title that applies well to jo btsun Sras pa who was a master of *dBu ma* and the founder of a *dBu ma* school in lower Mustang at gTad. The circumstances of bla ma dBu ma pa and jo btsun Sras pa's deaths are too close to be considered merely coincidental.

Jo btsun Sras pa most likely is the bla ma dBus pa of *'Phags pa shing kun gyi dkar chag*, whose name should be read as bla ma dBu [ma] pa. It ensues that jo btsun Sras pa and his disciples were, according to *Deb ther dmar po*, the main task force responsible for the renovation sponsored, according to *'Phags pa shing kun gyi dkar chag*, by Shakya bzang po with a lavish grant.

The petty village where the death of bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa occurred is the same in all the sources with insignificant variants in spellings. It is Ra sha ma se of *Deb ther dmar po* in reference to the death of jo btsun Sras pa; Ra sha dba' se of bSod nams 'od zer's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa*, and Ra sa na wa se of Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* in reference to the passing of bla ma dBu ma pa.

The event is placed in Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* soon after the episode of the attempted sTod Hor invasion of Tibet,³⁵⁴ which culminated in the death of the

353. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.162 lines 1-4) reads: “De nas dpal sBud skra bDe chen gling du phyags phebs nas bzhugs pa'i dus su/ bla ma dBu ma pa zhes bya ba de Bal po'i yul nas/ sKyid grong gi lam la yar byon pas/ Ra sha dpa' se zhes bya ba'i grong gi 'dabs su chu la grongs//”; “Then, he went to dpal sBud skra bDe chen gling. While [U rgyan pa] resided there, bla ma dBu ma pa, upon coming up on the way to Khyi (sic for sKyid) grong from the land of Bal po, died in the river near ('dabs su) the village of Ra sha dba' se”.

354. In the intervening lapse of time, U rgyan pa went through some important experiences. He first was at Gangs Ti se. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.56 lines 3-5) reads: “De nas Dol po nas thon nas/ chu bo bzhi 'dus kyi 'go bo/ 'jig rten na Gangs Ti se zhes grags pa der byon no//”; “Then [U rgyan pa] set off from Dol po and proceeded to the famed Gangs Ti se at the physical head of where the sources of the four rivers meet”.

He then was at sKyid grong after the sTod Hor invasion of the Western Himalaya which affected Ru thog and, most likely, Mar yul too. *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.746 lines 15-18): “De nas sKyid grong du dpon Zhang mTshan thog gis Jo bo'i dbu la gser gdugs phul ba'i ka ru mdzad nas gsang spyod gsungs pa'i tshe bya gag gi ro snyom byed cing/ sgom btab pas ting nge 'dzin gsha'

Phag mo gru pa *sgom pa*, rDo rje dpal (ibid. p.113 line 3), dated to fire tiger 1266 by means of a passage of *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.545 lines 12-17, see below p.235-236 and n.343). rDo rje dpal was the Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* for thirteen years until his death (1254-1266). The next available date in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* is the horse year 1270, that falls after several events in the *grub chen's* life (Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.118 line 6). Hence the death of jo btsun Sras pa occurred soon after 1266 and, more distantly, before 1270.

bSod nams 'od zer's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* covers the events involving U rgyan pa and bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa in the same way as Zla ba seng ge. bSod nams 'od zer records U rgyan pa's dismissal of bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa's personality.³⁵⁵ He

ma rang skyes//"; "After performing the *ka ru* (?) of offering a golden umbrella over the head of the [sKyid grong] Jo bo by dpon [Men] Zhang mTshan thog, when [U rgyan pa] uttered [a formula] of secret practice, since he attained the stillness of action and inaction and meditated, stainless bliss was spontaneously born [in him]".

355. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.152 line 7-p.153 line 19): "gNya' nam 'gram du dBu ma pa zhes pas/ phyi nang gzhung lugs rnam la pham mdzad pa/ ma rung 'byung po Byams pa'i stobs kyis btul/ rang nyid skye ba bdun par zhal gyis bzhes/ de nas dus de tsa na dBu ma pa zhes bya ba/ shes pas khengs pa can/ gNya' nam 'gram na dgon pa btab nas bzhus pa na re/ rGod tshang pas chos ci yang mi shes/ chos lugs nor bas zog po yi zer ba la sogs pa/ zhal mang du gtong gi 'dug ces gsan nas/ rje gsub thob rin po che'i zhal nas/ rGod tshang pa'i chos lugs nor ba'i/ gtan tshigs khong la dri ru 'gro'o zhes gsungs nas/ sgom chen 'ga' zhis gis zhabs tog mdzad nas byon/ lam du char chen po byung bas/ rje grub thob rin po ches spyam nam mkha' la gzigs nas/ gzhi bdag tsho khyed ci 'dod pa yin/ char chod (p.153) char chod gsungs pas/ de ma thag char chad song ngo/ de nas bla ma dBu ma can byon nas/ thog mar 'Phags pa 'Jam dpal gyi/ ngag rens pa'i sbyor ba zhis mdzad nas/ chos kyi dri ba mdzad pas lan ma byung par/ khong na re/ sgro gleng ma byed/ dbyangs gcig len pa yin gsungs skad/ der rje grub chen rin po che pas/ khyed kyi dbyangs nyan du yong ba ma yin pas lan thob/ khyod na re/ rGod tshang pas chos mi shes/ chos lugs nor ba yin zer gyin 'dug skad la/ de'i gtan tshigs gang yin zhes gsungs pas kyang/ lan ma byung/ khong Dus kyi 'khor lo mkhas zer nas/ dpal Dus kyi 'khor lo'i bka' phreng la/ dri ba mdzad pas kyang lan gang yang ma byung gsungs/ khong 'ud dang za zi byed cing/ Bal po'i gleng slong dang/ 'Phags pa Shing kun bcos pa dang/ zhabs tog byas pa la sogs pa'i/ gleng slong byed cing 'dug pa la/ nga ngos kyis dbyangs gcig blang gi gsungs nas/ ngas grangs med bskal par tshogs bsags nas/ mnam dag dal 'byor rin chen thob/ don med las la ma skos bas/ lang ling tsho la yid ma shor/ zhes pa la sogs pa gsungs//"; "At the border of gNya' nam (spelled so), the one named dBu ma pa [used to] defeat [adversaries] in matters concerning the main exoteric and esoteric doctrines, and to subdue noxious ghosts (*'byung po*) by means of the power of Byams pa. He had had seven rebirths [before that one]. At that time (i.e. having taken that re-embodiment) he was dBu ma pa who, owing to his knowledge, was quite arrogant. He had founded a monastery on the border of gNya' nam and, while residing there, he said: "rGod tshang pa did not know religion at all. His religious system being false, he was a deceitful [master]". Having heard that [dBu ma pa] had come out with this statement many times, the *rje grub chen rin po che* (i.e. U rgyan pa) said: "I am going to ask him confirmation that rGod tshang pa's religious system is false". He left accompanied by a few meditators who took care of him. On the way, there was a big rain fall. The *rje grub chen rin po che* gazed in the sky and said: "What do you, *gzhi bdag-s*, wish? Stop the rain! (p.153) Stop the rain!". As soon as he said so, the rain stopped. Before arriving to meet bla ma dBu

portrays the Tshal pa exponent as a petulant and arrogant master with no respect for other masters. U rgyan pa went to meet him at a nearby monastery in the area of gNya' nang, where bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa was residing, in order to seek an explanation from him of his nasty remarks regarding rGod tshang pa.³⁵⁶ Bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa avoided a reply, busy bragging as he was. The account is important because he also boasted of his restoration of 'Phags pa shing kun as a feat he just achieved.

The episode falls in *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* almost immediately after the incident in which U rgyan pa repulsed an invasion of Tibet by the sTod Hor, which ended with the death of the Phag mo gru pa *sgom pa*, rDo rje dpal.

The record of their encounter has a double significance. It confirms, once for all, the identity between bla ma dBu ma pa and jo btsun Sras pa and is useful to place the renovation to a marginally earlier point in time than their meeting. This proves that he substituted the *srog shing* of 'Phags pa Shing kun soon before the 1266 stormy meeting with U rgyan pa. The restoration should, thus, be dated to wood ox 1265 or thereabouts.

The account in the biographies of U rgyan pa is also useful to understand that bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa went to Bal po twice in a short span of time. The first time was when he restored the *srog shing* of 'Phags pa shing kun and met U rgyan pa on the way out. He then

ma, he performed a binding of 'Phags pa 'Jam dpal with an utterance of formulas. [U rgyan pa] reportedly said that an occasion of posing him a question on religion did not arise because he (dBu ma pa) exclaimed: "Do not blow it out of proportion. Accept [, instead, to listen to] one song". At that point, the *rje grub chen rin po che* retorted: "I did not come here to listen to a song of yours. I [want to] make use of this occasion. You reportedly kept repeating that rGod tshang pa did not know religion and his religious system is false. You should confirm whatever is [that you said]". Despite telling [him] so, an occasion did not arise. [U rgyan pa] said that he claimed he was a master of Dus kyi 'khor lo. Having gone on with litany of words on dpal Dus kyi 'khor lo, again an occasion to pose him [his] question did not arise at all. [dBu ma pa] went on with boasting and futile talks. He engaged in a conversation on Bal po and added a conversation on the restoration of 'Phags pa shing kun and the service that he had rendered [to it], to which [U rgyan pa] retorted: "Let's indeed have a song!", but [U rgyan pa] reported that he [went on saying things] such as: "After I had an accumulation of merit for innumerable aeons, I obtained this pure and precious human condition. Given that I do not [want to] be the cause of meaningless *karma*, I stay away from emotional matters [like yours]".

356. The biographies of U rgyan pa describe at some length his interaction with bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa and other events involving the Tshal pa's disciples after dBu ma pa died. Reading through these biographies has possibly led 'Brug ga kun mkhyen Padma dkar po to include dBu ma pa among the disciples of U rgyan pa in his *chos 'byung*.

Padma dkar po chos 'byung (p.449 lines 3-7): "bsNyen sgrub bstsal ba'i slob ma rin po che mKhar chu ba/ Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje/ bla ma dBu ma pa/ mkhas btsun bSod nams 'od zer/ rtogs ldan Zla ba seng ge/ rtogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba/ chos rje Kun dga' don grub/ grub thob Tsha chung ba/ gShong rDo rje rgyal mtshan/ gShong Blo brtan//"; "The disciple who [U rgyan pa] encouraged to meditate were rin po che mKhar chu ba, Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje, bla ma dBu ma pa, mkhas btsun bSod nams 'od zer, rtogs ldan Zla ba seng ge, rtogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba, chos rje Kun dga' don grub, grub thob Tsha chung ba, gShong rDo rje rgyal mtshan and gShong Blo brtan".

turned back towards Bal po and met with his death on his next journey forward to Tibet, at Ra sha ma/Ra sha dba' se/Ra sa na wa se soon after 1266. Hence the detail of a single journey undertaken by bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa in the account of *Deb ther dmar po* should be marginally modified.

The point in time of bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa's death and the slightly earlier restoration of 'Phags pa shing kun fell within the period in the life of Shakya bzang po when he was the Sa skya *dpon chen* from 1244 and before he was appointed dBus gTsang *dpon chen* in 1268. Hence the patronage of the 'Phags pa shing kun restoration was an enterprise supported by Sa skya, an ally of Bal po, rather than a collective endeavour of the people of Central Tibet.

There were nasty developments in the interaction between U rgyan pa and jo btsun Sras pa. After the episode in which U rgyan pa failed to obtain explanations from dBu ma pa for his slander of rGod tshang pa, their relationship turned exceedingly bitter, despite the great *siddha*, who had been to U rgyan, professing the best intentions towards him. dBu ma pa transferred the aversion he nurtured for the teachings of rGod tshang pa, given the differences among schools composing the bKa' brgyud pa, onto the person of U rgyan pa.

U rgyan pa was not intimidated by the threat posed by dBu ma pa's disciple, Phug pa rDor rgyal, who was ready to perform a violent curse (*mthu*) against him. After the death of dBu ma pa, which Phug pa rDor rgyal imputed to U rgyan pa, their relations broke out into open hostility.³⁵⁷ rDor rgyal performed a *mthu* against him. U rgyan pa bluntly attempted to dissuade him but, eventually, accepted the challenge, and the *yi dam* of the two masters, in a dream of U rgyan pa who used to dispose of obstacles in the visions that his sleep sent to him,

357. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.154 line 8-p.155 line 4): "De'i dus su bla ma dBu ma pa'i/ chos skyong gi 'bod byung ba la/ rje grub chen rin po che'i zhal nas/ khong mtshu byed yang 'o skol ni/ khong sku khams bzang ba'i smon lam 'debs pa lags/ zhe snang gis Byams pa gdan thub/ bsrung ba'i 'khor lo Byams pa sgom pa yin gsungs/de nas mNya' nam na phar byon pa'i/ mNya' nam dur khrod kyi thang kar phebs pa'i dus su/ thugs nyams la ma jo zhi na re/ zhing gi pha bong ston na legs zer ba zhi byung/ de tsa na dBu ma pa'i phug pa/ rGyal rdor zhes bya bas/ mi ma yi ngar blangs nas/ tshogs kyi bdag po la sogs pa/ rang re'i 'phrin las sgrub pa rnam phyir gyes nas/ gzhan gyi 'byung pa ma rung pa du ma nang na bzhugs 'dug/ sPyan ras (p.155) gzigs dbang phyug gi/ bsnyen sgrub la 'bad pa byed dgos gsungs/ gzhan yang 'di la ngo mtshar che pa'i lo rgyus du ma zhi snang na/ ha cang yang spros par 'gyur ba'i phyir ma bris so"; "At that time, having invoked the *chos skyong* of bla ma dBu ma pa, the *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "Despite his [habit of] performing *mthu*, we offer prayers for him to be in good health. He should concentrate on compassion rather than hatred. [I] meditate on Byams pa and his cycle of protectors". Then, he proceeded onwards to gNya' nam (spelled so). When he reached the plain ground of the gNya' nam cemetery, while he was concentrating, a nun who was there told him: "It is excellent to show [you] the boulder in the field". [U rgyan pa] said: "Given that dBu ma pa's [disciple], namely Phug pa rGyal rdor, instigated the *mi ma yin*-s against me, I have sent out our own achievers of accomplishments, such as Tshogs kyi bdag po, who have infiltrated in the ranks of the noxious demons of another person. (p.155) There is need to invoke the power of sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug". Moreover, many accounts of these extraordinary deeds being available, I do not wish to write further [about them], for these are extremely complex matters".

transformed into two wild *g.yag*-s fighting. Phug pa rDor rgyal's *g.yag* was killed.³⁵⁸ The episode bears similarities with the legendary duel between Rwa lo tsa ba rDor rje grags and Zangs dkar lo tsa ba 'Phags pa shes rab (see Vitali, "Biography without *rnam thar*: piecing together the life of Zangs dkar lo tsa ba 'Phags pa shes rab", forthcoming), which ended up

358. bSod nams 'od zer, *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.162 line 5-p.163 line 15): "Phug pa rGya rdor zhes bya ba sngags pa nus can zhig na re/ khyed kyis nged kyi bla ma dam pa la mi rigs pa yas pa yin pas/ mthu byed pa yin no zhes lan skur nas byung bas/ rje grub chen rin po che'i zhal nas/ dBu ma pa de ngas bsad pa yin pas/ khyod na nus pa ci 'dug lta'o/ nyung du bcug kyang nga la sgrub pa stong phrag mi 'ong ngam/ 'gran na khyod kyis nga mi thub/ snying rje ba mans na khyod zhag bdun las mi 'gor bar bya ba la tshogs med de/ nga la sems can 'di tsam zhig gi ltos pa btud pas blu ru phangs/ da Phug pa rDor rgyal dbang du sdus par bya'o zhes gsungs pa/ rje grub chen rin po che'i zhal nas/

nga yi zan kham 'di mi yis byin pa ma yin/ lha'dre za ru ma btub/ btub na O rgyan sprul pa'i zhing na/ nyin mo med du yod pa rnams/ mtshan mo byi la dang stag gzic la sogs par 'gyur ba yin/ mig dmar rdzig rdzig (p.163) pa dpag tu med pa yod de/ de rnams kyis kyang bza' ru ma btub pa yin/ khyod kyi chos skyong rnams/ ngas rkang pa sa la brdab pa tsam gyis rlag 'gro/ nga'i gnyid thams cad 'od gsal du yod/ rmi lam du las sbyor thams cad rdzogs 'gro yin gsungs/ yang bzhad nas mad kyang ku re byas pa yin gsungs/ yang nyin zhig gi tshe/ grub chen rin po che'i zhal nas/ 'o skol kyi chos skyong dang mi ma yin lung par mi shong par sa 'ber zhig khros nas song/ Phug pa rDo rgyal la zab dgos pa 'dug/ 'di ru mos gus tshud na cung drag bsrung ba'i 'khor lo bsgom kyin bye thur 'gro/ rmi lam na rDor rgyal gyi *g.yag* cig dang/ 'o skol gyi *g.yag* cig gnyis ka yang/ ri do bo tsam brang dkar po can gnyis 'thab kyin 'dug pas/ rgod *g.yag* tu 'dug go phar khyed byas pas/ 'o skol gyi *g.yag* des/ kho yi *g.yag* de bsad 'dug/ bsad pa de rwa la 'dom gnyis dang sor bzhi 'dug gsungs//"; "The disciple of bla ma dBu ma pa, Phug pa rGya rdor (spelled so for rGyal rdor) who was a powerful *sngags pa*, said in a message sent to him: "You are the one who mistreated my noble *bla ma*. I will perform a *mthu* [against you]". The *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "I will see what power you have, given that [you say] I have killed this dBu ma pa. Is it enough that I have had thousands of meditation [sessions], unless they are too few? If we compete, you will not be able to defeat me. Unless you repent, I will not have difficulty [to dispose of you] in no more than one week. It is a pity that people [like you] who wish to interact with me do not redeem. Now I will make sure that Phug pa rDor rgyal (spelled so) is vanquished". The next day Phug pa rDor rgyal came in his presence, and the *rje grub chen rin po che* said: "This barley nourishment of mine was not given to me by a human being. It was given to me by the *lha 'dre*-s. The *lha 'dre*-s cannot eat myself. Were they able [to do so], in the land of the incarnation from U rgyan, those who are local maidens during the daytime will turn into rats, tigers and leopards during the nighttime. There are innumerable red-eyed fearful [beings there]. (p.163) They too could not eat me. Your protectors will be destroyed as soon as I proceed to stomp my feet on the ground. There is light radiating every time I sleep. I proceed to complete all my destructive actions (*las sbyor*) in my dreams". He spoke laughing and teasing him (*ku re*). Another day the *grub chen rin po che* said: "The ground, where our *chos skyong*-s and *mi ma yin*-s could not be accommodated, slit and they left feeling angry. There is need [to pay] some attention to Phug pa rDo (spelled so) rgyal. It would be slightly better if he could change into having some faith". He proceeded to a sandy eroded hill to meditate on the cycle of protectors. He said: "In a dream, the *g.yag* of rDor rgyal and our *g.yag*, altogether two, both with a white chest that [could carry] the load of a mountain, had a fight. You (i.e. rDor rgyal) incited [your animal] to lock horns (*go phar*) with the wild *g.yag*. Our *g.yag* killed his *g.yag*. The one which was killed had horns two '*dom* and four *sor long*'."

with the death of the master from sTod. The account in *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* does not say what consequences rDor rgyal had to bear following the *g.yag* fight. Hence there are no indications whether U rgyan pa was responsible for the death of bla ma dBu ma pa/jo btsun Sras pa and no evidence is adduced to espouse this turn of events. U rgyan pa professed his innocence. It remains to be seen whether Phug pa rDor rgyal was killed by the *grub chen*.

A bKa' brgyud pa phase at Ta pho documented by physical evidence

The literature does not cope entirely with the extent of the bKa' brgyud pa presence on the “upper side”. A few material signs of physical remains in holy places of mNga' ris stod supplement the historical sources that enumerate the seats and retreats the members of the bKa' brgyud pa, mostly *ri pa-s*, frequented for their practice. It is perhaps due to the religious focus on Gangs Ti se that most of the localities mentioned in the historical material assign them to hermitages and other spots in Pu hrang stod. The members of the bKa' brgyud pa were also settled at other localities in areas different from the higher altitude territory of Pu hrang stod where the holy mountains and lakes are sited. Meditators rather stayed at secluded places than pursuing monastic life.

I concentrate here on the physical evidence coming from a holy site. Its great significance helps to revive an episode of forgotten religious activity, knowing all too well that others—before and after them—are no less important. It is a case of neglected historical evidence I transfer from the periphery of evidence in the source to a more central position.

The glory of Ta pho is celebrated in the well known epigraph inside the *skor khang* around the *gtsang khang* of its *gtsug lag khang*, which fixes lha bla ma Ye shes 'od's creation of the temple to the dragon year 996 and lha bla ma Byang chub 'od's revision to iron snake 1041. After *bstan pa phyi dar* a long silence befell the *dgon pa*, as if activity in its premises was sidelined. A renewal of its fortune occurred with the pioneering efforts of sTod Shes rab bzang po, direct disciple of Tsong kha pa, in La dwags, Nub ra and Pi ti. Ta pho was led to become dGe lugs pa many centuries after the Ye shes 'od phase.

A look at the status of the diffusion of each bKa' brgyud school active in the wider region of Upper and Middle West Tibet—the rTa sga and sTod Tshal pa, 'Bri gung pa, 'Brug pa and marginally the sTag lung pa and Karma pa—becomes, therefore, unavoidable to see whether Pi ti was touched by their members.

▪ The 'Bri gung pa

The history of the 'Bri gung pa, perhaps the main bKa' brgyud school engaged in sTod during the one hundred years 1191-1227/80, is to be subdivided into two phases marked by a distinctive approach to their endeavours in Upper West Tibet. The first went on from 1191 to soon after 1215, the approximate time of the foundation of rGyang grags's by Ghu ya sgang pa who had come to mNga' ris stod in that year. This earlier phase was characterised by the 'Bri gung pa's intense relations with the Pu hrang *jo bo-s*, aimed at establishing these rulers' consent to their *ri pa-s* in the territory of the mountain and the lakes. The second one, owing

to the creation of the *rdor 'dzin* post, led to a larger influx of hermits from 'Bri gung. The restraint of monastic foundation vis-à-vis a proliferation of hermitages inhabited by the meditators was due to Ghu ya sgang pa's rGyang grags, which became the "mother" *dgon pa* of the hermitages which were grouped under this institution.

In 1208—still during the earlier phase of 'Bri gung pa diffusion westwards—the *ri pa-s* sent by sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po were scattered to U rgyan, Dza lan dha ra, Gan dho/dha la, Gangs Ti se, rDo rje gdan, Bal yul, A su ra, La phyi Chu bar and Tsa ri. Their number was limited. The group sent to Gangs Ti se amounted to three hundred *ri pa-s*, the one at Tsa ri to one hundred, that at La phyi Chu bar to one hundred, too (*'Jig rten mgon po rnam thar* p.388 line 2 and p.390 line 6-p.391 line 1). This was a successful episode before the 'Bri gung pa secured to themselves a full-scale diffusion in Pu hrang stod a few years later. The most significant aspect is that the expedition did not set permanent basis for the presence of the 'Bri gung pa at the mountain and the lakes, since at least a good number of the members of these expeditions went back to Central Tibet.

Among the holy places reached by the 1208 expedition, the presence of the 'Bri gung pa at Ri bo Gan dho/dha la has to be highlighted since this holy place was the seat of the sTod 'Brug on the "upper side". No evidence shows that the 'Bri gung pa settled down permanently at Dril bu ri. In any event, this was the closest to Pi ti the 'Bri gung pa have been in their diffusion westwards.

A major event, the outcome of the definitive organisation of hermits in sTod sanctioned by the local rulers and 'Jig rten mgon po, was the Pu hrang jo bo A tig sman's grant of the caves gSer gyi Bya skyibs, the one in upper Dar lung located in the inner *skor lam* of Gangs Ti se, Dam pa rdzong, Lag phreng thod kar, mGon pa Ro ma, 'Um lo shing phug, Ri bo rtse bryad and Li dur to 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (in sTod 1219-1225), the ambassador sent from 'Bri gung. These hermitages covered a wide expanse of land from western Pu hrang stod to sites in the Himalayan range. Among them was Khwa char lha khang, a sign that temples going back to *bstan pa phyi dar* was included in the donations. Nonetheless, Ta pho was not part of the grant.

The 'Bri gung pa were secured a further expansion of holy sites by the Pu hrang kings sTag tsha and A tig to Seng ge ye shes in return of teachings—he gave them the *Byang chub sems dpa' sems bskyed* vow. Seng ge ye shes was awarded Brag la bSam gtan gling, Pu hrang rGod khung dgon and the land of Rong Yang dkar, a granary to provide a living to the Ti se *ri pa-s*. These sacred sites and the fertile land were again not in Pi ti.

At the end of the 'Bri gung pa tenure of mNga' ris stod (1277-1280),³⁵⁹ hence many

359. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.404 lines 1-4) talks about the enmity between Sa skya and 'Bri gung in Central Tibet: "De 'tshams Sa 'Bri 'khrugs pa'i 'go tshugs/ gong du/ khrims kyi brtugs gsher la/ phyogs phyogs nas/ mi drag pa 'gro dgos byung dus/ dpon chen Shakya bzang po dang/ dge bshes Rin chen brtson 'grus/ ri po che sTon tshul gsum mo bla ma dang/ bstan pa/ gdan sa chen po'i physis la bsam ste/ blos blangs nas byon//"; "At that juncture the strife between Sa [skya and] 'Bri [gung] broke out. When the need arose to send to the imperial court the most distinguished people

decades after the donation to 'Bri gung gling pa, Ta pho is again not listed among the 'Brigung pa branch monasteries of rGyang grags that covered a large expanse of lands. A passage in *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.31b line 5-f.32a line 2) enumerates holy places from Pu hrang stod to the east and south, and far away in the Himalayan range—Nyan ri, rDzu 'phrul phug, Ri bo rtse brgyad, Sle mi Til chen, Sle mi Kun 'dzom, Mum ri khrod, Do bo (i.e. Dol po) Shes rdo rje rdzong, Glo Chu mig brgya rtsa, lCags ye Ye shes rdzong, Gro shod rKyang phung, sPrag Li dur, Pu hrang rGod khung, Pu hrang Kho char lha khang, Pu hrang Shang khrang dpe'u, Pu hrang Brag sKa rag and Khu nu bSam gtan chos gling. Absence of Ta pho among this 'Bri gung pa holy places does not restrict the affiliation of the monastery to the sTod Tshal pa or the 'Brug pa. Still Ta pho was not a dependency of rGyang grags several decades after 'Bri gung gling pa was in sTod.

The inclusion of Khu nu bSam gtsan chos gling brought the 'Bri gung pa to the western limit of the Tibetan speaking world. This expansion might have led them to take control of Pi ti, too, but this is not mentioned in the sources.

▪ The sTod Tshal pa

The supposition that, among the Tshal pa on the “upper side”,³⁶⁰ the Pu hrang Tshal pa active in territories closer to Pi ti rather than the rTa sga Tshal pa whose “mother” *dgon pa* and branches were sited east of mNga' ris stod in southern Byang thang, mNga' ris bar and mNga' ris smad, is disproved by textual evidence.

The classification which goes by the name *sTod mTshal btsan po cha drug* (sic for *che drug*) groups together Tshal pa *dgon pa*-s in a non-synchronic manner since they were

from every locality to settle matters by law, dpon chen Shakya bzang po, dge bshes Rin chen brtson 'grus and rin po che sTon tshul, three of them, thinking of the future of the *bla ma*-s, the teachings and the great seat, came to accept [the task]”.

dPal 'byor bzang po, author of the text, shows that trouble between the two schools and their lay dignitaries began sometime before 1275, the year of Shakya bzang po's death, since he was still alive at that juncture. The strife took nasty developments during the years 1281-1289 and culminated in the 'Bri gung *gling log* of 1290 (see my “The year the sky fell: remarks on the *gling log* of iron tiger 1290” in Vitali, *Essays on the history of Tibet*). The takeover of mNga' ris stod by the Sa skya pa occurred years before the long and disastrous strife between the two power houses.

360. The line of *mkhan po*-s of lHa phyug mkhar, the monastery founded by lHa phyug mkhar pa Nyi zla 'od (1145 or 1146-1215), to which all Thal pa from the “upper side” depended is briefly outlined in *Deb ther dmar po* (p.135 lines 7-13). The years of the tenure of the lHa phyug mkhar throne by his successors is known only for the first two. Bla ma sPyan snga ba held the *gdan sa* for seven years (1216-ca.1222) after lHa phyug mkhar pa's passing in 1216, followed by rin po che sTon nam for three years (ca. 1222-1224) and then the abbatial chair remained empty, which occurred in the year of the monkey 1224. These abbots were followed in succession by bla ma Ba lam pa, Sangs rgyas jo sras, Sangs rgyas ston pa, bla ma Za lung pa bSod nam dbang phyug, Za lung pa bla ma mDzos pa bzang po, Ru thog pa Shakya rgyal mtshan, bla ma 'Ju phu ba Shes rab 'phel (*Deb ther dmar po* p.135 lines 7-13). Kun dga' rdo rje does not say whether this lineage covered the period up to the composition of *Deb ther dmar po*. But its record seems to be incomplete, as he states in the next sentence (ibid. p.135 lines 13-14).

founded in different periods. It says that the monasteries of the Tshal pa in sTod were Chos lung and Chos dzom; Yang Brag and bSam gtan rdzong in Bar; Mar lung and rTa sga in sMad (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* f.174a lines 4-5). sTod is the southern Byang thang (Byang) district comprising Gro shod and the Pra dum area; Bar is Glo bo; the easternmost area towards Mang yul Gung thang corresponds to sMad.

However, since Chos lung, donated by a Pu hrang *jo bo*—sTag tsha?—to the second rTa sga *gdan sa*, Dharma bsod nams, presumably sometime after 1200, is associated with the Phyi 'Brog of southern Byang thang and Chos dzom is grouped together with it, these Tshal pa monasteries were those of the rTa sga ba. Both groups, therefore, extended their influence towards Ta pho but nowhere their presence is documented at this monastery.

The Pu hrang Tshal pa were initially restricted to the kingdom ruled by its *jo bo*-s. A candidate for the Tshal pa temple in Pu hrang is Mog rom, founded by Mar lung pa's ancestor Dad pa shes rab during *bstan pa phyi dar*.³⁶¹

Owing to the grants of more than a single Pu hrang *jo bo*, the Pu hrang Tshal pa were settled from the area of the lakes at Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs on the northern shore of Ma pham g.yu mtsho and at Gangs Ti se since they were granted gSang ba mchod phug and mchod rten Khong seng. Under Shes rab 'phel ba, the third Pu hrang Tshal pa *bla mchod*, Zhi sde became Tshal pa, which occurred during the third quarter of the 13th century.

Towards the end of the bKa' brgyud pa's exercise of control over mNga' ris, the sTod Tshal pa mkhan po Sangs rgyas 'od zer stayed at the court of the Pu hrang *jo bo*. Under him a renewal of his branch's control of Gad pa gSer gyi bya skyibs occurred. This holy place was given to him by the rTa sga ba who, in the period intervening after the early Pu hrang Tshal pa until this head of their group, had taken over this holy site from their fellow affiliates in Pu hrang. Did the rTa sga ba in those years concentrated on mNga' ris bar and left sTod to the Pu hrang Tshal pa? Sangs rgyas 'od zer greatly expanded dgon pa Ser spang founded by Bla ri pa under the patronage of the Men Zhang; Chos lung founded by *mkhan po* (the second sTod Tshal pa abbot Dharma bsod nams after the area of Chos lung was given to him by the Pu hrang *jo bo*, perhaps sTag tsha Khri 'bar; sMan khrod and Mar lung (on all this see *Deb ther dmar po* p.148 line 18-p.149 line 1).

Ser spang, Chos lung, sMan khrod and Mar lung were in the '*brog pa* lands of southern Byang thang and thus in the rTa sga sphere of influence. Hence the Pu hrang Tshal pa extended their influence farther way to the east in mNga' ris bar and smad. No literary evidence says that Sangs rgyas 'od zer stretched Tshal pa activity to Pi ti or Ta pho.

361. *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* (f.19b line 5-f.20a line 1): "sPu hrangs su dgon pa Mog rom (f.20a) stab te yang gtsug lag khang dang bcas pa bzhang so??", "[Dad pa shes rab] founded dgon pa Mog rom in sPu hrangs. He established a *gtsug lag khang* [there]".

Mog rom is not identified as a Tshal pa temple in *Mar lung pa'i rnam thar*, but its frequentation by Mar lung pa, his disciples and associates, who were all Tshal pa, makes it a temple of this school. Nothing remains of Mog rom.

Although these takeovers were not concomitant. Mar lung pa Byang chub seng ge held his monastery Mar lung until his death in fire ox 1241 (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* f.356a lines 3-4), which functions as a partial *terminus post quem* for the passage of some Tshal pa monasteries on the “upper side” from one group of the school to the other. Thus, direct control of gSer gyi bya skyibs, Chos lung, sMan khrod was transferred from the Tshal pa rTa sga ba to the Pu hrang Tshal pa in different stages around or after 1241. It is probable that Sang rgyas 'od zer was the head of the Pu hrang Tshal pa during the reign of Grags pa lde, the unifier of Gu ge Pu hrang under his control (see above p.251), given that he sponsored Shes rab 'phel ba, his predecessor as head of the Tshal pa by giving him Zhi sde. If the grant of temples previously under the rTa sga ba to the Pu hrang Tshal pa depended on the expansion of Gu ge Grags pa lde's domains to Pu hrang, these monasteries were taken over by the Tshal pa of Gu ge Pu hrang after 1265. This is when Gu ge Grags pa lde became the ruler of unified Gu ge Pu hrang.

Hence during the later 13th century but before 1277-1280, when the bKa' brgyud pa lost control of mNga' ris to the Sa skya pa and their feudatories, rather than a sTod Thal pa expansion to the west, there was a contraction of the rTa sga ba in the east and a diminution of their importance.

▪ The 'Brug pa

If credit is given to Zhi byed ras pa's *Mi la ras pa's rnam thar* for talking about the presence of the great poet-yogin at Ri bo Gan dho/dha la, this sacred site would have existed already in the time of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud and frequented as early as him.

The meeting between rgyal ba rGod tshang pa (1189-1258) and the master 'Gar lo tsa ba at an unidentified locality but most likely Dril bu ri proves that this holy place in Gar sha was operated by bKa' brgyud members before the earliest major protagonist in mNga' ris stood from the ranks of the sTod 'Brug reached Gangs Ti se and then Gan dho/dha la.³⁶²

'Gar lo tsa ba warned him, mentioning the risks he could have incurred on the way—bandits and scarcity of food (see above p.106)—but these threats did not prevent rGod tshang pa from his proposed travel.

The account of the itinerary that rGod tshang pa followed in order to reach Chamba—from Gangs Ti se, across Gu ge, Rong chung, Shi pe la, Pi ti (Ta pho?), Gar sha, all the way to Cha be (Chamba)—has an incongruence in the narrative found in all the sources dealing

362. rGod tshang pa arrived at Ti se in wood dog 1214 (*Deb ther sngon po* p.803 lines 2-5), and stayed at Ti se until fire rat 1216. He was at mchod rten Khong seng in the summer of 1214 and spent the winter of 1214-1215 at Ma pham. He was at Ma pham for the summer of 1215. During that time he met Seng ge ye shes. The episode of sTag tsha Khri 'bar's rebuke to the 'Bri gung pa, who had sent away members of the 'Brug pa school, follows in autumn 1215 (*rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar* p.66 lines 6-19), leading to the consequence that rGod tshang pa could stay at gSer gyi bya skyibs. In the late part of the winter which corresponds to the beginning of 1216, his companion Dam pa gTsang went for a circumambulation of Ti se. rGod tshang pa spent the summer of 1216 at Gangs Ti se and thought of going to Chamba in the autumn of 1216, which he did.

with his journey once it is confronted with the geography of the territories to be crossed (see Strachey, "The Physical Geography of Western Tibet"). When he met 'Gar lo tsa ba either in Dril puri or elsewhere soon after it—but most likely at Ri bo Gan dho/dha la— after living contiguous Gu ge Rong chug he must have left the Shi pe/Shi skyid la behind him for a long tract of road. Hence the correct reading of the risk he run if meeting the Shi skyid la bandits is that they were deployed anywhere on the route—Shi skyid ("happy to die" or "happy death") being a suggestive spelling of the pass name when referred to the bandits' treatment of their victims.

The point 'Gar lo tsa ba communicated to rGod tshang pa was that he risked to meet the Shi skyid bandits anywhere on the way given the extent of their activity was wider, hence farther away from the pass. They stretched their menace to the lands of Gar sha and Cham be. He may have passed through Pi ti but the brevity of his journey is not indicative of a sTod 'Brug takeover of Ta pho.

The 'Brug pa are said to have controlled major holy places at Gangs Ti se—gSer gyi bya skyibs, Nyan po ri and Dar lung, which means that they shared some of them with other bKa' brgyud pa schools' members (see Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdo rje, *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma* p.66 lines 6-19). This enumeration goes against the statements in other sources that the 'Brug pa had difficulties to stay in several holy places around the mountains given 'Bri gung pa disliking for any other bKa' brgyud pa to reside at the sites where they were settled. sTag tsha Khi 'bar would have reestablished their unbiased frequentation,³⁶³ so that *ri pa*-s from different schools overlapped at the same holy place, wherever multiple caves, like at gSer gyi bya skyibs, existed at these sites.

363. The 'Bri gung pa dislike of other bKa' brgyud pa presence at the holy places in the Gangs Ti se Ma pham area is also revealed by a speech of sTag tsha in favour of the 'Brug pa. Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdo rje, (*rGod tshang pa rnam thar* p.66 lines 6-19) says: "De'i dus su bla chen sTag tsha khong rang gi sku mkhar gyi rtsa na sgrub gnas khyad par can zhig 'dug/... bla chen gyis Dam pa Mang zhig bya ba la bka' bsgo mdzad de/ dPal Phag mo gru pa'i sras rnam kyis nang nas mchog tu gyur pa/ shar chu bo Gang ga tshun chad na rtogs pa tho bar grags pa'i rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug grub thob chen po Gling ras pa'i slob ma chos rje gTsang pa rGya ras bya ba'i rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug gi yod/ de'i slob ma 'di rnam snyom chung jo bo bzang ba/ chos rang shes dag byed cing nga'i ri khrod na sgom zhing yang 'dug pa la/ khyed 'Bri khung ba chos bton yong bar 'dug pas/ ci la 'don/ sa cha ni nga'i sa cha yin/ ri ni nga'i ri yin//", "At that time at the foot of the residence of bla chen sTag tsha there was an important meditation place... [Here] the *bla chen* (i.e. sTag tsha) told Dam pa Mang zhig: "Among the disciples of dPal Phag mo gru pa the most excellent was the lord of the *yogin*-s grub thob chen po Gling ras pa (1128-1188), whose fame of supreme spiritual attainments reached as far as the eastern side of River Gang ga. His disciple chos rje gTsang pa rGya ras (1161-1211) was a lord of the *yogin*-s. His disciples are humble and noble. They expand their own knowledge of religion and meditate in hermitages. Since you, 'Bri khung ba, went to send them away, why did you do that? This land is my land, this mountain (i.e. Gangs Ti se) is my mountain").

Unless this speech was a pious 'Brug pa apology, one should conclude that the 'Bri gung pa tried to supersede that of the local king. These facts occurred earlier than the summer of 1216. Subsequently, rGod tshang pa was allowed to stay at Nyan po ri rdzong and his companion Dam pa gTsang at Dar lung.

The next great sTod 'Brug, rGod tshang pa's disciple U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal, did not touch Pi ti and was not a potential holder of Ta pho. He did not turn it into 'Brug pa.³⁶⁴

▪ The sTag lung pa

Similar in the approach of the other bKa' brgyud main schools, the sTag lung pa disciples of sTag lung thang pa bKra shis dpal (1142-1210) were dispersed by him in strategical regions of the highlands and beyond (*sTag lung chos 'byung* p.243 line 14-p.244 line 11).

Like Karma Pakshi's disciples (see immediately below p.255-256), a vague approximation of the framework to their transfers to distant lands and regions of the plateau is that they took place in the same period when the 'Bri gung pa sent by 'Jig rte mgon po, the Tshal pa and 'Brug pa went to populate the mountains of Pu hrang stod and nearby sites. Apart from holy places in dBus gTsang, the main locality outside Tibet where sTag lung thang pa wanted them to be was rDo rje gdan, the focal point in the view of all Buddhists. Others were Sing gha (spelled so) la'i gling (Shri Langka), Bal yul and A su ra'i brag phug (caves by this name are found in the Western Himalaya, at Pham mthing in Bal po and in 'Bras mo ljongs). Those in the west were Dza lan dha ra and U rgyan.

These sTag lung pa groups active during an early phase of bKa' brgyud pa history beyond the borders of the plateau in the west were small monastic communities rather than hermits, as in the case of the other schools. To establish themselves in Dza lan dha ra, the sTag lung pa monks must have traversed the regions of Upper West Tibet following the course of the Glang chen kha babs until the river comes out of the Himalayan hills and onto the Indian plain. Perhaps they visited Pi ti and Ta pho but once again no trace is kept that they left a mark on this region and monastery.

▪ The Karma pa

Besides the prophecies of Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193) about the past and future lives of several of his disciples and acquaintances who were told that they would be reborn in the western direction, those of Karma Pakshi (1204, 1206 or 1210-1283) are documented to have been active in mNga' ris stod and beyond the limits of the Tibetan world.

364. U rgyan pa left for the west in water rat 1252, when he was twenty-three, after his father Jo 'phan's death (*U rgyan pa rnam thar rgyas pa* p.18 line 2). On the way, he halted in Dol po via Pu hrang gDong dmar before reaching Gangs Ti se. Zla ba seng ge (*U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.40 line 4) says: "De nas Dol po nas lam thon te/ chu bo bzhi 'dus kyi mgo bo 'jig rten na Gangs Ti se zhes grags pa der byon/"; "Then, from Dol po, he took the road and went to Gangs Ti se, which is the physical head of the junction of the four rivers". Hence, he did not arrive at Gangs Ti se before water ox 1253. He stayed at Ma pham g.yu mtsho and then went to Ru thog for a short visit (*ibid.* p.42 lines 4-5). After another sojourn at Pu hrang gDong dmar, he spent the winter of 1253-1254 at Ru thog (*ibid.* p.43 line 2). He then proceeded to Ma ru (the Triloknath area) and Ku lu ta after the winter of 1254 (*ibid.* p.43 lines 4-5) on the way to his final destination U rgyan.

The approximate lapse of time, during which they went westwards, cannot once again be ascertained, for it is improbable that they were active in regions far away from one another concomitantly. A simplistic consideration is that their presence on the "upper side" occurred one generation after the first big wave of hermits sent to the west by the 'Bri gung pa, Tshal pa and 'Brug pa given Karma Pakshi's dates.

The Karma pa on the "upper side" are classified into two main groups. The distinction of one group was the colour of the hat they wore (Zhwa gser ba, Zhwa dmar ba and sometimes Zhwa khra ba instead of Zhwa dkar ba); the other one by their anthropomorphic hat, those of a tiger, leopard, bear and *g.yag* (sTag mgo pa, gZig mgo pa and Dom mgo pa sometimes instead of g.Yag mgo ba, as well as g.Yag ru ras pa).³⁶⁵

They mingled, for Zhwa dmar Thugs rje nyi ma, Zhwa gser ba Thugs rje rgyal mtshan and rTogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba brought the practice of the six-lettered mantra, of which Karma

365. *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.279 lines 11-12) mentions some disciples of rin po che Karma pa who were active in sTod, Southern Turkestan and Kha che: "Rin po che pa Karma pa'i bu slob ni/ Zhwa can gsum/ mGo can gsum...", "The disciples of rin po che Karma pa are as follows: the three Zhwa can ("wearing a hat"), the three mGo can ("wearing a head")..."

IHo rong chos 'byung (p.279 line 20-p 280 line 8) adds: "Zhwa dkar Thugs rje Ye shes la ri bo Gan dha'i gnas yig dang/ gnas de grub pa po rnam kyis (p.280) nyams len dang spyod lam gyi yig chung/ lung bstan gnang ba ltar Zhang chung dang Kha che'i yul brgyud nas slar ri bo Gan dha ru'i gnas sgo phyas/ da lta'i bar du ri pa dang dgon pa yod par grags so/ Zhwa dmar Thugs rje nyi ma/ Zhwa ser Thugs rje rgyal mtshan/ rTogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba rnam kyis sPu rang dang/ Gu ge/ sTod Hor gyi yul du gsung yi ge drug pa'i bstan pa sgrog pa dang/ Thugs rje chen po'i nyi ma 'char bar byas so/ rTogs ldan sTag mgo ba dang gZig mgo ba/ mNga' ris nas rGya gar gnas rnam la gshegs so/"; "Zhwa dkar Thugs rje ye shes came into possession of the ri bo Gan dha [la] *gnas yig* ("guide") and a brief text describing its meditators' experiences and techniques to practise. According to the prophecy he received, by way of the lands Zhang chung and Kha che, he opened again the "door" of the holy places in Gan dha [la]. It is well known that *ri pa*-s and monasteries are existing [at Gan dha la] to this day. Zhwa dmar Thugs rje nyi ma, Zhwa ser Thugs rje rgyal mtshan and rTogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba preached the teachings of the "six-lettered *mantra*" in sPu rang, Gu ge and the land of the sTod Hor. They made the sun of *Thugs rje chen po* rise. rTogs ldan sTag mgo ba and gZig mgo ba went from mNga' ris to the holy places of India".

Also see Si tu pan chen Chos kyis 'byung gnas's *Karma Kam tshang rnam thar* (vol.1 p.159 line 3): "Grub thob chen po Karma pa'i sku dngos kyis gdul byar gyur ba'i slob ma tshogs bsam gyis mi khyab kyang rags par rnam thar rnam su skod pa ni/ rTogs ldan Zhwa dkar ba/ Zhwa ser ba/ Zhwa dmar ba ste Zhwa can gsum/ rTogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba/ sTag mgo ba gZig mgo ba ste mGo can gsum/"; "The disciples of Grub thob chen po Karma pa, who turned out to be his followers were inconceivably [many] groups. They are dealt with in their biographies. [The main ones] were Togs ldan Zhwa dkar ba, Zhwa ser ba and Zhwa dmar ba the three Zhwa can ("holders of the Hat"); rTogs ldan g.Yag mgo ba, sTag mgo ba and gZig mgo ba, the three mGo can ("those with an [animal] head")".

Among the followers of Karma Pakshi (1204-1283) one finds a slightly modified version of the same group. These were Zhwa gser ba, Zhwa dmar ba and Zhwa khra ba (instead of Zhwa dkar ba) and again sTag mgo pa, gZig mgo pa and Dom mgo pa (instead of g.Yag mgo ba) as well as g.Yag ru ras pa ('Gos lo tsa ba, *Deb ther sngon po* p.613 lines 4-9).

Pakshi was a master, to Gu ge Pu hrang and farther away to the land of the sTod Hor who I think they were no more the Ilkhanid but the Chagatai, and the Kashmir Valley, traditionally a great centre of Buddhism.

rTogs ldan sTag mgo ba and gZig mgo ba moved from mNga' ris, being a vague connotation since the way the region is mentioned does not clarify how far west they travelled to cross to the holy places of India.

More significant for the subject of Pi ti and Ta pho is that Zhwa dkar Thugs rje ye shes came into possession of a Ri bo Gan dho/dha [la] *gnas yig* ("guide") and a brief text describing its meditators' spiritual realisations and practising techniques. He received a prophecy whereby, via Zhang zhung and after a detour to Kha che, he reached Gan dho/dha la and opened the door of the holy places once again. This does not imply that Zhwa dkar ba converted Dril bu ri to the Karma pa school. Historiography proves that it remained the 'Brug pa stronghold in the west but that he proceeded to a reconnaissance of the holy spots in its territory following the description of the *gnas yig*, whose religious paternity is undisclosed. Once more, no Karma pa is documented to have been active at Ta pho.

Besides the events and the personalities involved in them, the presence of the Karma pa in sTod refers to those years and not much else is found in the sources. The work of these Karma pa masters did not have a follow-up in the next decades.

▪ The bKa' brgyud pa control of Ta pho: physical traces

In a scenario in sTod dominated by the bKa' brgyud pa during the period, the literature is inconclusive concerning the identity of the school which held Ta pho. The available sources do not spend a word on the matter. Ta pho and Pi ti in general are sidelined in the accounts of the one century bKa' brgyud pa diffusion in sTod. The look I gave in the available literary material confirms this state of affairs.

A feeble suggestion is that dgon pa Mang Rum, where yongs kyi mkhan po rin po che sTag sgo ba was a resident lineage holder of the local *Vinaya* tradition, was an institution associated with the Mang dber/wer clan of ancient Zhang zhung pa origin, inhabitants of the land of Rum yul where Ta pho was built (see n.389). But this hypothesis is no less inconclusive to identify the bKa' brgyud pa school which controlled Ta pho. It does not refer to the *dgon pa* founded by lha bla ma Ye shes 'od but to another monastery and the best notional approximation concerns the land where the *bstan pa phyi dar* monastic institution was built.

Hence no historical material covers the long period at Ta pho from its *bstan pa phyi dar* foundation by lha bla ma Ye shes 'od in the year of the dragon 996 followed by its revision by lha bla ma Byang chub 'od in iron snake 1041 to the dGe lugs pa takeover, as if the *dgon pa* went through a prolonged time of abandon. No space is given to Ta pho by the bKa' brgyud pa documents that write about the vibrant span of time that saw members of its schools, active in Upper West Tibet for a protracted period that covered the end of the 12th century to the 1270s.

Even the dGe lugs pa literature—mKhar nag lo tsa ba dPal 'byor bzang po's *dGa' ldan chos 'byung* (f.86b lines 2-3) and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's *Baidu rya gser po* (p.376 lines

18-19)—which, in some cases, documents phases at temples and monasteries prior to those of their takeover, does not say a word on the many centuries that divided the two periods. A historical survey is inconclusive. Hence one must rely on physical evidence.

Before the celebration of Ta pho 1,000 years, murals were visible inside the *bum pa-s* of two Ta po *mchod rten-s* in the northeast of Ye shes 'od's *gtsug lag khang*. Both *mchod rten-s* and murals were in advanced state of decay (see p.345). Years later—I think this happened sometime before holding the celebration of Ta po 1,000 years—the openings of the *bum pa-s* were walled and the *mchod rten-s*'s exteriors replastered. The outcome is that the evidence provided by the murals has been obliterated and the *mchod rten-s* are no more evidence of a religious phase not recorded in the literature.

The murals I could document are too spoiled to be attractive to art historians but their rendition is significant for an attempt to detect the period of their execution. One clue to attribute 13th century Ta pho to the bKa' brgyud pa is the adoption of the style typical of the school which has counterparts in a number of monasteries and temples in mNga' ris stod. I think of Tho ling and Khwa char, where traces are still found despite the wanton Chinese destruction of their temples and others in Gu ge Pu hrang, or A lci and Kan ji in La dwags just to mention some.

The attribution of the murals to the bKa' brgyud pa is reinforced by the presence of several *ras pa-s* wearing the typical white cotton robes on the walls of the second *mchod rten*. Nonetheless, to ascertain which bKa' brgyud pa school took control of Ta pho at an unspecifiable time between the late 12th century and the 1270s is a task that has no solution unless some source on the matter resurfaces.

It is equally unclear which one of the bKa' brgyud pa schools held Ta pho. The 'Bri gung pa are candidates given their widespread diffusion in the regions of mNga' ris stod which extended from Pu hrang (both sTod sMad) to Mar yul and Gu ge as well as the Himalayan range. Equally possible is that Ta pho was ruled by the sTod Tshal pa, strong in Pu hrang and then in Gu ge but also present significantly in mNga' ris bar and smad. The 'Brug pa, too, might have been the masters of 13th century Ta pho, owing to their presence in Pu hrang and at Dril bu ri in Gar sha.

The outcome of the points made in these lines is not a definitive assessment of the circumstances that involved Ta pho in the 13th century but highlight physical evidence that one intermediate phase should be recognised between the two foundations—one by Ye shes 'od and Byang chub 'od, the other by sTod Shes rab bzang po who brought there the teachings of Tsong kha pa, a turn of events that still exists nowadays.

The long gap between these two phases is filled by the evidence provided by the two *mchosd rten-s* which still contain lonely signs, although nowadays inaccessible, of a phase that has escaped a record in the literary material available at present.

Other religious institutions founded during the 'Bri gung pa period

Besides 'Bri gung gling pa's achievements at Bla ma .yu ru and the area of A lci with the support of dNgos grub mgon in a combined effort to accomplish both their renovation or

construction, a small network of temples and monasteries of the school came into existence. They were grouped together in a compact territorial expanse of La dwags gsham and the area towards the Zangs dkar range. They were *bstan pa phyi dar* temples taken over by school of sKyo pa 'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po, others were built anew. The 'Bri gung pa built Kan ji and A lci lHa khang so ma. They took over the *bstan pa phyi dar* temples at Ling shed through their refurbishing.

▪ Kan ji lha khang

The unassuming temple at Kan ji,³⁶⁶ a single holy room of rather reduced dimensions and simple rectangular plan, is called Lo tsa ba'i lha khang by the people of the local village. They assign, therefore, the first phase at the temple to Rin chen bzang po (958-1055),³⁶⁷ an almost inevitable attribution since, practically, all the temples of some antiquity in Upper West Tibet are popularly ascribed to him. Still, the temple does not betray any meaningful sign of religious artefacts dating back to *bstan pa phyi dar*, although these may have been obliterated during a subsequent renovation.³⁶⁸ Nor the temple has structural features that are

366. Kan ji is the spelling which bids fair, in my opinion, to be the closest to the original. rKan gzhi is the earliest spelling known to me (A lci gSum brtsegs inscription on the second floor, and Addendum Two). Other spellings are known, among them rKan bzhi and the Tibetanised version Gangs bzhi, which both describe the four mountains surrounding the temple and the village at the four corners (see dKon mchog bkra shis, "rKan bzhi" in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan ed., *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.681 lines 8-10).

367. dKon mchog bkra shis, "rKan bzhi" (in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan ed., *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.681 lines 10-14): "sNgon lo tsā ba Ri chen bzang pos La dwags yongs la lha khang brgya dang brgyad bzhengs dus 'dir yang lha khang gsum bzhengs par mdzad cing/ de gsum gyi nang nas gcig sKya pa zhes pa'i grong pa la lo tsās bdag nyar byed dgos pa'i bka' ji ltar stsal ba ltar des kyang rang gi mchod khang gi tshul du bdag nyar byas rkyen da bar zhig ral ma gyur bar sngar mus su mjal rgyu yod/"; "In antiquity, lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po came to La dwags. In the course of building 108 *lha khang*, here [in Kan ji] he founded three *lha khang*. Among the three, given that one was known as sKya pa (the "[lha khang] of the lay people"), the *lo tsa* ordered the villagers to take care of its management. Likewise, they provided to it as their *mchod khang*. This arrangement was not abandoned until the present day, and [the temple] can be seen [in the same conditions] as in antiquity".

An intriguing aspect of this lore that does not match the evidence provided by the temple is that not one but three *lha khang* are attributed to Lo chen at Kan ji. The reason for the survival of the 'Bri gung pa temple is that the villagers too care of it, which implies that the other two were looked after by monks but they did not last.

368. Roof beams in the shape of lions are a lonely sign that the temple may have been built during the period in which Rin chen bzang po was active since they are a functional and stylistic element found in various *lha khang*-s of the 11th century. They can be found back to Kashmiri prototypes but are a feeble trace that does not warrant a chronological attribution.

Other temples in Pu rig and bordering La dwags gsham composed of a single isolated room (possibly early examples of the genre) are in dilapidated conditions. Those which come to mind among others are the one at Bla ma g.yu ru, whose name has not been preserved, and the ruined

characteristic of buildings made during the Later Diffusion of Buddhism, as Wan la gSum brtsegs shows. Or else it does not open to the east, as *bstan pa phyi dar* temples normally do.

The *lha khang* bears stylistic features popular in mNga' ris stod and dBus gTsang during the 13th century, when the bKa' brgyud pa were thriving and had a strong presence in La dwags. Like the more famous Bla ma g.yu ru in La dwags gsham and Wan la gSum brtsegs located not far from this diminutive temple, Kan ji lha khang benefited from the religious awakening brought by the 'Bri gung pa.

The religious cycles inside Kan ji lha khang and its location within a land controlled by the 'Bri gung pa during the 13th century makes it, in the shape that it has come to us, a 'Bri gung pa enterprise.

Nonetheless, there is no trace of an involvement in its foundation or takeover by 'Jig rten mgon po's nephew 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas who spearheaded the 'Bri gung pa activities in La dwags gsham. There is no literary reference to the participation of 'Bri gung gling pa in Kan ji lha khang, unlike Bla ma g.yu ru. Nor is there a surviving epigraphical reference to him, like in Tsa tsa pu ri lha khang near A lci *chos 'khor*, where the name 'Bri gung gling pa survives in a badly damaged inscription.

An exception, a rare literary reference to Kan ji and its existence in the 'Bri gung pa period in Upper West Tibet, is found in the long inscription on the right wall of the temple, somewhat similar to the epigraph on the ground floor of Wan la gSum brtsegs. This much-decayed epigraph in *dbu med* makes any attempt at reading it a bold exercise. Entire portions are missing and lacunae are found in crucial places, which obliterate personal names. But some consideration about its contents can be attempted with the necessary prudence.

The text of the inscription is divided into various sections and opens with a description of the land of Kan ji in mythical yet realistic terms. It continues by mentioning the religious kings of the Yar lung dynasty and then Nyi ma mgon, the founder of the mNga' ris skor gsum kingdom, together with his successors, in keeping with the literary tradition that the rulers of mNga' ris skor gsum descended from those of Yar lung. It contains an interesting reference to the warfare between Nyi ma mgon and the rGya pa jo of the La dwags pa dynasty of Indo-Iranic stock, who ruled this land before his conquest.

It then relates activities for the spread of Buddhism carried out by the builder of Kan ji lha khang, adding a description of the shape of the temple that has survived until now, and of his clan, but their names are sadly defaced and thus unreadable, a fact which does not help to assess the temple historically.

A short reference to the religious cycles housed in Kan ji lha khang follows, identifying sPyan ras gzigs, sGrol ma and sMan bla as the three statues of the *lha khang* and stating that a few *mandala*-s and the twelve deeds of the Buddha were painted on its walls. These statues

structure at Cig tan, whose murals were still faintly visible in the days when Francke visited it. They have disappeared in the meantime.

are coarser than the murals, which is not uncommon in Upper West Tibet.³⁶⁹ Cold coating has contributed to stiffen them.

▪ Ling shed

Despite its remoteness, Ling shed is a site of remarkable antiquity, which went through several religious and edification phases in the course of the centuries.

The inception of a renewed occupation of the area that took place during the 13th century occurred when an ascetic by the intriguing name Nag pa dzo gi meditated at a cave at dKar rtse, west of the Ling shed area.³⁷⁰ Its location falls on a hill opposite of where the local monastery stands with the village standing on both slopes that borders on Zangs dkar to the southwest and the area of the Sing ge la in the northeast. Nag pa dzo gi gathered a few monks there. The presence of this monastic community led to the foundation of Bi gang I khung dgon pa, a designation that sounds like a corruption of a monastery belonging to the 'Bri gung pa.

Hence, members of this bKa' brgyud pa school took over Ling shed, as shown by murals in lHa khang 'od 'bar inside the present-day *dgon pa* by the same name. Although in extremely bad shape, they document that, in the first half of the 13th century or at the latest the beginning of its third quarter, Ling shed belonged to the school's circuit formed by Bla ma g.yu ru, Kan ji, Wan la and A lci. They share similar distinctive features with the wall paintings at those holy places.

Apparently, lHa khang 'od 'bar does not have any sign of remote antiquity. Owing to the structural revision that it underwent at an unspecified time in its existence—the construction of a wall in front of the area where murals going back to the 13th century are still extant—the traces of lHa khang bKra shis 'od 'bar being 'Bri gung pa are hidden nowadays. It is unclear when this added wall was built. The wall has undergone a recent restoration, so that one wonders when the small opening which allows a view of the ancient wall paintings in bad conditions—a sort of irregular and untraditional *zhal ras khang*—was made.³⁷¹

369. During the period of the second diffusion of Buddhism in the Western Himalaya, several clay images, made in the style of Kashmir which found popularity and local adaptation in Upper West Tibet, betray some degree of provincialism. This is the case with statues at Na ko (Tibetan spelling uncertain) in sPi ti, some statues at Ro pag in Khu nu and even on the shrine in the style of Kashmir inside Seng ge sgang at Bla ma g.yu ru.

370. 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan, Ling shed (*dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.824 lines 1-4): “Phal cher brya phrag bcu gsum tsam gyi nang Nag pa dzo gi zhes pa'i bya bral zhig yul 'di'i nub phyogs su yod pa'i dKar rtse yul mjug gi brag phug zhig gi nang du sku mtshams su bzhugs/ khong dang myam du gzhan grwa pa kha shas kyang der bzhugs/ de'i ming la Bi gang I khung dgon pa zhes btags/”; “Approximately in the course of the 13th century, an ascetic, namely Nag pa dzo gi, settled to meditate at a cave at the extreme limit of dKar rtse, sited to the west of this locality (i.e. Ling shed). Together with him, a few monks settled there. The name given [to the foundation that ensued] was Bi gang I khung dgon pa”.

371. An added wall that hid texts and statues has been detected at Khwa char dgon. The purpose of this wall was to protect them from looting. The purpose of the added wall at Ling shed is less

Inscriptions in lHa khang bKra shis 'od 'bar which accompany the paintings on the walls are religious in contents. They, therefore, date from the 'Bri gung pa period but do not add anything to the historicity of the monastery.

The antiquity of Ling shed goes back to *bstan pa phyi dar*. Rin chen bzang po is credited with the construction of gSo sbyong khang, a temple where he used to restore monastic vows on full moon day,³⁷² after he made, according to the untenable tradition I have discussed at some length in the previous pages, the statue of bCu gcig zhal at Wan la gSum brtsegs, erected instead during the 'Bri gung pa period in La dwags gsham.

Rin chen bzang po's gSo sbyong khang (the "temple of the restoration of the vows") has an esoteric dimension which may have been present at *bstan pa phyi dar* time. The *lha khang* is reachable through steep stairs made of dark and heavy stones, unusual in Tibetan culture.

clear, for the space which it protects is empty except the murals, so that one cannot say whether it was meant to save important relics from the ravage of iconoclasm.

372. 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan, "Ling shed" (*dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.825 lines 5-9): "sNgon du lo chen Rin chen bzang pos 1040 Wam mda' ru Thugs rje chen po bCu gcig zhal gyi sku bzhengs te Ling shed la phebs/ da lta dgon pa yod pa'i gnas der gso sbyong khang zhes pa'i 'du khang zhig bzhengs par mdzad/ der yar ngo dang mar ngo'i bco lnga rim bzhin dge 'dun rnam tshogs gso sbyong mdzad srol yod/"; "Earlier lo chen Rin chen bzang po in 1040 made the statue of Thugs rje chen po bCu gcig zhal at Wam mda' and went to Ling shed. At the place where the *dgon pa* stands now he accomplished to build a 'du khang called gSo sbyong khang. Here on the fifteenth of the waxing and the waning moon he restored the vow of groups of monks".

After stating that Rin chen bzang po made the statue of bCu gcig zhal at Wan la in 1040 (both claims valid at face value), Tshe ring bkra shis, "Wa mda'" (in 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (ed.), *dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang (The History of the Ladakh Monasteries)* p.825 lines 6-15) adds: "Ling shed la phebs/ da lta dgon pa yod pa'i gnas der gso sbyong khang zhes pa'i 'du khang zhig bzhengs par mdzad/ der yar ngo dang mar ngo'i bco lnga rim bzhin dge 'dun rnam tshogs gso sbyong mdzad srol yod pa 'dra/ Ling shed dang mi ring ba zhig na Yul chung zhes pa'i yul zhig yod la/ der yang lo tsa bas dgon chung zhig dang/ de'i nang du 'Bum po ti bcu gnyis cha tshang bka' bstan mang po zhig 'bri bar mdzad/ [note: Lo chen gyis 'Bum 'bri ched shog bu mi ma yin kun la bzo ru bcug/ yi ge rnam khong rang gis 'bri bar mdzad/ brGyad stong pa dang/ gzhan bod gnyis gser la bris yod/ 'di rnam Lo chen gyi phyag bzo 'jig rten la doms su chog pa yin] de rnam da lta'ang nyams med mjal rgyu yod/ ma tshad khong rang gis ljags rtsom gnang ba'i che brjod ldebs su bris yod/"; "[Lo chen Rin chen bzang po] went to Ling shed. At the place where the present-day monastery is located he built a 'du khang, called gSo sbyong khang. Here on the fifteenth day between the waxing and waning moon there likewise is the custom to renew the vows of the monks, [gathered] in assembly, step by step. There is one locality not far from Ling shed, called Yul chung. Here, too, the *lo tsa ba* built a small monastery and, within it, had a 'Bum, complete in twelve volumes, produced and had many oral teachings put into written form (*bka'*). Scriptures (*bstan*) were given edition [note: in order to have the 'Bum written down, Lo chen gave paper to all the *mi ma yin* to do the work on it. They wrote the words down. There are a *brGyad stong pa* and two other volumes written in gold, which Lo chen personally produced. [They are so beautiful that they] satisfy [anyone in the phenomenal world]. It can still be seen at present that they have not suffered decay. Moreover, there is an epigraph on the wall with a eulogy praising their maker".

They lead to a dark, secretive area, the gSo sbyong khang, whose walls are made of the same stones. They are nowadays still covered with murals in no better state of preservation than those in lHa khang 'od 'bar. The room does not provide evidence that the *bstan pa phyi dar* temple was taken over and completely renovated by the bKa' brgyud school in the 13th century, but this is a thesis that should not be neglected. Later murals in the style popular in La dwags and in Upper West Tibet at large have taken the place of the earlier ones on the walls. The choice to renew the temple attributed to Rin chen bzang po may have depended on practical reasons but the absence of a *dkar chag* to the monastery does not allow to ascertain the developments that took place.

The addition of lHa khang 'od 'bar to gSo sbyong khang does not deviate from the extant evidence at A lci and elsewhere, localities where 'Bri gung pa temples were added to preexisting *bstan pa phyi dar* holy buildings.

Still during Later Diffusion of Buddhism and probably after the Tho ling council of 1076-1078 (mNga' ris rgyal rabs p.67 lines 8-12, see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.319-322) in which he participated, Zangs dkar lo tsa ba went to Ling shed and built a *dgon pa* that is no more extant.³⁷³

Among the early 'Bri gung pa temples in La dwags, Ling shed has the unique distinction of three phases that took place in its premises—A lci counts two. After having witnessed the presence of masters during *bstan pa phyi dar* and the 'Bri gung pa period, it was converted to the dGe lugs pa by sTod Shes rab bzang po, the great disciples of Tsong kha pa from La dwags, responsible for a pioneering activity in favour of his teacher's school in Mar yul stod, Nub ra and Pi ti. The other 13th century 'Bri gung pa temples in La dwags—Bla ma g.yu ru, Kan ji, Wan la—were not converted into dGe lugs pa perhaps because they were in La dwags gSham, the region not touched by him. All of them continued to belong to the 'Bri gung pa school and, therefore did not receive the religious impulse that was brought by sTod Sher bzang in Ling shed.

- A lci lha khang So ma has murals painted in the style popular with the bKa' bryud in mNaga' ris.

373. 'Jam byangs rgyal mtshan, "Ling shed" (*dGon rabs kun gsal nyi snang* p.825 line 16-p.826 line 2): "Phyis Zangs dkar lo tsa ba 'Phags pa shes rab Ling shed du phebs/ de dus Ling shed du ma slebs gong na Phag lta zer ba'i ri rdob gcig yod pa de'i steng nas lo tsas gzigs pa dang/ lo chen Rin bzang gis bzhengs yod pa'i dgon pa'i 'gram na pha bong zhig steng na 'bar ba gzigs te/ der dgon pa che tsam zhig bzhengs na bkra shis po yong ba 'dug dgongs nas/ der phebs (p.826) te lha khang chen po gcig bzhengs par mdzad/ sngar Lo chen gyis bzhengs pa'i gSo sbyong khang de yang che rgyas su btangs//"; "After [Lo chen], Zangs dkar lo tsa ba 'Phags pa shes rab went to Ling shed. He did not yet reach Ling shed that the *lo tsa* looked at the slope (*rdob* spelled so for '*dab*) of the mountain Phag lta. He had the vision of flames over a boulder at the side of the *dgon pa* built by lo chen Rin bzang. He thought to build a *dgon pa* somewhat big, so that the fortunate ones would come [to inhabit it]. He went there (p.826) and managed to build a great *lha khang*. He also renovated gSo sbyong khang built earlier by Lo chen".

Grag's pa lde:
from ruler of Gu ge lHo stod to king of unified mNga' ris stod

The scenario of mNga' ris stod changed drastically to the point that the territories of mNga' ris stod passed from fragmentation to unity in a few decades. With Grags pa lde's campaigns in the contiguous territories to his kingdom Gu ge lHo stod, Upper West Tibet was unified under him with the exception of Mar yul. *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* explicates the outcome of his campaigns by saying that Grags pa lde accomplished the simultaneous conquests of Pu hrang and Gu ge Byang ngos (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.439-440). Grags pa lde unified Gu ge Pu hrang for the first time in more than a hundred and seventy years since rTse lde's death, whose brother bTsan srong succeeded him in Pu hrang while the throne of Gu ge was usurped (*mNga' ris rgyal rabs* p.68 lines 16-18).

Grags pa lde's control extended to the farthest-reaching areas of mNga' ris stod but he did not aim at the control of the territories of southern Byang thang such as Gro shod, next to Pu hrang in the east, since the king concentrated on a more rewarding endeavour. His takeover of the commercial doors of Upper West Tibet—the *rje sgo*-s or passes leading to other countries—is evidence that he opted to extend his authority over the physical limits of mNga' ris stod, and thus the whole of the region except Mar yul. The control of the *rje sgo*-s secured to Grags pa lde rewarding commercial advantages.

The territories in the Mon pa borderlands incorporated into Gu ge by the takeover of the passes leading to lands outside Grags pa lde's kingdom were (*mNga' ris rgyal rabs* p.78 line 17-p.79 line 3):

- ~ Kya nom, the land adjoining Pu hrang to the south, known as Kumaon;
- ~ Nyi ti, famous for the Nyi ti la, which leads to Garhwal;
- ~ Grum gnyis, which *sKyabs ston Khro 'grel* (quoted in bsTan 'dzin rnam dag, *sNga rabs Bod kyi byung ba brjod pa'i 'bel gtam lung gi snying po* p.33-4) spells as Gru nyi, the pass joining Jhoshimath in upper Garhwal with Pu ling in Gu ge;³⁷⁴
- ~ Hrang nam—seemingly a Zhang zhung pa name like Ka nam in Khu nu—the area east of Rong chung;

374. bsTan 'dzin rnam dag, *sNga rabs Bod kyi byung ba brjod pa'i 'bel gtam lung gi snying po* includes Kya nom, Nyi ti, Gru gnyi among the lands composing the southern stretch of Zhang zhung (p.34 lines 2-4: "La dwag Zang mkhar Gar zha Nyung ti sPi ti/ Khu nu Tshangs/ Drug nyi Nyi ti Kyo nam Sha khog mGhar yang Tshad ro/ Ti dkar/ Sle mi dang/ Wom glo Se rib Dol po Krug skyes sogs").

These lands at the border of the Tibetan plateau or in the Himalayan range are listed according to territorial contiguity, first from north to south—La dwag (spelled so), Zang mkhar (spelled so), Gar zha, Nyung ti, sPi ti, Khu nu, Tshangs—and then from west to east—Drug nyi, Nyi ti, Kyo nam, Sha khog, mGhar yang, Tshad ro, Ti dkar, Sle mi, Wom glo, Se rib, Dol po, Krug skyes. A section of this classification—Tshangs, Drug nyi, Nyi ti, Kyo nam, Sha khog, mGhar yang, Tshad ro—comprises the lands of Garhwal and Kumaon and corresponds to most of the areas to which trade routes were taken over by Gu ge Grags pa lde.

~ Ad ru which I cannot identify;³⁷⁵

~ Sang wang—another Zhang zhung pa name—in Byang ngos;

~ Khur shud 'jug khul whose name restitutes Khu nu shod 'jug khul. Khur should be corrected into Khun of Khun nu, a common variant of Khu nu, since in *khyug yig*, in which *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* was originally written, *ra* and *nga* are remarkably similar. The term 'jug stands for “entrance”, while *shud* is a different spelling for *shod*, “lower”. Hence, the name means “the land, entrance to lower Khu nu”.³⁷⁶ For reasons of contiguity of some of these territories to Kinnaur, the king of Gu ge was able to impose tribute all the way to the entrance to lower Khu nu.³⁷⁷

Grags pa lde was the king of Gu ge lHo stod when U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal came to the west. U rgyan pa's visit to Ru thog where he met its Bla mkhar *jo bo* rulers coincided with the expansion of the sTod 'Brug to the north and Grags pa lde's plans for an extension of territorial control in that direction. When U rgyan pa travelled to Ru thog (1253-1254), Grags pa lde had not yet taken over Byang ngos and therefore had not yet unified Gu ge Pu hrang. The bKa' brgyud sources document that Ru thog was not under Grags pa lde, since separate rulers governed its territory, unless they became feudatories of the Gu ge king subsequently, a fact that is not elucidated in the sources. As said elsewhere in this work of mine (see p.237-238), whether Gu ge extended control over Ru thog in the successive years when Grags pa lde took hold of the other regions in mNga'ris stod or whether the region remained outside his reach, like Mar yul which had a different governance, does not transpire from the documents.

The antecedents of Grags pa lde's conquest of Byang ngos rest on the embryo of the antagonism between 'Bri gung and Sa skya that extended from the religious field to that secular. Grags pa lde's lHo stod sided with 'Bri gung, Chos rgyal grags pa's Byang ngos with Sa skya.

375. In the same list of countries of *sKyab ston Khro 'grel* quoted by bsTan 'dzin rnam dag (*sNga rabs Bod kyi byung ba brjod pa'i 'bel gtam lung gi snying.po* p.34 lines 2-4), a land with which I am not familiar named Tshad ro is located between East Kumaon and West Nepal. Both identities of Ad ru and Tshad ro remain uncertain.

376. For reasons of contiguity of some of these territories to Kinnaur, it cannot be ruled out that the king of Gu ge was able to impose tribute all the way to the entrance to lower Khu nu. Grags pa lde's dominions that extended to lower Khu nu must have included Pi ti but it is not proved that his support to the Tshal pa extended to Ta pho. Even if he was in control of Pi ti, the bKa' brgyud pa school he may have supported in Ta pho remains an unsubstantiated aspect.

377. It is uncertain whether Gu ge controlled Khu nu after the late 12th century and the four rulers who succeeded one another in the territory, for *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* does not mention any other ruler of the dynasty before mentioning its takeover by Grags pa lde. Hence it is possible that Khu nu was lost to Tibetan control after them. Judging by the alternation between Tibetans and Mon pa who ruled in the borderlands adjoining Khu nu, as told in non-Tibetan sources such as *Kulu Vamshavali*, this possibility should not be ruled out although not too clear on the subject.

If it was alternance, it was Tibetan rather Mon pa control of Khu nu at the time of the bKa' brgyud diffusion, given the local sponsorship to their schools, the basis of their settling in sTod.

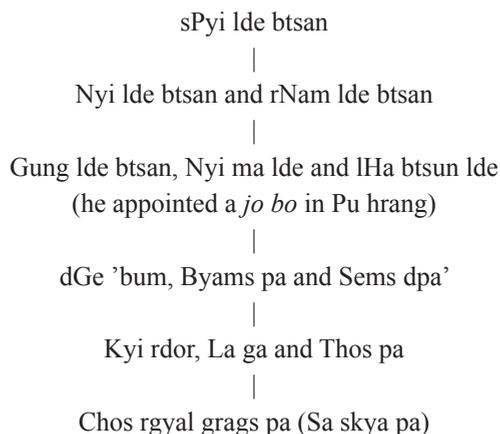
In 1261 'gro mgon 'Phags pa was made imperial preceptor by the recently enthroned emperor Se chen rgyal po (Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.440). This event has to be considered as a conservative *terminus post quem* for the establishment of the alliance between Chos rgyal grags pa and the Sa skya pa. The rivalry between the two rulers of Gu ge was fomented by a wider enmity between the two religious schools involved in the secular affairs that extended to the plateau altogether.

mNga'ris rgyal rabs (p.78 lines 4-5) says that pro-'Bri gung Grags pa lde of lHo stod had the upper hand. He ousted Chos rgyal grags pa from the throne of Byang ngos and took over Pu hrang at the same time (*mNga'ris rgyal rabs* p.78 lines 4-5). Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan's *Si tu bka' chems* adds that Sa skya's plan was thwarted. In this light, I propound a date of Grags pa lde's conquest of Byang ngos to around 1265, when 'Phags pa returned to Tibet for the first time and Phag gru rGyal ba rin po che was still alive, i.e. before the request by Sa skya to the 'Bri gung pa had been refused following Grags pa lde's defeat of Chos rgyal grags pa, the ally of the Sa skya pa.

A conclusive word on the dates of Grags pa lde is provided in *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* (p.79 lines 3-4) which says that Grags pa lde's death took place in a fire ox year. The year of his passing cannot have been, therefore, other than 1277. Hence, he was born in iron tiger 1230. Given Grags pa lde's dates and the evidence from *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* which says that he was the next king of lHo stod after bKra shis dbang phyug, he reigned over the unified kingdom from the mid-1260s (ibid. f.31b lines 3-4) until his demise.

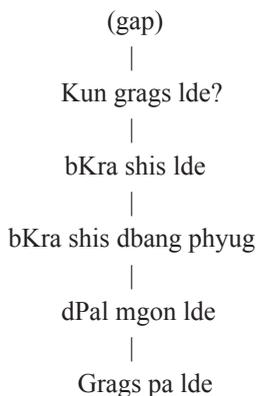
Fire ox 1277—the year of Grags pa lde's death—was when Gung thang began to organize the *glang gi las stabs bcu gsum*, its network of castles to control the lands this kingdom ruled in mNga'ris on behalf of Sa skya, including Gu ge Pu hrang (*Gung thang gdung rabs* lHa.sa ed. p.108 line 8-109 line 2). The two events may have been coincidental but the passage of Gu ge under the Sa skya pa alliance and the almost contemporary death of Grags pa lde may betray a deeper truth.

Kings of Gu ge Byang ngos
(second quarter of the 12th century- third quarter of the 13th)



Kings of Gu ge lHo stod
(second quarter of the 12th century- third quarter of the 13th)

dPal 'od btsan [and] 'Dul srid 'dul btsan



▪ The Noble Religion in Gu ge during Grags pa lde's reign

Grags pa lde's enhanced status allowed him to dedicate himself to the patronage of the Noble Religion. The context of his overlordship shows that, in order to make endowments to religious sites, he focused on his original kingdom rather than the territories he took over. His predecessors in Gu ge lHo stod, bKra shis dbang phyug and his son dPal mgon lde supported the 'Bri gung pa, whose *ri pa*-s and monks were active in their land, whereas no signs exist of their care for either the Tshal pa or the 'Brug pa. Grags pa lde instead adopted an encompassing approach.

His contribution to the religion concerned holy sites at the centre of his lHo stod kingdom and its periphery. In terms of *yon bdag* support bestowed upon the 'Bri gung pa, Grags pa lde and his wife bSam grub rgyal mo sponsored Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, the third 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* at Ti se.³⁷⁸

378. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* (f.31b lines 4-5): “De'i rjes su rdo rje 'dzin pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan pa byon/ rje 'di Gu ge rgyal po khri Grags pa lde dang/ lha lcam bSam grub rgyal mo yab yum gyis Pu rang rGyal ti mkhar du gdan drangs nas chos zhus pa'i yon du Pu rang Thang yab stod smad la sogs pa phul lo/!” , “After him, rdo rje 'dzin pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan came [as *rdor 'dzin*]. Having invited this *rje* to Pu rang rGyal ti mkhar, Gu ge rgyal po khri Grags pa lde and lha lcam bSam grub rgyal mo, the husband and wife, received teachings. In return, they awarded [him] Pu rang Thang yab stod smad”.

bKra shis dbang phyug, dPal mgon lde and Grags pa lde gave sacred sites and estates in Pu hrang to the *rdor 'dzin*-s of their times. This corroborates the evidence that close relations existed between the lHo stod kings and the Pu hrang genealogy of *jo bo*-s, at least since the time when sTag tsha Khri 'bar was ruling.

In a crucial passage about religious patronage, Kun dga' rdo rje's *Deb ther dmar po* states that the gSer gyi gtsug lag khang founded by lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po was given to Shes rab 'phel ba, who succeeded Tshul dar ba as head of the Pu hrang Tshal pa.³⁷⁹ It was given to Shes rab 'phel ba in return of his care for the *dgon pa* after he became the *bla mchod* of the local king and his wife.

No temple other than Tho ling is recognized anywhere in sTod to be the gSer gyi tsug lag khang founded by Rin chen bzang po.³⁸⁰ The king who gave Tho ling to the Tshal pa could not have been a Pu hrang *jo bo*, but a ruler of Gu ge. That he was Grags pa lde is supported by the period of his reign and the tenure of Shes rab 'phel ba, and the status this king as the supreme lord of the whole mNga' ris stod during those years. Since he extended his control over Pu hrang, he came into direct contact with the Pu hrang Tshal pa as their overlord.

The possibility that the grant of Tho ling to the Tshal pa took place during the reign of the Gu ge lHo stod kings before Grags pa lde has to be dismissed, since bKra shis dbang phyug and dPal mgon lde, his immediate predecessors on the throne of lHo stod, did not hold

A hypothesis is that Grags pa lde's patronage to Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, the third *rdor 'dzin* at Gangs Ti se, took place around the mid 1260s since *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (p.78 line 5) records that Grags pa lde conquered Pu hrang at the same time as Gu ge Byang ngos. Or else he would have bestowed Thang yab stod smad before he took over Pu hrang, a possibility that should not be dismissed given the grants of his predecessors on the throne of Gu ge lHo stod in the same region although they did not control it.

379. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.148 lines 6-11): "De nas bla ma Shes rab 'phel ba yar gdan drangs/ khong gis dgon pa dang grwa pa bu slob kyi bskyang bran mdzad/ thad sor bzhugs nas rgyal po yab yum gyi bla mchod mdzad/ rgyal po yon mchod kyi lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang pos bzhengs pa'i gSer gyi gtsug lag khang chen po sde dang bcas pa phul/ bZhi sde'i gtsug lag khang sde dang bcas pa phul nas 'gro don 'phrin las dpag tu med pa mdzad nas/ zhi bar gshegs/'", "Then, [after Tshul dar ba's death,] Shes rab 'phel ba was invited upwards (to sTod). He took care to protect the *dgon pa*, the monks and the disciples. Having stayed with [the ruler of Gu ge Pu hrang], he became the *bla mchod* ("officiating *bla ma*") of the king and his wife. Owing to the *yon mchod* [established with] the king, he was offered the great gSer gyi gtsug lag khang built by lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po [and] its [monastic] community. As he was given bZhi (spelled so) sde gtsug lag khang [and] its [monastic] community, he performed innumerable deeds for the benefit of sentient beings. He then died".

The grant of Zhi sde (bZhi sde) confirms that Pu hrang was under Grags pa lde.

380. This is obviously a half mistaken assessment since it was Zhi ba 'od who built Tho ling gSer khang according to *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, but most sources of different periods, presumably not having had access to the documents Ngag dbang grags pa had, credit Ye shes 'od and Rin chen bzang po with this foundation. *Ngor chos 'byung* (p.262 lines 4-5) and *Padma dkar po chos 'byung* (p.259 lines 9-12) say in the same words: "Khyad par shar phyogs su gser gyi mchod rten chen po zhi bzhengs pas nyi ma shar ba'i tshe/ de'i 'od nang na yar phog pas lha khang thams cad gser gyi mdog tu lhag ger 'char bas mTho lding gSer khang du grags/'", "In particular, he (i.e. Ye shes 'od) built a large *mchod rten* in the east. When the sun rises, as golden light is reflected by this [*mchod rten*], all the *lha khang*-s are wonderfully radiant with golden colour. [This is why] it became known as mTho lding gSer khang".

Tho ling, despite the temple being in their kingdom. La ga, the king who ruled Byang ngos before Chos rgyal grags pa, and thus a contemporary of the lHo stod king bKra shis dBang phyug, controlled lands in lHo stod at least as far as Mang nang, south of Tho ling, for he built temples there. Only by conquering Byang ngos, under which Tho ling had passed in the meantime, could a lHo stod king regain possession of Tho ling.

It is also probable that the king of Gu ge who established *yon mchod* with Sangs rgyas 'od zer, the Tshal pa *bla mchod* in Pu hrang after Shes rab 'phel ba, before Pu hrang passed under the control of Sa skya, was again Grags pa lde.³⁸¹

mNga' ris rgyal rabs (p.78 lines 16-17) adds that Grags pa lde renovated Tho ling, a confirmation that he was the king who granted Rin chen bzang po's gSer khang to Shes rab 'phel ba. He made a restoration of dPal rgyas, far from the centre of his kingdom.³⁸² dPal rgyas, nowadays destroyed, was a *dgon pa* at the periphery of Gu ge lHos stod, in the plain west of Preta pu ri, whose existence goes back to *bstan pa snga dar*.

In his classification of the temples meant to pin the reclining demoness that is Tibet and to build Ra sa 'Phrul snang, Ne'u pandi ta attributes the foundation of dPal rgyas to Srong btsan sgam po with the purpose of avoiding that mtsho Ma pham overflows (*sNgon gyi gtam me tog phreng ba* p.18 lines 17-18). lDe'u jo sras in his *chos 'byung* (p.132 lines 7-8) credits Khri srong lde btsan with its construction to control the territory of klu Ma dros. In *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* dPal rgyas is simply described as having been built by Grags pa lde's ancestors without specifying their identity (ibid. p.78 lines 12-13).

Among the two ways to identify the Tshal pa settled in mNga' ris stod, who pursued religious practice there away from rTa sga, I think that the name Pu hrang Tshal pa suited them until they stretched their influence to Gu ge. When the Pu hrang Tshal pa extended their influence to Gu ge, the term sTod Tshal pa that identifies all members of the school settled on

381. *Deb ther dmar po* (p.148 lines 12-18): "De nas bla ma Sangs rgyas 'od zer ba gdan drangs nas dgon pa dang grwa pa bu slob yon bdag dang bcas pas bskyang bran dang thad sor bzugs/ rgyal po yab yum gyi bla mchod mdzad nas/ yab yum dang rje blon rnam la dbang bskur/ de nas Gu ge rgyal pos gdan drangs nas Gu ge rgyal po yab yum rje blon rnam la dbang skur mdzad/ 'bul ba longs spyod dpag tu med pa byung zhing/ 'gro don dang 'phrin las rgya chen po byung 'dug/'", "Then, [after Shes rab 'phel ba] since Sangs rgyas 'od zer was invited, he took care of protecting the *dgon pa*, the monks, the disciples and the sponsors, and stayed [with the Pu hrang king]. As he became the *bla mchod* ("officiating *bla ma*") of the [Pu hrang] king and his queen, the [royal] husband and wife, the chiefs and the ministers revered him. Then, as the king of Gu ge invited him, he gave empowerments to the king of Gu ge, his wife and the *rje blon*-s. He received innumerable splendid donations and performed great deeds for the benefit of sentient beings".

The passage shows that Pu hrang still had a *jo bo* but he was under the authority of Grags pa lde.

382. A reference to dPal rgyas lha khang is found in rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs rang grol's *gTsang smyon He ru ka rnam thar* (p.182 lines 4-5). It shows that at the end of the 15th century, when gTsang smyon was in sTod, dPal rgyas still was an active temple.

the "upper side" could be used with a two-fold signification, one general and the other specific to the Tshal pa of Gu ge Pu hrang.³⁸³

The reference to dPal rgyas, a temple constructed by Srong btsan sgam po, is the only one found in the text. Another temple was perhaps built there by Khor re (*mNga'ris rgyal rabs* p.60 line 19-p.61 line 1), if his Khri sde chos skor is identified as dPal rgyas, otherwise, since dPal rgyas is nowhere included among the *bstan pa phyi dar* temples, the ancestor of Grags pa lde to whom *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* attributes dPal rgyas must have been Srong btsan sgam po. If so, Grags pa lde's would have been the first restoration of the temple after its establishment in the 7th century. The foundation of dPal rgyas, ascribed to Srong btsan sgam po in Ne'u pan di ta's *sNgon gyi me tog gi phreng ba*, is oddly attributed to Khri srong lde btsan in *lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung*.³⁸⁴

Given his focus on his kingdom lHo stod, the temple building activity of Grags pa lde, which covered the extension of Gu ge lHo stod from Tho ling to dPal rgyas, was most likely undertaken before subduing Byang ngos, whose *terminus ante quem* is ca. 1260 or better 1265.

▪ bKa' brgyud pa occupancy of a cave at Khyung lung

The ancient site of Khyung lung had a pivotal place in the kingdom of independent Zhang zhung, documented in literary material that goes back to a period that is proto-historical in terms of the sPu rgyal lineage of *btsan po*-s. Its importance was eminently secular in the long

383. Little is said in *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* concerning Grags pa lde's support to other religious masters of his day besides the *rdor 'dzin*-s and the Tshal pa. The text (ibid. p.78 lines 11-12) reports that he invited an otherwise mysterious Sangs rgyas from rGya, who gave teachings to the Gu ge king not later than 1277 when Grags pa lde died. The absence of records in such sense show that no presence of foreign Buddhist teachers in sTod is documented from the time when Kha che pan chen was in Pu hrang during the summer of 1213 onwards. He may have been a teacher from the lands on the "upper side".

rGya normally refers to China (rGya nag) more commonly than Gangetic India (rGya gar), although in this case such readings are improbable. rGya also applies to the Tibetan clan of the same name (rGya Mi nyag), anciently associated with the kings of the sPu rgyal dynasty (e.g. the master rGya 'Jam dpal gsang ba the founder of gNas rnying in Myang stod during the time of Ral pa can), but the use of the term as a place name found in this sentence of *mNga'ris rgyal rabs* rules out such a possibility.

Besides addressing China or rGya gar, rGya is the ancient village in Mar yul stod, one of the royal sites of the pre-Nyi ma mgon rGya pa Jo bo dynasty.

384. *lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung* (p.132 lines 7-8): "Nub phyogs klu Ma dros pa'i kha gnon du Pra dun rtse dPal rgyas gyi gtsug lag khang bzhengs/", "In the west, he (Khri srong lde btsan) built Pra dun rtse [and] dPal rgyas gtsug lag khang-s in order to [provide] protection against klu Ma dros".

One might interpret this passage as if reference is made to a single temple called Pra dun rtse dpal rgyas, so that it would apply to Pra dun rtse exclusively, but Ne'u pan di ta, *sNgon gyi me tog gi phreng ba* (lHa sa ed. p.18 lines 17-18), discussing the matter in reference to Srong btsan sgam po, talks about two temples, Pra dun rtse and dPal rgyas, which were intended to prevent Ma pham g.yu mtsho from overflowing. They are obviously not a single temple since the two *lha khang*-s are sited at a great distance from one another.

period during which Zhang zhung availed of freedom, although Khyung chen spungs pa'i ri, a site for religious practice, existed nearby the citadel of the Lig myi hrya kings. Often in the studies and the present view of the Bon po school savants, this religious site has been confusedly assessed since it has been taken as the citadel of the ruler.

Khyung lung went through several cultural phases after its downfall. The eminently secular role of Khyung lung, although with sensibly diminished importance when it was conquered by Srong btsan sgam po's central Tibetans and in the centuries thereafter, lasted until the early phase of mNga' ris skor gsum that corresponds to this kingdom's foundations. sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon's conquest of Khyung lung marked a decisive step in the establishment of his dynasty and kingdom in mNga' ris stod. The formula adopted in Padma 'phrin las's account is his subjugation of the local *bzhi bdag*, accomplished by him under the name Jo jo rGod lde (Padma 'phrin las, '*Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar in bKa' ma bla ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar* p.272 lines 5-6).

In line with the principles that lha bla ma Ye shes 'od gave to the people of his kingdom to make of mNga' ris skor gsum a light of Asia, Khyung lung became, like many other localities, a centre of religious activity during *bstan pa phyi dar*. No more secular events characterised the history of this ancient site after the first half of the 10th century.

All historical aspects concerning Zhang zhung left aside, I focus on evidence about the presence of the Noble Religion at Khyung lung that documents a further Buddhist phase at the site after Ye shes 'od and related *bstan pa phyi dar* activities. This fell in the intermediate period before the emissary of Tsong kha pa, his direct disciple mkhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa, brought Gu ge, inclusive of Khyung lung, into the dGe lugs fold during the first half of the 15th century.

Among Khyung lung's many caves on both sides of the Glang chen kha babs, the exterior of one of them has been modelled in the shape of a *mchod rten*. The cave is away from the ancient religious centre of the independent Zhang zhung at Khyung chen spungs pa'i ri, higher up from the plain where dPal rgyas was located and the later Bon po monastery Gur rgyam was built. It is located within the Khyung lung dngul mkhar citadel, given that the location offered many possibilities owing to a great number of caves which could have been turned into a temple.

Murals in faded conditions cover the walls of the cave. They depict the bsKal bzang Sansg rgyas in the typical way to represent them, which is a proliferation of similar images but with different postures and *mudra*-s. A few empty halos with related perforations into the walls are proofs that statues were suspended on their surfaces. They are all lost. The ceiling is decorated in its centre with a *dkyil 'khor* of large proportions, a part of which has detached and therefore is again lost. The rest of the ceiling not occupied by the *dkyil 'khor* is ornamented with designs that reproduce patterns of fabrics and floral motifs.

The few signs in the literature converge to show that Khyung lung had a monastic community. Physical evidence proves that it was centred around a cave temple. The murals of the cave in Khyung lung belong to that period (see p.346-347). The idiom has distinctive traits that make it consonant with the bKa' bgyud pa visual expressions of the period.

The bsKal bzang Sangs rgyas are rendered in the typical Tibeto-Pala style ubiquitous on the plateau in its adoption during the 13th century, which can be ascertained from the treatment of the faces and the bodies. The *dkyil 'khor*, too, is painted in the most classical rendition of the Tibeto-Pala style.

The style adopted in the cave does not neglect a pictorial heritage of the previous periods:

- the light blue background of the images, is a feature typical of the Kha che style which has persisted—although with a change of hue towards a darker shade—till the dGe lugs pa time murals;

- the lotus petals below the images;
- the circular haloes;
- the wavy decorations inside them;
- the festoons;
- the ceiling depicting fabric motives.

All of them are elements imported from the earlier style of Kashmir into the Tibeto-Pala rendition of the images, employed to depict the canonical proliferation of bsKal bzang Sangs rgyas and also represented by the *mandala* on the ceiling.

The combination of the Kha che and Tibeto-Pala styles are hardly seen elsewhere, which makes of the cave a rare specimen of a symbiosis between the past of mNga' ris skor gsum and new wave of bKa' brgyud pa insemination that was carried out for at least some seventy years.

A 10th century precedent to the murals of the Khyung lung cave is the mythical central statue of Kha char lha khang made in 996 in collaboration between the Newar artist A shwa dharma and his Kashmiri counterpart Wang ku la. Another previous case was the Ma ga dha artist who worked at Tho ling, whose images are not extant and, anyway, not identified in the literature.

Another distinctive trait in situ of 'Bri gung pa activity, although without a similar stylistic symbiosis— unless undocumented—was the placement of a statue of 'Od dpag med at Khyung lung (Chos dbyings rdo rje, *Gangs Ti se lo rgyus* p.50 line 8-p.51 line 5 see n.173). I wonder whether, for reasons of religious parallelism with the statue of 'Od dpag med at Nyan po ri rdzong, a monastery equally held by this bKa' brgyud school, the 'Bri gung pa takeover of Khyung lung was marked by the installation of the other 'Od dpag med sculpted image at the ancient citadel of Zhang zhung.

The painted cave of Khyung lung is unrecorded in the literature and does not bear inscriptions. Therefore, it is undated. All one can do is to place it into a consonant period of 'Bri gung pa activity at this *gnas*.

The opening of this cave to religious practice fell in the years close to earth dragon 1208 in the aftermath of the expedition headed by gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa, since Don mo ri pa rDorje mdzes 'od received the vows at Khyung lung in 1215 in the local monastic context (see above n.174). Or else it was opened sometime after the same local master was made the Pu Kug (i.e. Gu ge Pu hrang) *yongs kyi mkhan po* in wood snake 1245 (see n.264).

Subsequently, Legs ldan ye shes (1263-1344) received *Phur pa* teachings from an unidentified *slob dpon* at Khyung lung (see n.399), which shows that this ancient site was still

in the control of the 'Bri gung pa sometime in the years after the reigns of bKra shis dbang phyug and dPal mgon lde. Facts concerning Legs ldan ye shes are traces that a community of either *ri pa*-s or monks was active at Khyung lung, availing of the cave. It is thus a suggestion corroborated by evidence in the literature that the cave at Khyung lung depicting the typical plethora of bsKal bzang Sang rgyas was produced in the span of years marked by the flourishing of the bKa' brgyud pa schools in mNga' ris.

In any event, Khyung lung kept being a thriving religious centre of the 'Bri gung pa until the Sa skya pa's takeover of the "upper side" in 1277-1280. 'Bri gung pa Khyung lung was still active during the reign of Grags pa lde who gave Tho ling to the sTod Tshal pa and restored dPal rgyas.

The local masters of a new 'Bri gung pa phase

The focus of the bKa' brgyud pa activities began to move forcibly away from mNga' ris in those years. Work in favour of the school was still pursued by some local 'Bri gung pa who were the disciples of Don mo ri pa and thus belonged to the lineage of Seng ge ye shes.

Their biographies collectively show that the culture of the lands on the "upper side" had entered a phase of marked insularity. This new generation of 'Bri gung pa born in mNga' ris had their native lands as their sphere of activity with the exception of one of them, 'Jig rten blos btang (on whom see soon below). Unlike Seng ge ye shes, who was active in several regions of mNga' ris but with a preference for those close to the Himalayan range and Don mo ri pa who followed in his footsteps, they did not trespass the limits of their native lands not even to venture in contiguous areas.

However, even these masters and their more modest feats have a strong historiographical value because their biographies contribute to shed a dim light on the dark years with little historical record (from 1277-1280 until soon after 1363) in the history of mNga' ris skor gsum (see my *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.479-480). They correspond to the Sa skya pa control of mNga' ris skor gsum. The work of these masters, nonetheless, show that the religious activities of the 'Bri gung pa in those lands did not come to a halt after Sa skya extended its sway over the lands on the "upper side".

The case of Don mo ri pa is indicative of the attitude marked by provincialism. Until Seng ge ye shes followed in his teacher's adventures, he is given some prominence in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*. Following the death of Seng ge ye shes, he almost disappears from historical memory. Don mo ri pa's autobiography ends with the meeting with his teacher Seng ge ye shes in 1237. *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* does not go further than describing the 1244-1245 journey to Sle mi and Pu hrang together with Seng ge ye shes and his appointment as general abbot of Gu ge Pu hrang in early 1245.

Despite being their teacher, Don mo ri pa does not receive elaborate attention in the different length biographies of the local bKa' brgyud pa practitioners. He has a role in them inasmuch as he took part in stereotyped duties of a master, such as being mentioned in the circumstances of their first meeting and for his bestowal of monastic vows to them.

Although not too rich of details, these *rnam thar*-s still contain useful glimpses about Don mo ri pa's life or else no information about his deeds would not exist after 1245. For instance, *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar* ends its treatment of his life by saying that he died in a rat year.³⁸⁵ The rest of his existence is neglected in all the documents referring to him, so the identification of this rat year is not immediate. A passage in the biography of his disciple Legs ldan ye shes says that Don mo ri pa gave him the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow in fire pig 1287, when his follower was twenty-five years old.³⁸⁶ This fire pig year helps to propose that the death of Do mo ri pa occurred in the rat year 1288 or, less probably, in the rat year 1300 because he would have been extremely old.

▪ 'Dul ba and Upper West Tibet

The progressive provincialism of the bKa' brgyud pa from the "upper side" was partially compensated by a transmission of 'Dul ba with glorious antecedents that reached the school's exponents and continued to be their property for generations to come. Their holders were 'Bri gung pa native of mNga' ris rather than members of the school who came to live and work in the west.

The greatness of the line of 'Dul ba, whose origin was legendary, went through two stages, crucial for the religious history of the land. A first nodal point was the transfer of monastic observance from mDo Khams to mNga' ris skor gsum after it existed in Central Tibet. dGe bshes Zhe Ku ma ra and dge bshes 'O brgyad were invited to mNga' ris from mDo' Khams sgang. This happened during the later period of *bstan pa phyi dar*, hence generations before the advent of the bKa' brgyud on the "upper side". The transmission remained the appanage of the native 'Bri gung pa affiliates even after being celebrated by 'Jig rten mgon po in person. Yongs kyi mkhan po sTag sgo ba, a contemporary of

385. *Don mo ri pa'i rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.504 lines 1-2)*: "De lta bu'i bla ma rin Don mo ri pa chen po ni/byi ba'i lo khams kyi zla ba'i tshes bcu' gcig gi nub mtshan phyed tsam la chos kyi dbyings nas chos kyi dbyings su mya ngan pas 'das pa'i tshul bstan to//"; "Such a *bla ma rin po che* as Don mo ri pa chen po showed the way of dying by passing into the sphere of religion from the [other] sphere of religion around midnight of the eleventh day of *khams* (sic) *kyi zla ba* of the rat year".

386. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.516 lines 4-5)*: "De nas dgung lo nyi shu tsa lnga bzhes pa'i dus su mkhan po de nyid la bsnyen rdzogs kyang mdzad//"; "Then, when [Legs ldan ye shes] was twenty-five years old (1287), he took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from the *mkhan po* (i.e. Don mo ri pa)".

Legs ldan ye shes was born in water pig 1263 (see below n.398).

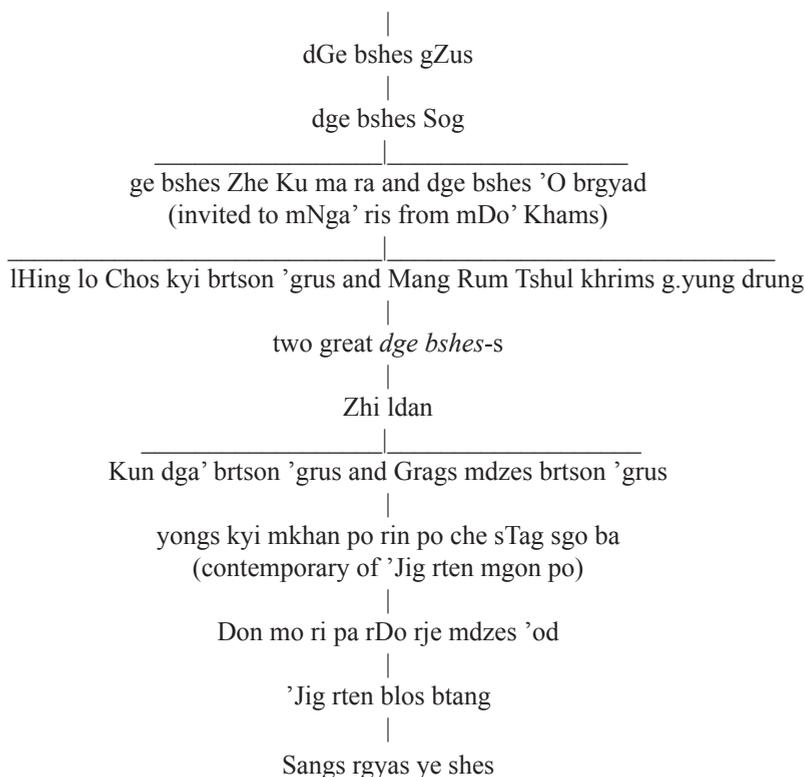
Variations in spellings show that the sources of the biographies in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* were not written by the same hand. For instance, the biographies of Seng ge ye shes and Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma spell *rgung lo*, the archaic way despite belonging to the 13th-14th century; the *rnam thar* of Legs ldan ye shes goes for the later version *dgung lo*.

sKyob pa rin po che, made rDo rje mdzes 'od the lineage holder after him. This was the next nodal point in the 'Dul ba transmission that concerned the exponents the school in mNga' ris.³⁸⁷ The lineage was:

bcom ldan Thub pa
 |
 bram ze 'Dul ba 'dzin pa
 |

 Slungs [and] sKyogs

387. *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (p.134 line 6-p.136 line 3): "bsTan rtsa dam chos 'Dul ba ste/ de yi bshad pa'i srol ka yang/ bcom dan Thu pa chen po yi/ (p.135) zhabs slob 'phags pa dGra bcom gyi/ slob ma Bal po yul gyi ni/ bram ze 'Dul ba 'dzin pa yin/ de la Slungs sKyogs gnyis kyis gsan/ de la dge bshes gZus gyis gsan/ de'i slob ma dge bshes Sog/ Sog gi mkhan po dge bshes She/ Ku mā ra zhes bya ba dang/ dge bshes 'O bryad gnyis po ni/ mNga' ris stod yi rgyal khams su/ mDo Khams sgang nas gdan drangs so/ de'i mkhan bu lHing lo yi/ Chos kyi brtson 'grus bya ba dang/ Mang rum Tshul khirms g.yung drung yin/ lHing lo ba yi mkhan bu ni/ dge bshes chen po rnam gnyis yin/ de'i mkhan bu Zhi ldan yin/ de'i mkhan bu mkhan po ni/ Kun dga' brtson 'grus bya ba dang/ Grags mdzes brtson 'grus bya ba yin/ mkhan po Kun dga' i mkhan bu ni/ yongs kyi mkhan po rin po che/ sTa sgo ba zhes bya ba yin [note: chos rje rin po che 'Bri gung pa dang dus mtshungs pa yin/ mkhan po de la chos rje'i zhal nas/ de dgra bcom pa dngos gcig yod par 'dug gsung nas nan tar mnyes skad/ dGu zur phug gi Gyam po cer gdan chags pa yin/ Dam Rum gyi sTag sgo'i byang phyogs na brang khang mnga' bas mkhan po sTag sgo ba zhes grags (p.136) so/ de la bla ma Don mo ri pa bsnyen rdzogs mdzad pa'i mkhan po yin no/ de'i mkhan bu Don ri yi/ mkhan po yongs kyi mkhan po ni [note: Dus gsum gyi Sangs rgyas de'i mtshan nas smos na rDo rje mdzes 'od/ Zhang ston rDo rje mdzes 'od yin/ [sku tsh'e'i bzhug pa la bDe chen thel du byon no/ de'i mkhan bu Don ri yi/ mkhan po 'Jig rten slob tang yin/ de'i mkhan bu mNga' ris kyi/ mkhan po Sangs rgyas ye shes [note: mkhan po grub pa tob pa skyes su yin/ bDe chen thel pa yin no//"]; "The noble 'Dul ba doctrine is the foundation of the teachings. As for the tradition of its transmission, the disciple from the land of Bal po of 'Phags pa dGra bcom pa, the great bcom ldan Thub pa's disciple, (p.135) was bram ze 'Dul ba 'dzin pa. Both Slungs [and] sKyogs received ['Dul ba] from him. dGe bshes gZus received it from them. His disciple was dge bshes Sog. Sog's disciples were known as dge bshes Zhe Ku ma ra and dge bshes 'O bryad, altogether two. They were invited to the kingdom of mNga' ris from mDo' (spelled so) Khams sgang. Their disciples were Chos kyi brtson 'grus of lHing lo and Mang Rum Tshul khirms g.yung drung. lHing lo's disciples were two great *dge bshes*-s. Their disciple was Zhi ldan. The two *mkhan po* who were his disciples were known as Kun dga' brtson 'grus and Grags mdzes brtson 'grus. The disciple of mkhan po Kun dga' was known as yongs kyi mkhan po rin po che sTag sgo ba [note: he was a contemporary of chos rje 'Bri gung pa (i.e. 'Jig rten mgon po)]. The *chos rje* (i.e. sKyob pa rin po che) told about this *mkhan po*: "It seems that this one is a true *dgra bcom pa*", and was very pleased. He established the *gdan [sa]* at Gyam po che of dGu zur phug. Since he had his residence (*brang khang*) in the north of sTag sgo of Dam rum (spelled so for Mang Rum), he was known as sTag sgo ba. (p.136) He was the *mkhan po* from whom Don mo ri pa took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow. His disciple from Don [mo] ri was the yongs kyi mkhan po Zhangs [zhung] ston [pa] rDo rje mdzes 'od [note: if the [true] name of this Dus gsum Sangs rgyas is mentioned [here], this was rDo rje mdzes 'od]. The disciple of the former mkhan po Don [mo] ri [pa] [note: he went to stay at bDe chen thel] was 'Jig rten blos btang [note: he held the *gdan sa* of Don mo ri for many years]. His disciple was Sangs rgyas ye shes [note: this *mkhan po* was an exalted *grub thob*. He was from bDe chen thel].



Don mo ri pa's predecessor in the lineage was not his 'Bri gung pa teacher Seng ge ye shes. Not being a mNga' ris pa, he was not part of it. It is not confirmed whether sTag sgo ba, the Don mo ri pa's teacher of *'Dul ba* leaned towards the 'Bri gung pa, but this seems likely. An earlier 'Bri gung pa native of mNga' ris stod than his disciple Don mo ripa, sTag sgo ba established the Gyam po che ("big cave") of dGu zur phug in Pu hrang, where *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* was written (see n.388 immediately above).

Zhe Ku ma ra and dge bshes 'O bryad, who brought this *Vinaya* transmission to mNga' ris stod and were the *'Dul ba* lineage predecessors to sTag sgo ba, belonged to the line of gZus and Sog, important proponents of the monastic observance in Central Tibet. lHing lo Chos kyi brtson 'grus and Mang rum Tshul khirms g.yung drung, next holders after Zhe Ku ma ra and 'O bryad, were the first exponents of transmission from mNga' ris.³⁸⁸ Through them the *'Dul ba* lineage put roots locally.

388. Is the Mang rum, probably like the Mang dkar who gave a minister to Nyi ma mgon (*lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung* p.146 lines 9-10 and *mkhas pa lDe'u chos 'byung* p.380 lines 17-18), a subclan of the Mang dber/wer who provided other *blon po-s* to both the erstwhile Zhang zhung kingdom and the mNga' ris skor gsum kingdom?

However, given the studies of Don mo ri pa in Gu ge Pu hrang (see above n.245), Mang Rum is a locality, perhaps named after the subclan of the Mang dber/wer.

The names of the two *dge bshes*-s, members in the next generations—the disciples of lHing lo and Mang rum—are forgotten or, when given (Zhi ldan followed by his disciples Kun dga' brtson 'grus and Grags mdzes brtson 'grus) are both of little religious and historical significance.

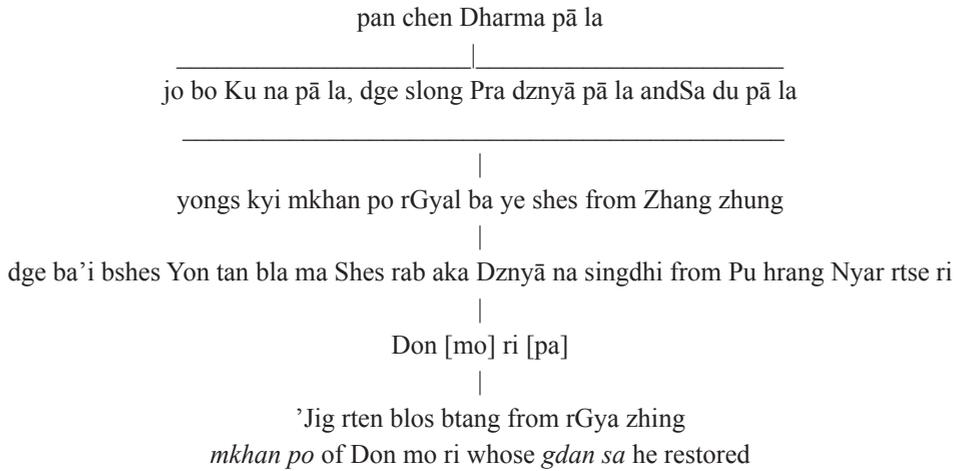
The outline of the *'Dul ba* lineage confirms that, among the four disciples of rDo rje mdzes 'od (see below p.277-278), 'Jig rten blos btang was his *dnegos slob* or “main disciple” who sat on the *gdan sa* of Don mo ri for a long time. One more local bKa' brgyud pa, Sangs rgyas ye shes who was a disciple of 'Jig rten blos btang, kept the *'Dul ba* transmission within the orbit of the Don mo ripa. This shows that the religious heritage of Don mo ri pa continued at least for two generations ('Jig rten blos btang and his own disciples Sangs rgyas ye shes and Legs ldan ye shes, see below p.271-272 and p.281-283) until towards the period I deal with in this book of mine.

bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo adds that another eminent transmission of *'Dul ba*, descended from Dharma pā la, the great *pandi ta* of east India invited to mNga' ris skor gsum by lha bla ma Ye shes 'od, which had Zhang zhung rGyal ba shes rab as its supreme local exponent, eventually reached Don mo ri pa.³⁸⁹ Due to the education and religious propensities of Don mo ri pa, two traditions of *'Dul ba*—the one from dBus gTsang and mDo Khams and the other autochthonous to mNga' ris bur originally from India—converged in mNga' ris to him as late as the 13th century after they coexisted in the territory for quite some time beforehand. This other lineage was:

Otherwise, the name identifies people from Rum yul belonging the Mang dber/wer clan of Zhang zhung pa origin, Rum yul being the land where Ta pho is located as told by the inscription in the processional corridor around the *gtsang khang* of its *gtsug lag khang*.

389. *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (p.136 lines 3-6): “gZhan yang Byang chub sems dpa' yis/ rGya gar mkhas pa chen po ni/ Dharma pā la spyen drangs nas/ mTho lding chos sde chen po der/ chos kyi 'khor lo chen po bskor/ de'i mkhan po gts'o bo gsum/ Ku na pā la [note: jo bo] zhes pa dang/ Pra dznyā pā la [note: dge slong] zhes pa'o/ de'i mkhan bu yongs kyi/ mkhan po rGyal ba shes rab [note: Zhang zhung ba yin]/ de'i mkhan po dge ba'i bshes/ [note: Pu rangs Nyar rtse ri gi/ Dznyā na singdhi Yon tan bla ma Shes rab yin/ de'i mkhan po Don ri yi/ mkhan bu Zhim mdzes ses rab [note: phyis kyang Don mo'i mkhan po mdzad/ rGya zhing ba yin no]/ zhes bar skabs kyi tshigs su bcad pa'o [note: bla ma rin po che'i thugs nas byon pa'o]/ de ltar mNga' ris stod du ni/ Sangs rgyas bstan pa'i nyi ma shar/"; “Moreover, since the Byang chub sems dpa' (i.e. Ye shes 'od) invited the rGya gar master, pan chen Dharma pā la, [the Indian master] turned the wheel of the teachings at this mTho lding chos sde chen po. His three main disciples were known as Ku na pā la [note: jo bo], Pra dznyā pā la [note: dge slong] [and Sa du pā la]. Their disciple was the yongs kyi mkhan po rGyal ba shes rab [note: he was Zhang zhung ba]. His disciple was dge ba'i bshes Yon tan bla ma Shes rab [note: Dznyā na singdhi from Pu rangs Nyar rtse ri]. The disciple of his disciple Don [mo] ri [pa] was Zhim mdzes shes rab (i.e. 'Jig rten blos btang). Subsequently, he too was the *mkhan po* of Don mo ri. He was from rGya zhing. At that time, the succession was interrupted [note: since it was the concern of the *bla ma rin po che*, he went to restore it]. Likewise, the teachings of Sangs rgyas in mNga' ris skor gsum shone like the sun”.

A lineal gap divides rGyal ba shes rab's disciple Yon tan bla ma Shes rab from Don mo ri pa.



Hence, the local 'Bri gung pa observed a rigorous ascetic lifestyle and did not indulge in diplomatic activities. Their reluctance in accepting appointments by the Pu hrang court, as in the case of Chun 'dor ba, illustrates their attitude (see *Bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i rnam thar* for many episodes of hard meditation in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.508 line 1-p.510 line 2 and below n.398). The time of the bKa' brgyud pa diplomatic missions was over, since ties had been priorly knotted with the powers of mNga' ris but other factors contributed to marginalise acquaintance to the local potentate.

Their ascendancy was lost when Sa skya took over mNga' ris through its feudatories. The great period of the bKa' brgyud pa had come to an end during that turn of years and their more reclusive approach might have been also induced by the erosion of the 'Bri gung pa power in mNga' ris stod by the Sa skya pa alliance. Accepting a diminished role, the daily activity and interaction with the people of the lands on the "upper side" and their chieftains were entrusted to resident members of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools. The local secular powers continued to respect the bKa' brgyud *ri pa*-s of mNga' ris, receive their teachings and favour their appointment at several hermitage-monasteries of the bKa' brgyud pa school.

To stay with him, despite much reluctance, Don mo ri pa's disciple Chun 'dor ba, who was eventually summoned to the Pu hrang court, received royal reverence and was confirmed in his role of religious master which he kept adopting by giving teachings upon being appointed abbot of Gu zur phug.

▪ The disciples of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od

Don mo ri pa's four disciples were 'Jig rten blos btang, 'Od sku brtse ba, Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma ("the elder"), and Chun 'dor ba, whose biographies are included in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* but their lives are dealt with in a succinct manner.

The short *rnam thar* of 'Jig rten blos btang neglects the participation in the 'Dul ba lineage of this disciple who is first mentioned by *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*. The

biography says that he sat on the chair of Don mo ri as abbot and little else is known about him.³⁹⁰ No clue is given in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* to know whether 'Jig rten bloṣ btang succeeded his teacher upon his death or after Don mo ri pa left the throne of Don mo ri to join Seng ge ye shes in 1237.

bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo only preserves the name 'Od sku brtse ba, the second Don mo ri pa's disciple, and mentions his abbotship of Gu zur phug in Pu hrang.³⁹¹

With the third disciple, Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma ("the elder"), *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* becomes a little more profuse about his life and deeds. The source gives a few—albeit rather unassuming—notions on Don mo ri pa as well.

Yang dag rdzong ba gong ma was a native of Ka tse. He belonged to the Gyer, a clan which may betray Bon po origins if one goes by the classical meaning of this clan name used as a term, i.e. Bon po chanting. The father of Yang dag rdzong ba gong ma was Lo Mon.

Yang dag rdzong ba gong ma was married but when Don mo ri pa accepted the invitation of the teacher and disciples of Ha la lha khang Mun sel rdzong at Ka tse Ro ha, he went to see him and soon thereafter he received the *rab tu byung* and *bsnyen rdzogs* vows at the same time. He was given the name bsTan mdzes 'od, styled after the one of his master Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od.

The other major event in his life, apart from meeting Don mo ri pa, was his foundation of dgon pa Yang dag rdzong, a hermitage in the best *bKa' brgyud pa* tradition, where he spent a long time secluded in meditation.³⁹²

390. 'Jig rten bloṣ btang gi rnam thar (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.504 line 5-p.505 line 1): "Rab tu byung dang bsnyen par rdzogs pa mdzad/ khrid dang gdams thams cad tshar nas/ Don mo ri'i gdan sa la bskos te gnas der yang 'dul bya rnams smying cing grol bar mdzad do/ (p.505) physis bDe chen thel du gdan phab nas/ yongs kyi mkhan po mdzad pa lags so//"; "[Jig rten bloṣ btang] took the *rab tu byung* [and] *bsnyen par rdzogs pa* vows [from Don mo ri pa]. After completing to receive all *khrid* and *gdams ngag*, he was appointed *gdan sa* of Don mo ri. Here he set people to be trained on the path of liberation. (p.505) Later, after settling at bDe chen thel, he was the *yongs kyi mkhan po* ("general abbot")."

'Jig rten bloṣ gtang is known under his other name Zhim mdzes shes rab. In the biography of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.136 note to line 6), he is also defined as rGya zhing pa, which proves his provenance. He was from rGya zhing, the holy place of Rin chen bzang po in Pu hrang frequented by A ti sha and where 'Brom ston pa first met Jo bo rje, as told in the part of the same source dedicated to *bstan pa phyi dar* on the "upper side" (ibid. p.273 lines 2-3) and many others texts. Don mo ri pa and 'Jig rten bloṣ btang revitalised a *sTod 'Dul* tradition that had been introduced by the great pandi ta Dharma pa la in the early 11th century.

391. All that *Bla ma 'Od sku brtse ba'i rnam thar* (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.505 lines 1-2) says about him is extremely succinct: "gNyis pa ni bla ma 'Od sku rtse ba [note: physis su Gu zur phug gi gdan sa 'dzin pa mdzad pa yin no] yin no//"; "The second [close disciple of Don mo ri pa] was bla ma 'Od sku brtse ba [note: later, he was the holder of the *gdan sa* of Gu zur phug]."

392. *Bla ma Yang dag rdzong ba gong ma'i rnam thar* (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.505 line 2-p.506 line 3): "Bla ma rin po che Yang dag [note: Gyer ba] rdzong ba gong ma nyid yin te/ de'i lo rgyus ni dang po yab Gyer Lo Mon zhes bya ba la sras gcig mnga' ba la/ de cher skyes pa dang/

Equally laconic is information about Don mo ri pa's other disciple, Chun 'dor ba, who may have hailed from Pu hrang,³⁹³ but his clan, the Khon, prevents an assessment of his origin, especially given the deviance in the spelling—Khon rather than 'Khon. He became the student of Don mo ri pa at a tender age, since he was given to rDo rje mdzes 'od by his

khyim thab byas nas yod pa las/ dus gcig gi tshe bla ma ri po che Don mo ri pa Pu rangs nas Kha tse Ro har byon pa'i bshul lam la/ yum Ha la'i lha khang Mun sel rdzong du phyags phes pa'i dus su/ Ha la'i bu slob rnams kyis zhabs tog chen po byas nas Thugs bskyed zhus pa gnan/ de'i dus su bla ma ri po che mos gus chen po yang skyes/ ba spu g.yo' ba la stsogs pa byung/ de nas zla ba gcig tsam nas gSer rje Phan phyug bya ba nga'i g.yog la gdong zer nas phyin pas/ Kha tse Ro har (p.506) bla ma rin po che Don mo ri pa cha ter gcig gi nang na bzhugs la 'khor rnams bskor 'khyi ri ri byed pa mtshong bas/ mos gus chen po skyes te/ spyang sngar byon nas phyag phul sku khams zhus pas/ khyod bstun pa byed du yongs sam gsung/ mchis zhus pas zhal 'dzum mdzad nas/ rtsis cig mdzad pas da lta rang bzang ba 'dug gsung nas/ de ma thag tu rab tu byung nas bsyen rdzogs mdzad/ mtshan yang Shākya'i dge slong slong bsTan mdzes 'od ces par gsol lo//"; "The history of bla ma rin po che Yang bdag [note: he is Gyer ba] rdzong ba gong ma ("the elder") is as follows. First of all, his father Gyer Lo Mon had one son. As he grew up, after he was made to marry, on one occasion, when bla ma Don mo ri pa, on the way from Pu rangs to Ka tse Ro ha, came to the locality Ha la'i lha khang Mun sel rdzong, the master and disciples of Ha la having rendered a great service to him, they asked for *Thugs bskyed*, and he gave them [these teachings]. At that time, a great faith was born in [Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma] for the *bla ma rin po che*. Even his body hair shivered. After about one month, he left [for Ka tse Ro ha] saying: "Send along gSer rje Phan phyug to be my servant", (p.506) At Ka tse Ro ha, [Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma] saw him surrounded (*bskor 'khyi ri ri*) by his retinue while bla ma rin po che Don mo ri pa was under a *cha ther* (?). A great faith was born in him. He went near him, prostrated and enquired about his health. [Don mo ri pa] asked him: "Did you come to become a monk?", he begged: "Yes", and [the master] smiled. After making a calculation, as he said that the time was auspicious, as soon as he took the *rab tu byung* vow, he was bestowed the *bsnyen rdzogs* [vow]. He was given his other name of Shākya'i dge slong bsTan mdzes 'od".

Ibid. (p.506 lines 4-6): "De nas lo 'ga' lon pa'i dus su dpal Yang dag rdzong gi dgon pa 'di yang 'debs pa mdzad nas/ sku bsod kyang skyes/ gzhan phan mang po sgrubs pa la bzhugs/ tshogs pa yang en tsham byung 'gro don yang mang du grub pa yi gsung/ de ltar gong gi mdzad pa rnams thar phyin nas/ rgung lo brgyad bcu rtsa gnyis la smin drug gi nyi shu bzhi la mya ngan las 'das//"; "A few years later, he built dpal Yang dag rdzong gi dgon pa and stayed at this holy place to meditate for many years. It is said that a somewhat noticeable assembly [of monks] existed [there, and] that he accomplished many beneficial deeds in favour of sentient beings. Likewise, coming to the end of his activities mentioned above, he died aged eighty-two on the twenty-fourth of *smin drug* [*zla ba*] (1294)".

393. His provenance Pu hrang is based on extremely dim evidence, and thus it is uncertain. After having attended upon his teacher Don mo ri pa for a long time, *Bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i rnam thar* (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.507 line 6-p.508 line 1) says: "De nas (p.508) Gug ger byon nas ston bsod snyoms mdzad/ rgun Nu ze kug tu byon grogs po slob dpon dpon gCung pa dang bla ma Nu ze kung pa dang gsum gyis byon no//"; "Then, (p.508), as Chun 'dor ba proceeded to Gug (spelled so) ge. He went for alms in autumn. In winter, he went to Nu ze kung. With his companions, slob dpon gCung pa (his younger brother?) and bla ma Nu ze kung pa, altogether three, he went to Nu ze kung". Nu ze kung is a sheer name to me.

parents when he was seven years old.³⁹⁴ At an unspecified time in his life, the episode that saw him being summoned to the Pu hrang court that led, after the conventional exchange of pleasantries against teachings, to his appointment as abbot of Gu zur phug in Pu hrang, probably as successor to 'Od sku brtse ba.³⁹⁵

Those who extended the request to Chun 'dor ba to come to court are said in his biography to have been the Pu hrang *bla zhang*-s. The plural indicates that another ruler—the heir apparent?—was co-opted to the throne. No time framework is provided by his *rnam thar* and one wanders in darkness as to the identification of the ruler or rulers of Pu hrang of those days. The choice of the Pu hrang *jo bo* active in the same period, who must have still been leaning towards the bKa' brgyud pa, is restricted to either sTobs lding btsan, who built bKra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang at Kha char (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.432-436), or rDo rje sen ge (ibid. p.445-446 and p.452).

394. *Bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.507 lines 2-4): “bZhi pa ni thugs dgongs grub pa'i sras gdung rgyud 'dzin pa ni/ bla ma rin po che Chun 'dor ba [note: Ma ti badzra zhes pa'o]/ gdung Khon yin byis pa lo bdun tsam pa zhis pha mas bla ma Do mo ri pa la phul ba yin/ de ni gdod ma nas/ 'khor ba la thugs log cing lhag pa'i bsam pa dang ldan pa zhis yod/ der lo mang por spyang sngar bzhus/ rab tu byung bsnyen rdzogs mdzad nas mtshan yang 'Od dpal ye shes su btags so//”; “The fourth [disciple], the holder of [Don mo ri pa's] lineage and the son who fulfilled his wish, was bla ma rin po che Chun 'dor ba [note: he was named Ma ti badzra]. His clan was Khon (spelled so). When he was a boy of seven years, his father and mother gave him to bla ma Don mo ri pa. This one, from the beginning, did not like worldly life and had a superior way of thinking. At that time, he spent many years with the *spyang snga*. After he took the *rab tu byung* and *bsnyen rdzogs* vows, he was given his other name of 'Od dpal ye shes”.

395. *Bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.510 lines 3-5): “De nas sPu rangs kyi bla zhan rnam kyis Gu zur phug gi gdan sa la zhu mi byung nas byon dgos zer ba la ngas mi yong gsung nas ma bzhed pa la thams cad kyis zhu ba nan can phul bas dbang med byon no/ zhabs thar bskyod pas/ yon bdag Gro nge na re zhabs thar byon pa mi yong nga'i rta 'di chibs par zhu byas nas der chibs nas byon//”; “Then, since a messenger came with a request by the *bla zhang* (i.e. the king) of Pu rangs to become the abbot of Gu zur phug, informing him that he had to go, [Chun 'dor ba] said: “I will not go”, and declined [the offer]. After everyone extended a pressing request, he was obliged to go. As he went on foot, yon bdag Gro nge having told him: “You are not allowed to go on foot, ride this horse”, and he went there by horse”.

Ibid. (p.511 lines 2-5) for Chun 'dor ba's appointment as *mkhan po* of Gu zur phug which was under the administration of Gu ge not Pu hrang: “De nas Pu rangs su phebs te bla zhang blon gsum la stogs pa thams cad kyis bsu ba byas phyag phul byin rlabs zhus nas/ rgyal ba'i gdan sa Gyam po cher bzhus nas/ yon bdag bla zhang blon gsum gyis mdzad pa lags so/ de'i dus su yang dbyar Chun 'dor la bzhus rgun Gu zur phug tu bzhus/ ston lan re Thang por byon de ma gtogs pa sus zhus kyang them spangs mdzad nas mi byon par sgrub pa rtse gcig la nan tan du mdzad do//”; “[Chun 'dor ba] then went to Pu rangs and, since everyone such as the *bla zhang blon gsum* (i.e. the two Pu hrang rulers and their minister?) welcomed him, prostrated and received his blessings, having settled at Gyam po che, the seat of the Victorious Ones, the *bla zhang blon gsum* were the *yon bdag*. At that time, he also stayed in Chun 'dor during summer and resided at Gu zur phug in winter. Except for going to Thang po once every autumn, he did not go [anywhere else], disregarding anyone asking [him to come], since he refrained [from stepping on] the threshold, and meditated one-pointedly in a very strict way”.

Chun 'dor ba died in a dog year aged eighty-three. When he was eighty years old, he said he would still live three more years.³⁹⁶ Supposing that this happened after Don mo ri pa had settled again in Gu ge Pu hrang in 1244, given that at least three of the four disciples were from Gu ge Pu hrang and thus their meeting must have taken place in Upper West Tibet rather than in lands to its east, the first available dog year for Chun 'dor ba's death—eighty-three years after that period—is water dog 1322. Hence, he would have been born in iron rat 1240 and would have first met Don mo ri pa in fire horse 1246. Or else he would have died one duodenary cycle later in wood dog 1334. Consequently, he would have been born in water rat 1252 and would have first met Don mo ri pa in earth horse 1258.

Legs Idan ye shes (1263-1344) was the major exponent of the next generation of 'Bri gung pa from mNga' ris. He was born in Gu ge at the bank of the Glang chen kha 'babs in the tract of the river that corresponds with the area of Khyung lung (see n.398 and n.403). Of humble origin unlike the great disciples of sKyob pa rin po che, who had come to mNga' ris, but from a somewhat wealthy family, Legs Idan ye shes was the son of 'brog pa-s, and learned skills typical of his status—dice and archery—during his teens.³⁹⁷

396. *Bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.511 lines 5-6): “de nas rlung lo brgyad bcu bzhes pa'i dus su mya ngan las 'da' bar bzhes pa la sku 'khor rnams kyis mya ngan las mi 'da' bar gsol ba btap pas/ 'o na de tsug bya khyed rang rnams kyis bsod nams thob pa yin//; “Then, when [Chun 'dor ba] was eighty years old (*brgya'bcu* sic for *brgyad bcu*), having decided to die, since the retinue requested him not to die, he said: “If so, I will do in that way (*de tsug bya*). You will acquire merit”.”

Ibid. (p.512 lines 1-3): “Lo gsum zhal gyis bzhes nas/ Chos bzang mo mang po yang gsung bla ma rin po che Yang dag rdzong pa dbus mdzad pa bla ma mkhan po Thel pa la stsogs pa rnams kyid khrid dang gdams pa ma lus pa tshar bar mdzad do//”; “Since [Chun 'dor ba] promised to live for three [more] years, he also gave many profound teachings. [Together with] bla ma rin po che Yang dag rdzong pa as the head teacher, he gave the complete *khrid* and *gdams pa* of [masters], such as bla ma mkhan po Thel pa, without exception. Then, three years elapsed”.

Ibid. (p.512 line 6-p.513 line 1): “Zla ba gsum sku mtshams mdzad nas bzhugs drung nye gnas pa la Ye shes yod pa la bco lnga (p.513) la nga 'gro khyod kyis spur la me 'jug phod dam gsung/ mi phod lags dzug mi gsung bar zhu//”; “[Chun 'dor ba] then stayed in meditation for three months. To Ye shes who was in his presence (p.513) he said: “I will be gone on the fifteenth. Would you dare to burn my corpse?”. [The latter] begged him: “I will not dare. Do not ask me this”.”

Ibid. (p.513 line 6): “De yang khyi'i lo khra'i zla ba cho 'phrul chun ngu'i tshes bco bryad la mya ngan las 'das so//”; “With regard to this, [Chun 'dor ba] died on the eighteenth of *khra'i zla ba cho 'phrul chung ngu* (of the dog year)”.

397. *Legs Idan ye shes kyid rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.514 lines 4-6): “De yang gdul bya rigs can la gzigs nas yul sTod mNga' ris kyid sa cha Gangs Ti se dang mtsho Ma pham gyi nub phyogs/ chu bo Ganggā'i 'gram mi ya rabs kyis gang ba'i yul sMug yu bya ba der yab phyug po gSer rgod dang yum phyug mo Dam pa zhes bya ba'i sras su skye ba bzhes so/ yum de ni mkha' 'gro ma'i sprul pa dngos yin no/ de yang chu mo phag gi lo la sku bltam mo//”; “With regard to this, having considered the people to be tamed belonging to a good family, in the land of sTod mNga' ris, west of Gangs Ti se and mtsho Ma pham, at the bank of river Gangga, in the area filled

He was trained by most of Don mo ri pa's disciples. Legs ldan ye shes received the monk vow from 'Jig rten blos btang, teachings on bDe mchog from Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma and on mGon po bya rog ma from Chun dor ba.³⁹⁸ Before going to occupy the throne of Don mo ri in Central Tibet, Legs ldan ye shes went to Ka tse to study 'Dul ba under Don mo ri pa. By the clue in his *rnam thar* that Legs ldan ye shes also received the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from Don mo ri pa who the interlinear note in his biography identifies him as the abbot of Ka tse, a main centre of the 'Bri gung pa in Gu ge and one of the seats of Don mo ri pa.

It is possible that at the local 'Bri gung pa hermitage-monastery Ha la lha khang Mun sel rdzong of Ka tse Ro ha associated with Yang dag rdzong ba gong ma, was where he first met Don mo ri pa and where Don mo ri pa himself sojourned. Ancient murals are still extant in a cave of the area of Ka tse called Nyag, in the absence of literary references, one might surmise, again on stylistic—and thus not definitive—grounds, that they could be specimens of a pre-'Bri gung pa frequentation of the site.

with noble people called sMug yu, here [Legs ldan ye shes] was born as the son of the wealthy father gSer rgod and the wealthy mother Dam pa. The mother truly was the incarnation of a *mkha' gro ma*. He was born in water female pig (1263)".

Ibid. (p.515 line 5): "De nas dgun lo bcu gsum tsam bzhes pa'i dus su cho lo dang mda' byung ba la stogs pa 'jig rten pa'i sgyu rtsal rnams mchog tu gyur pa mkhyen pa yang byung/"; "Then, when he was about thirteen (1275), he became an expert of impermanent performances such as dice and archery".

398. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.516 line 1-p.517 line 1): "De nas lo bzhi tsam klog la stogs pa yon tan gyi gzhi thams cad mthar thug pa slob par mdzad do/ de nas dgun lo bco bryad bzhes pa'i dus su yongs kyi mkhan po 'Jig rten blos btang la rab tu byung ba mdzad do/ mtshan yang Legs ldan ye shes su btags so/ de nas mKha' tser byon mKha' tser mkhan po la 'Dul ba gsan nas ston pa 'Dul ba 'dzin par grags so/ spyid yang rab tu byung nas sku gshegs ka'i bar du dgongs lto mi gsol ba dang btung ba yang bcaid dka' thub mthar phyind par mdzad pa lags so/ de nas dgun lo nyi shu rts lnga bzhes pa'i dus su mkhan po de nyid la bsnyen rdzogs [note: Do mi ri pa la] kyang mdzad/ Hum gyi chos kyang gsan cing thugs su chud par mdzad do/ bla ma ri po che Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma nas bDe mchog gi chos ma lus pa gsan/ bla ma Chu bar ba nas Ye shes kyi mGon po bya rog ma'i chos skor gsan/ Mi g.yo ba'i dmigs pa (p.517) skor gsum yang gsan pa yin gsung/ de nas Khyung lung gi slob dpon rin po che la Phur pa'i chos rnams gsan/"; "Then, for four years (1275-1279), [Legs ldan ye shes] exhaustively studied the foundations of education, such as reading. When he was eighteen years old (1280), he took the *rab tu byung* vow from *yongs kyi mkhan po* 'Jig rten blos btang. He was given his other name Legs ldan ye shes. After going to mKa' tse (spelled so), since he obtained 'Dul ba from the *mkhan po* of mKha' tse, he became known as ston pa 'Dul ba 'dzin pa. In general, ever since he took to the *rab byung* vow until his death, he observed austerities until the end, such as refraining from eating or drinking at the evening meal (*dgongs lto* sic for *dgong lto*). Then, when he was aged twenty-five (1287), he took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from the *mkhan po* himself [note: from Don mo ri pa]. He also obtained instructions on *Hum* and mastered them. He obtained teachings on bDe mchog without exception from bla ma rin po che Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma. He obtained teachings on Ye shes kyi mGon po bya rog ma (i.e. in his form with a crow head) from bla ma Chu bar ba. It is said that he also received *Mi g.yo ba'i dmigs pa* (p.517) *skor gsum* [from bla ma Chu bar ba?]. He then obtained teachings on *Phur pa* from the *slob dpon rin po che* of Khyung lung".

Apart from taking the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from Don mo ri pa—perhaps at Ha la lha khang Mun sel rdzong—Legs ldan yes shes received instructions on the recitation of *Hum* from him. He studied, too, under a teacher said to be the master of Khyung lung, who is unidentified in his *rnam thar*. The reference to the *slob dpon rin po che* of Khyung lung, teacher of Legs ldan yes shes, confirms that this site kept being a bKa' brgyud pa centre from the beginning of the 13th century to at least the takeover of the Sa skya pa and feudatories if not for a longer time. Gu ge lHo stod, where both Ka tse and Khyung lung are located, consistently extended support to the 'Bri gung pa.

If Don mo ri pa was the *slob dpon rin po che* of Khyung lung—a possibility not to be ruled out since he was a native of this locality and studied in its religious institution—the *Phur pa* teachings Legs ldan ye shes received would have been granted to him before 1288, the death year of rDo rje mdzes 'od. Hence this would have happened years after the takeover of mNga' ris stod by the Sa skya pa and feudatories, which would prove that the bKa' brgyud pa affiliations were not uprooted.

Most of the remaining part of *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar* is dedicated to his encounter with an Indian *siddha*, going in the biography by the Tibetan sobriquet of 'Dzam gling grags pa, who had come on a spiritual mission to bring teachings to the people of mNga' ris stod.³⁹⁹ Little is told about him and his religious penchant. He visited mNga' ris stod more than once, mainly in summer, and on one occasion he is said to have left the highlands for Dza lan dha ra, which by no means implies that he was from there, but might indicate the route that he followed to come to and leave from Gu ge.⁴⁰⁰ He was a master of *gtum mo* and meditation,

399. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.517 lines 1-3)*: “De nas grub thob 'Dzam gling grags pa dang mjal ba yin te/ grub thob de ni Sangs rgyas skye ba gcig gis thogs pa yon tan du ma dang ldan pa 'Dzam bu'i gling 'dir nyi zla ltar grags shing gdul bya las can rnam smin par mdzad pa yin pa la/ khyad par du sTod mNga' ris kyi rgyal khams 'dir gdul bya smin par mdzad la gzigs nas byon pa yin te//”; “He then met grub thob 'Dzam gling grags pa. This *grub thob* possessed the many qualities that are put together (*thogs pa*) by means of one life as Sangs rgyas. Given that he was famous like the sun and moon in this 'Dzam bu'i gling and laboured to liberate people to be trained who had a karmic nexus [with him], he came [here] having realised in particular the possibility to make those to be tamed spiritually ripened in this kingdom of sTod mNga' ris”.

400. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.517 line 3-p.518 line 1)*: “De yang dgag e'i zla ba la 'Dza la dha rar byon/ der mi kun na re grub thob cig 'dug zer ba bla ma rin po ches gsan te/ a de dang mjal na thugs pa zhig byung/ da byon na cis kyang mjal dgos syam pa'i thugs dgongs bcug ste/ dus nyin gcig gyi tshe sring mo zhig yod pa na re khar tsang dbyar smad song zer ba'i grub thob de 'dra ba zhig 'dug zer/ gang na 'dug byas pas a ki gong ka na 'dug zer der yi ge 'bri 'phro bor nas byon pas/ sMug yu'i sgang de ka la mjal nas mos pa'i sgo nas phyag gsum mdzad de/ zhabs pyi bos blangs (p.518) nas bskyod pa zhus zhu pas ci byed gsung chos ston gcig kyang gsol bar zhu chos 'brel zhig kyang zhu dgos zhus//”; “With regard to this, ['Dzam gling grags pa] went to 'Dza la dha ra (spelled so) during the last summer month (*dgag e'i zla ba*) (spelled so). *Bla ma rin po che* heard all the people saying: “Here there was one *grub*

teachings that he transmitted to his newly acquired disciple Legs ldan ye shes during a session of fifteen days.⁴⁰¹

After the Indian *siddha* left, Legs ldan ye shes pursued ascetic life induced on him by the practices that he received from 'Dzam gling grags pa. But he was then obliged to leave his native Khyung lung area,⁴⁰² and go to embrace abbatial duties at Yang dag rdzong, the religious institution founded by his teacher Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma.⁴⁰³

thob". A thought arose in [Legs ldan ye shes'] mind: "A! I must meet this one". He came to this mental resolve (*snyam pa'i thugs dgongs bcug*): "I must meet him by all means if ever (*da*) he comes". One day, his sister said: "There is a *grub thob* resembling the one who left last year at the end of summer". Since he asked: "Where is he?", she replied: "He is up there". At that time, he went [to look for him] leaving the remaining writing work unaccomplished. As [Legs ldan ye shes] met him above sMug yu, [Legs ldan ye shes] prostrated thrice due to his faith. Bowing to his feet (p.518), he begged him to come [along with him]. [Legs ldan ye shes] asked him: "What should I do?", he replied: "I request that a religious feast is given. I also need that a personal relation is established"."

401. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.518 line 5-p.519 line 2): "Der sgom phug tu byon nas zla ba phyed tsam khrid kyang btab/ gzhan yang gdams ngag phran tshegs mang po yang gsan gzhan yang gtum mo'i zhal gdams mo'i gdams la stsogs pa gtum mo'i chos skor tshang (p.519) ba gnan/ de la stsogs pa chos mang po thugs su chud pa mdzad nas dang sems skye med du do sprod mdzad pas thugs la sa mā dhi dpag tu med pa 'khrungs bla ma'i yon tan thams cad ni rtogs/"; "Therefore, they went to a meditation cave, and a *khrid* was instilled [in him] for half a month. Moreover, ['Dzam gling grags pa] gave him many minor *gdams ngag-s*. Moreover, he gave him the complete cycle of teachings on *gtum mo*, such as *gTum mo'i zhal gdams* (p.519). After mastering many teachings such as those, since he was introduced [to experience the state of] non-originated absolute mind, uncountable *sa ma dhi* [realisations] were born [in him], due to which he perceived all the qualities of the *bla ma*".

402. A sentence, referring to 'Dzam gling grags pa and Legs ldan ye shes after they left their cave near sMug yu upon the former's departure from mNga' ris stod, indicates more precisely the location of sMug gyu, the native place of Legs ldan ye shes, in the ragged Gu ge territory crossed by the Glang chen kha 'babs. Their next stop after sMug gyu was Khyung lung, and this also contributes to explain the fact that Legs ldan ye shes received teachings from the *slob dpon rin po che* of Khyung lung.

Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo p.520 lines 2-3) says that the two left sMug yu and: "Khyung lung du byon nas de nub der gzims phyi de da log gsung/ da rung mchi lags zhus nas nyi ma phyed gong bar du byon da log gsung/"; "After reaching Khyung lung, that night they slept there. The next morning (*phyi de*) ['Dzam gling grags pa] said: "Now you go back". Since he begged: "I wish to stay still more", they went on together for half a day, and he said: "Now you go back"."

403. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar (bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.521 line 3-p.522 line 3): "De nas lo mang gcig pu gcig bzhugs nas gdams ngag la gnad du bsnun nas sgrub pa kho na mdzad do/ de nas bla ma ri po che Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma mya ngan las 'das pa'i gdan da la bzhugs par zhus nas/ bla ma rin po che Chun 'dor bas kyang khyod bzung dgos gsung nas/ der bla ma bka' mi bcag pa'i ched du 'dzin par zhal gyis bzhes nas/ gong ma rnam kyi sku gdung rir bsrel mchod pa'i gnas thams cad la bzabs tog phun sum tshogs pa ndzad lags so/ de nas Pu rangs ri pa gnyis dang sku 'khor dang bcas pa byon na bla ma Chun 'dor ba'i drung du lo gnyis byon te/ der yang

Upon becoming its abbot, Legs ldan ye shes took charge of rendering service to the tombs, relics and religious objects of his predecessors. The biography of him does not say who these predecessors were. The foundation of Yang dag rdzong pa dates back to a brief amount of time before him, and there were not many predecessors who sat on its throne apart from, obviously, Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma, its founder, and Legs ldan ye shes. Hence, the notion that Legs ldan ye shes had to take care of the relics and the objects of several predecessors was perhaps a cult dedicated to the eminent 'Bri gung pa members other than the local ones, similar to the *mchod rten*-s of rGyang grags. However, the practice did not include the direct preservation of the remains of Senge ge ye shes because they were placed inside a *mchod rten* and sent to 'Bri gung.⁴⁰⁴

Another interesting notion gleaned from the appointment of Legs ldan ye shes as *gdan sa* of Yang dag rdzong is that the incumbency on the *gdan sa* was awarded on a rotating basis. The biography of him says that, after completing his turn as abbot, he was able to concentrate on ascetic practice.

He was a typical 'Bri gung pa exponent from mNga' ris stod of his time, since he spent his entire adult life in his native land under the control of Sa skya, which did not prevent him

thugs (p.522) kyi dgongs pa thams cad bsgrubs par mdzad cing ci mnyes pa'i zhabs tog kyang mdzad/ drung nas kyang khrid dang gdams ngag ma lus par dge bzhin du gngang ba lags so/ de nas gdan 'khor nas gdan sa Yang dag rdzong du chags phab nas gnas der yang lo mang por sgrub pa'i rgyal mtshan btsugs nas gdul bya ma lus pa smin pa dang grol bar mdzad do//"; "Thereafter, [Legs ldan ye shes] only performed meditation by being alone for many years and focusing on the practice of the *gdams ngag* [he had received]. Given then that he was asked to occupy the *gdan sa* after the death of Yang dag rdzong pa gong ma ("the elder"), since bla ma rin po che Chun 'dor ba also said: "You must hold [the *gdan sa*]", he accepted because he could not disregard his *bla ma*'s order, and thus rendered a virtuous service to all the tombs of the predecessors, their relics and the cult objects (*mchod pa'i gnas*). After leaving with two Pu rangs *ri pa*-s and his retinue, he went to stay with bla ma Chun 'dor ba for two years. Here as well, (p.522) he fulfilled all the latter's wishes and rendered service to him to his satisfaction. [Chun 'dor ba] happily gave him *khrid*-s and *gdams ngag*-s without exception. Then, after his turn as *gdan [sa]* (*gdan 'khor*), by settling at gdan sa Yang dag rdzong, he hoisted the banner of meditation for many years and emancipated people to be trained".

404. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.488 lines 3-6): "De nas nye gnas bzhi dang/ rin po che Don mo ri pa'i bu slob la stsogs pa nams kyi/ rin po che ju gser zho brgyad nyi shu gcig na bza' la sol ba'i gdung rten dpangs la mtho bcu gsum yod pa zhig bzhangs nas/ nang na bKa' brgyud kyi bla ma nams kyi rten mang po dang/ gzungs mang po dang/ phyag dpe' nams dang/ gdung ma 'thor ba dang/ thugs ljags dang bcas pa go rim legs par bzhugs/ Dus gsum gyi Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi bzhugs gnas/ 'Og min ltugs po bkod pa'i zhing khams/ 'Bri gung thel na bzhugs so//"; "The four *nye gnas* and bla ma Don mo ri pa's disciples then made the funerary reliquary, thirteen *mtho* in height, with the covering decorated with [a coating of] eight *zho* of gold and twenty-one precious corals. Inside it, many images of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s, many *mantra*-s, books and entire relics, [Senge ge ye shes]'s heart and tongue were put there inside in this order. It was installed at 'Bri gung thel, which is the abode of the Sangs rgyas of the Three Times and the paradise of 'Og min ltugs po".

to practice his school's teachings, a sign that the Sa skya pa hegemony on the "upper side" was bland. The Sa skya pa control of mNga' ris was politically exclusive but not in the field of religion.

Legs ldan ye shes died in wood monkey 1344.⁴⁰⁵

▪ Later 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin*-s

In a statement that sounds like an overclaim, 'Bri gung *Ti se lo rgyus* says that the 'Bri gung pa continued to prosper at Gangs Ti se during the time of Dar ma rgyal mtshan, the *rdor 'dzin* who was at the mountain during the early years of the control over mNga' ris by the Sa skya pa alliance (ibid. f.31b line 5, and f.32a lines 2-3).

Deb ther sngon po (p.1210 lines 3-10; *Blue Annals* p.1040) has a short biography of Sangs rgyas ri pa, a lineage holder of 'Khor ba rgyun gcod teachings (the "interruption of *samsara* unfolding"), transmitted in Tibet by Mitra dzo gi. 'Gos lo tsa ba says that Sangs rgyas ri pa was a *rdor 'dzin* at Gangs Ti se for five years sometime after turning twenty years of age. The appellative *ri pa* was perhaps given to him owing to his sojourn at the mountain.

The assertion in *Deb ther sngon po* that he became the *ti shri* of the sTod Hor brings back to the same requirement, the one of deciphering the identity of this *ulus*: whether it was Hul-lu-hu's Mongols who became the Il-khanid or the Chagatai but not the Mongols who took over South Turkestan with the conquest by Jingir rgyal po's general, Je be, in the years 1218-1221 (See Boyer transl., *History of the World Conqueror* by 'Ala-ad-din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini vol.1 p.66-69; Boyle, "The Mongol World Empire" p.616a-b, Walker, *Jenghiz khan* p.75-77 and especially p.78; 'Bri gung *gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* p.23 line 3-p.24 line 2). The conquest of South Turkestan was not conducive to the formation of any new *ulus*.

The formation of the sTod Hor as an ethno-political entity dates to the split of the Mongol tribes after the death of Mon gor rgyal po in 1258 and the subsequent ascension of Se chen rgyal po to the imperial throne in 1260 after he defeated A ri bo gha.

It is unclear when Sangs rgyas ri pa became the *ti shri* of the sTod Hor and whether he was the 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* before this appointment. A look at the sequence of these emissaries of the school does not solve the matter but at least helps to form a vague idea.

The master of Sangs rgyas ri pa was known as Bya bral chen po in the passage dealing with the transmission of 'Khor ba rgyun gcod (*Deb ther sngon po* p.1209 line 15-p.1210 line 3; *Blue Annals* p.1040). He was a monk at Thel ('Bri gung thel or gDan sa thel?), thus a 'Bri gung pa or Phag mo gru pa—the closeness between the two bKa' brgyud pa schools in secular and religious matter during the period is well known. He belonged to the *smyon pa* ("madman") tradition.

405. *Legs ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar* (*bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.523 line 6-p.524 line 1): "dGung lo bryad bcu rtsa gnyis pa la sa ri sa ga zla ba'i skar ma rGyal byung ba'i tshes bryad kyi srod 'khor tsam mya ngan las 'das pa chen po yongs su mya ngan las 'das so//"; "When [Legs ldan ye shes] was eighty-two years old (1344), during *sa ri* (one of the twenty-eight constellations, possibly the 14th lunar mansion?) *sa ga zla ba* with the star rGyal, on the eight day, around the early part of the night, (p.524) he died".

Deb ther sngon po says that Bya bral chen po met both rje btsun Mid la (1036 or 1040-1123) and Dwags po lHa rje (1079-1253). This is a pious embellishment devoid of historical validity given that '*Khor ba rgyun gcod* was brought to Tibet by Mitra dzo gi who spent eighteen months on the plateau during the years 1198-1199. Bya bral chen po and Sangs rgyas ri pa were holders of the lineage sometime thereafter.

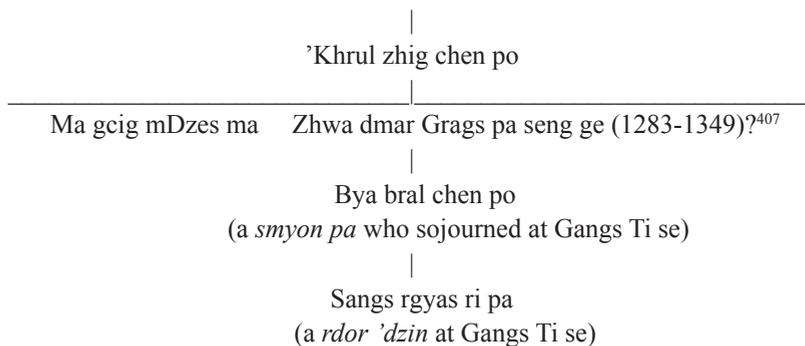
Mitra dzo gi

|

Ma gcig Re ma (d. 1235)⁴⁰⁶

406. *Jo bo yab sras las 'phros pa'i skyes bu dam pa 'ga'zhig gi byon pa'i tshul bstan rtsis* (f.10b line 5-f.11a line 4): "Ma cig Ri ma ni/ yul Nyang stod Sham po yab dKon mchog grags dang yum rGya mo bzung nge gnyis la sras gnyis sras mo gnyis ste/ bzhi yod pa'i mtha' lhag yin/ lo bcu bzhi pa la mkhan po sNgo gdong pa Byang grags dang las slob Dar ma rin chen gnyis la rab tu byung mdzad/ Dar ma byang chub du btags/ mkhan po la bKa' gdams Lam rim gsan pas sTong nyid bsgom tshul ma byung nas dge bshes lHag cung pa la bKa' gdams Lam rim/ bDen gnyis kyi khrid la sogs gsan/ 'O yug lHag cung pa'i slob ma ston pa Shes rab seng ge la chos nyan pas/ nyams rtogs smras pas (f.11a) Sa gtam sGa le'i cho'phrul yin/ khyod la nyams rtogs de 'dra skye ma ran/ snying po rem la srong zed gsang gtam smras pa mi 'dug nyam pa cig byung/ nyer gnyis pa la sGrol ma zhal gzigs/ so bdun pa la mThong lam thob par bshad do/ de nas rTa nag gi rdzong gi ri/ lCims kyi ri dang Phug mo'i brag la bzhugs/ Khams bsgoms Chos kyi bla ma/ rTa phug pa/ gTsang pa Jo sras nmams la yang chos 'grel de zhus/ lug lo'i dbyar la Tsha tsha mo'i ri la byon/ der khams 'dus drag po bsnung/ rgyal tshas kyang ma sol/ rang gar bzhag pas dangs/ 'brug gi lo dpyid zla 'bring po/ bya zla'i nyi shu brgyad gyi nub mo bshegs pa'i tshel/ lCe bsgoms dgung lo lnga bcu lnga cig bzhes pa yin no/ lCe bsgom bsgom pa'i rdor las 'byung ngo/'"; "Ma cig Ri ma was born at yul Nyang stod Sham po from father dKon mchog grags and mother rGya mo bzung nge, these two. They had two sons and two daughters, altogether four and she was the youngest. When she was fourteen, she was ordained to the monastic vow by sNgo gdong pa Byang grags [acting as] *mkhan po* and Dar ma rin chen [acting as] *las slob*, these two. She was called Dar ma byang chub. Since she received *bKa' gdams Lam rim* from the *mkhan po*, as it was not possible [for her] to receive instructions on the meditation on *stong [pa] nyid*, she obtained the *khrid* of *bKa' gdams Lam rim* and *bDen gnyis* ("the two truths") from dge bshes lHag cung pa. Since she heard teachings from ston pa Shes rab seng ge, the disciple of 'O yug lHag cung pa, as she disclosed to him her spiritual experiences, he said: (f.11a) "This is the miracle of Sa gtam sGa le. You are not yet ready to generate spiritual realisations. Recite the essential [*mantra*] with perseverance". The thought came to her not to disclose secret accounts. When she was twenty-two years old, she had the vision of sGrol ma. At age twenty-seven, she said she obtained *mThong lam* ("path of seeing the truth"). Then, she stayed at the mountain of rTa nag rdzong, the mountain of lCims and Phug mo'i brag. She asked to establish a religious link with Khams bsgoms Chos kyi bla ma, rTa phug pa and gTsang pa Jo sras. In the sheep year, she went to Tsha tsha mo'i ri during summer. Here, she felt seriously sick as her *dhatu-s* ("components of one's health") became weak. She did not even take any ailment to improve (*rgyal tshas kyang ma sol*). She healed by being left by herself. When she died in the evening of the twenty-eighth of the middle month of spring [called] *bya zla ba* of the dragon year, lCe bsgom was aged fifty-one. This is a summary of the meditators [known as] lCe bsgom".

The death of Ma gcig mDzes ma having occurred when her disciple, lCe bsgom ri ba otherwise mKha' skyong Brag pa (1185-1259), was fifty-one years old, means that her passing occurred in



The historical placement of Sangs rgyas ri pa as 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* at Gangs Ti se must have fallen after Dar ma rgyal mtshan who, according to *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus*, was a contemporary of gCung rin po che rDo rje grags pa, the 'Bri gung abbot in office from 1255 to 1278 (see *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* f.31b line 5). Dar ma rgyal mtshan was the successor of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan who was sponsored by the Guge Pu hrang king Grags pa lde (d. 1277). Hence Dar ma rgyal mtshan was *rdor 'dzin* when mNga' ris passed under Sa skya and its feudatories. *'Bri gung Ti se lo rgyus* talks about an exorbitant number of 'Bri gung *ri pa*-s during his time at the sacred mountain and many localities where they were settled (see above n.242), which would be one more sign of Sa skya pa openness to other creeds, but the claim in this source sounds like an exaggeration. Sangs rgyas ri pa's tenure of the *rdor 'dzin* post fell still after that nodal point in the history of Upper West Tibet.

This was around the time when the disciples of Don mo ri pa and their own disciples were active, and it seems that religious masters such as 'Jig rten blos btang, 'Od sku brtse ba, Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma, Chun 'dor ba and then Legs ldan ye shes embodied with their existence that season of 'Bri gung pa activity marked by conspicuous insularity. The role of the 'Bri gung *rdor 'dzin* at Gangs Ti se was no more pivotal.

wood sheep 1235 rather than in a dragon year as the text says (the nearest dragon year was 1232 when lCe bsgom ri ba would have been aged forty-nine).

Jo bo yab sras las 'phros pa'i skeyes bu dam pa 'ga' zhig gi byon pa'i tshul bstan rtsis (f.10a lines 4-5) says about lCe bsgom ri ba: "Yul rTa nag dgra 'dul du yab Nya ba Lug skyabs dang yum rDo rje grub gnyis kyi sras su shing mo sbrul la 'khrungs//"; "He was born at the locality rTa nag dgra 'dul in wood female snake (1185) as the son of his father Nya ba Lug skyabs and his mother rDo rje grub".

407. The reliability of the outline of the transmission lineage of *'Khor ba rgyun gcod* in *Deb ther sngon po* remains open to questioning further, for it seems improbable that, another of its holders, 'Khrul zhig chen po could have met Mitra dzo gi when the latter was in Tibet in 1198-1199 and Zhwa dmar pa Grags pa seng ge (1283-1349) too.

Hermit life and secularism: a last look from the perspective of the 12th-13th century bKa' brgyud pa

The great bKa' brgyud pa masters of the 12th century should be credited with the creation of an ingenious system that took into consideration the reality of those days:

- the need firmly to establish their school along the ascetic line traced by their *pha jo bo*, rje btsun Mid la,
- the hard fact of an ever-growing *sangha* and
- the surging of several local powers in distant lands of the plateau, at its fringes and beyond it.

Hence the *bla ma*-s of the various bKa' brgyud pa schools conceived for their disciples the dual role of hermit-saints to uphold the tradition of the school and diplomats to promote their position with the power on the secular stage of the day. The entire spectrum of the political situation was taken into consideration, and disciples were posted in areas where they could interact with rulers who held a major political influence. In return, the religious assistance provided to the regional rulers also extended to the secular sphere.⁴⁰⁸ A consequence of these relations was that the bKa' brgyud pa congregations, in particular the 'Bri gung pa, amassed conspicuous fortunes used for the maintenance of the monastic community.⁴⁰⁹

408. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan, *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser 'phreng* (p.83 lines 12-13): "Di skabs shig Hor dmag gis Mi nyag gi rgyal khams bcom/ de'i mi rnam srog gi 'jigs pa las skyabs//"; "This was one occasion in which the Hor troops raided the kingdom of Mi nyag. [Jig rten mgon po] protected its people from the fear of loosing their life".

See above (n.18) for statements from the sources concerning 'Jig rten mgon po's protection of the kingdom of Mi nyag from the Mongols for twelve years as well as rDo rje gdan from Muslim invaders on one occasion.

409. I introduce here one more instance of the many found in the bKa' brgyud pa literature concerning the great quantity of donations received. 'Bri gung gling She rab 'byung gnas, *'Jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar* (p.116 line 5-p.117 line 2) reads: "mDzad pa cung zad tsam mgo smos pa yin gyi rgyas par nyin cig gi mdzad yang bsam gyis mi khyab pa rgyas pa tsam zhig tu gyur pas bri yis mi lang zhing mtha' mi mngon no/ de ltar sku rab tu gshegs nas mthar mya sngan las 'das kyi bar du dgung lo bzhi bcu tham par tshogs pa skyangs te phyogs bcu'i bu slob dang yon bdag rnam ky'i 'bul ba dang zhabs tog la ni nyi ma cig la gser 'bum tshar brgyad dang ma mi res kyang dus cig tu gser gyi po ti brgya phul ba man chad la gsar gyi mDo rgyas tshar nyi brgya la gsum gyis ma longs pa bzhes te khri brgyad stong pa dang khri pa dang glegs bam la sogs pa tshar brgya'am stong ngam khri'am 'bum la (p.117) sogs pa smra bar mi nus so zang zing rta'i brgya 'bul lam de bzhin du 'dzo'am g.yu'am dar ram/ mdzo mo'am/ 'bri'am/ gser ram/ nas sam/ bud med kyi rgyan 'bul lam gnag rta stong man chad nas nyung ba re re gnyis nas nyi ma re re'i 'bul//"; "Since even his daily activity included so many deeds that mind cannot conceive, I do not even begin to write about them, for they never approach an end. Likewise, from when he took the *rab tu* [*byung*] vow until his death, he protected the assembly for forty years (1179-1217). The offerings and the services given to him by the disciples and sponsors from the ten directions are as follows. He was offered, in one day, eight sets of gold written 'Bum or else up to one hundred volumes of gold written books offered by a single person on one occasion, which are short of three [volumes] to make a set of two hundred volumes of large-sized *mDo* written in gold. One cannot

The system envisaged at that time was based on the principle that the secular relations with the powers of Tibet were conducive to the opening of hermitage places, and the retreat life was instrumental in the institution of secular relations with the powers of Tibet.

The biographical material offers evidence that the bKa' brgyud pa disciples opted for hermit life in the style of rje btsun Mid la, but often with some reluctance, to comply with the orders of their *bla ma*-s. The austerities of hermit life went hand in hand with preeminent awareness of the political reality in which the retreat activities were undertaken. This was not their choice again, for their *bla ma*-s exhorted them to establish links with all the powers of the period.

However, there were different nuances in the approach adopted by the various bKa' brgyud pa schools. Especially those concerning the opening of the "door" of the hermitage at Gangs Ti se were multifaceted.

The Tshal pa, who pursued a much less ambitious policy of settling in the lands on the "upper side" than the 'Bri gung pa, were able to establish themselves in these regions with better ease. Once settled in mNga' ris, they knotted ties with the local powers which had to recognize the presence of the Tshal pa in their territories. The case of the second abbot of rTa sga, Dharma bsod nam's mutual support with the Pu hrang *jo bo* is symptomatic.

The school of bla ma Zhang had a much less confrontational attitude, to the extent that they had a relatively easy-going relation with the Sa skya pa even when the Yuan emissaries came to power. A telling case is that, like the Sa skya pa, the Tshal pa had sided with Se chen rgyal po's faction and against the one of A ri bo gha when they two vied for the imperial throne (see above n.413). This was not the case of the 'Bri gung pa who fought the 1290 *gling log* against the Sa skya pa and their Yuan masters.

Pursuing the policy of creating in the main direct interaction with the local authorities, the 'Bri gung pa often had to depend on conditions external to their will or straight religious matters. To these difficulties one must add that sometime the relations among them were embittered by personal feuds with other fellow bKa' brgyud pa. The 'Bri gung pa were thus less prompt in establishing themselves in the regions of mNga' ris, although they were the earliest to have tried to do so. But when they were able to establish themselves, they could benefit of their relations with the local authorities and have a bigger share of control of these lands.

even speak about the hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousand volumes [he received] such as the volumes of *Khri brGyad stong pa* and *Khri pa*. (p.117) Concerning the *brgya 'bul* ("offering of 100") of horses and material goods, and, likewise, 'dzo (sic for *mdzo*), tea, turquoise, silk, female 'dzo (spelled so for *mdzo*), 'bri, gold, barley, ornaments for women and cattle up to 1,000 horses were given at least twice everyday".

The early phases of the bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of Gangs Ti se: a summary

- The inception of the relations between the bKa' brgyud pa and the eminent people of the "upper side" was the invitation by the king of mNga' ris skor gsum, rTse lde, to Mid la bZhad pa'i rdo rje, which went unattended. Subsequently rje btsun Mid la was able to go to Gangs Ti se.
- While the tradition believes that rje btsun Mid la sanctified the mountain by leaving a profound mark of his extraordinary qualities and personally contributed to the sacredness of the site, it does not associate him with Ma pham g.yu mtsho. The tradition does not consider the holy lake a theatre of his supramundane display of mystical capacities.
- The sources do not record any momentous activity undertaken at Gangs Ti se by Mid la's disciples and the disciples of these disciples for quite some time thereafter. It was Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110-1170) the early post-Dwags po bKa' brgyud master most sensible to continue sGam po pa's legacy, who sanctioned its sanctity by addressing the crucial importance of bKa' brgyud pa frequentation of the mountain to his disciples.
- Zhang g. Yu grags pa and sKyob ba 'Jig rten mgon po actualised the hermitage retreats by creating the conditions to open the holy places, as wished by 'gro mgon Phag mo gru pa. Their Tshal pa and 'Bri gung pa followers fulfilled the task in several phases.
- The presence of 'Bri gung pa and Tshal pa pioneers in mNga' ris was separated by a few years. It was coincidental since the heads of the various schools realised that their monastic networks needed external support.
- Unsettled conditions in mNga' ris stod—the land was ravaged by the destructive invasion of 1193-1194 from the southern border—prevented grub thob Ngad phu pa to do no more than an explorative attempt at establishing the 'Bri gung pa in sTod during his mission. Sangs rgyas Tshal pa, instead, settled successfully in mNga' ris smad which was peaceful after it underwent much damage.
- Sangs rgyas Tshal pa was accompanied by a small group of followers. In fact, he asked Tshal Gung thang for reinforcements when he founded rTa sga. Ngad phu pa travelled with a more substantial group of hermits. Ngad phu pa perhaps opened the door of Ti se holy place to the 'Bri gung pa but his attempt was temporary and, therefore, inconclusive.
- The Pu hrang jo bo sTag tsha Khri 'bar brought back his land to past flourishing by supporting the Tshal pa rTa sga ba and the Pu hrang Tshal pa. This shows well enough that stability was resumed and a season of bKa' brgyud insemination was introduced.
- A new major wave of 'Bri gung pa hermits in 1208 was able to establish the school at Gangs Ti se partially. Given the remarkable authority commanded by sTag tsha Khri 'bar in the religious and secular fields, the possibility that the 'Bri gung pa moderate success depended on Pu hrang pa weakness needs to be ruled out. The reason for the inability of the 'Bri gung pa to establish themselves at the mountain should be imputed to organization weakness and disagreements between gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa that undermined the situation. gNyos chen po could not even establish his reputation with sTag tsha on that

occasion. Other 'Bri gung pa masters went separately to Ti se in the next years and frequented the Kathmandu Valley like gNyos lHa nang pa and 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa had done.

- In 1215, the 'Bri gung pa were headed once again by gNyos lHa nang pa but no more by 'Gar dam pa who was sent by 'Jig rten mgon po to the opposite sector, Khams and farther east. The appointment of a 'Bri gung rdor 'dzin at Gangs Ti se—the first of them was Ghu ya sgang pa— indicates that, this time, the conditions for their presence were better organised with a representative settled permanently in loco.

- A new major wave of 'Bri gung pa at Gangs Ti se was headed in 1219 by 'Jig rten mgon po's nephew, 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas. This expedition brought to conclusion the phase of diffusion of this bKa' brgyud pa school in the lands on the “upper side” that availed of the system of a combined ascetic and secular effort.

'Bri gung gling pa concentrated on establishing ties with Jig gir rgyal po's generals and on fortifying those with Ya rtse. He availed of Mongol sponsorship to patronise the two “side brothers” of Kha char, made by the Pu hrang jo bo rNal mgon lde. His travelling companion, grub thob Seng ge yes shes, expanded the religious influence to Dol po, Mang yul and Sle mi.

- Most 'Bri gung pa *ri pa*-s who belonged to these phases were not local. They were dBus pa and Khams pa, and their presence at Gangs Ti se was more occasional than definitive, a pilgrimage that corresponded often with a period of meditation. The Tshal pa were either local—the initiator of the sTod Tshal pa was lHa phyug mkhar pa, who was not a sTod pa himself but several of his sTod Tshal pa disciples were from mNga' ris—otherwise they were masters transferred to sTod for good.

- A strong sense of rivalry was typical in the relations between the different bKa' rgyud schools. The 'Brug pa and 'Bri gung pa nurtured dissent in order to open the “door” of the Tsa ri pilgrimage. Rivalry among schools is documented after the “door” of Gangs Ti se was opened. The 'Bri gung pa expressed hostility towards the 'Brug pa masters, rGod tshang pa and then U rgyan pa.

- A friend of rGod tshang pa was at sKyang phan Nam mkha' rdzong, sanctified by rje btsun Mid la, because he did not know where else to go. All the other Mid la's *rdzong* were occupied by the ubiquitous 'Bri gung pa. sKyang dpal rDo rje sangs rgyas said that the entire 'Dzam bu gling was filled with 'Jig rten mgon po's disciples.⁴¹⁰ Nonetheless, the 'Brug pa, who

410. Sangs rgyas dar po and rGyal thang ba bDe chen rdo rje, *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* (p.90 line 14-p.91 line 3): “De na rdzong drug du byon nas/ grogs po skyang dpal rDo rje sangs rgyas kyang skyang dpal Nam mkha' rdzong na bzhugs 'dug pa dang mjal bas/ khong gi zhal nas nga dang po a khu jo bo 'Bri khung pa 'di mams rna bas mi thos pa'i sa phyogs shig tu 'gro bsam pas de dus rdzong drug gi phyogs de na Shar gling bya ba'am/ Ri 'dabs bya ba'am/ (p.91) Klong bya'am 'Bri khung pa'i sgom chen mang po bzhugs 'dug pas/ chos rje 'Bri khung pa'i bu rgyud kyis 'Dzam bu gling ma khyab mi 'dug//”; “Then, since he went to the *rdzong drug*, he met his friend sKyang dpal rDo rje sangs rgyas who was staying at sKyang dpal Nam mkha' rdzong. [sKyang dpal rDo rje sangs rgyas] said: “First, I thought of going to a place where I will not hear with my ears about a *khu* 'Bri khung ba. At this time, since many 'Bri khung pa are staying in the areas of the *rdzong drug*, at Shar gling, or else at Ri 'dabs (p.91), or at Klong, many meditators of

complained of the obsessive presence of the 'Bri gung pa in the world of hermitages frequented by rje btsun Mid la, did exactly the same. The 'Brug pa did not leave any of those places untouched.⁴¹¹

- Following the establishment of the various bKa' bgyud pa schools at Ti se—the Tshal pa, 'Bri gung pa and 'Brug pa, while the sTag lung pa and Karma pa had a marginal role—a phase began in which the bKa' bgyud pa increased their local power. Internal rivalry coincided with enhanced provincialism and insularity of their proponents, some of whom, however, were holders of great transmissions.

- After they had linked ties with the major powers in the lands on the “upper side”, the bKa' bgyud pa hermit-diplomats also attracted the support of minor rulers. The outcome was that, everywhere they went, they could count on major or minor sponsorship. The local powers which had not yet established these contacts with them were eager to initiate them upon arrival of these masters in their land.

- Establishing relations with minor rulers was particularly the case of the period successive to 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas's mission to the border of the “ocean of sand”. Most local powers in the lands on the “upper side” became associated with the 'Bri gung pa, and the phase of provincialism and insularity began. This state of affairs is exemplified by the life example of Seng ge ye shes who had the Dol po *slob dpon*, sgom Dar, and the Lan bde *yon bdag*, rNga rtseng, for sponsors.

- The next period marked by the surge to power of Sa skya signed the end of bKa' bgyud pa predominance in the lands on the “upper side”.

- On the religious side, the pioneering approach adopted by the early bKa' bgyud pa turned around a full circle and reached the ultimate with Legs ldan ye shes, the last 'Bri gung pa dealt with in this book of mine. No more bKa' bgyud pa proponents travelled to distant lands in their fervour to have mystical experiences—Shri na ga dPal gyi ri bo, Dza lan dhara, U rgyan, Bal po, “the ocean of sand” and many other lands; or the impressive presence of the disciples of sTag lung thang pa in foreign lands.

- Still a few isolated individuals were able to venture in foreign lands such as U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal. Another was Shes rab bla ma, a sTag lung pa who went as far as U rgyan (see below p.295-298). One more was dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (see my “dByil ston Khyung-rgod-rtsal: the *'das-log* travelogue and *gter ma* rediscoveries”, read at the 8th IATS Seminar in Bloomington 1998).

- Legs ldan ye shes received teachings from an Indian *siddha* who himself dared to attempt difficult journeys like the earlier bKa' bgyud pa used to do and kept coming to mNga' ris stod, probably attracted by the sacredness of the Gangs Ti se region.

the 'Bri gung pa reside [there]. No [place] in 'Dzam bu gling that is not occupied by the lineages of disciples of chos rje 'Bri khung pa”.”

411. The biography of gTsang pa rGya ras contained in *Deb ther sngon po* says that the 'Brug pa ascetics filled every place in 'Dzam bu gling (ibid. p.785 lines 5-6): “Bya rgod kyi nyin lam bco bgyad du 'Brug pa'i bu slob kyis ma khyab pa med bya ba byung/”, “The saying was formulated that “there is no place at a distance of a vulture's eighteenth day journey not occupied by the 'Brug pa disciples”.

During the one hundred years from the second half of the 12th century until the second quarter of the 13th the bKa' brgyud pa were quick in establishing themselves in several territories around Tibet and outside it as soon as the political circumstances in Tibet allowed them to do so.

The bKa' brgyud pa controlled the greatest hermitages of the land and beyond, and obtained important allies in the territories where they were active from Upper West Tibet to the Ordos region. They were unable to establish relations with the rulers of Bal po on a permanent basis, but the failure later proved not to have been so crucially negative.

This state of affairs demonstrates that the *yon mchod* relation, developed in the successive Mongol and Yuan/Sa skya period, had a phase of advanced incubation during those decades and was an indigenous formulation, meant for Tibetans by Tibetans. It found application also in the case of foreign powers.

The major weak point in the implementation of their policy was that the bKa' brgyud pa failed to secure the crucial alliances to themselves. The rulers of mNga' ris were not enough politically decisive to earn hegemony in Tibet to the bKa' brgyud pa. Other alliances failed for different reasons. Whereas they were never able to establish close and lasting links with the leadership in Bal po, they lost a preeminent ally in the kingdom of Mi nyag 'Ga which was trashed by Jing gir rgyal po.

During those one hundred years or so, a double pressure was exercised on Tibet. The Muslims made their presence felt from the south and the Mongols from the northeast and northwest. If the Muslim's pressure from the south apparently represented the worst danger due to the extreme differences in the doctrine, it was their Mongol sponsors who dismantled, in the next period, the carefully built castle of bKa' brgyud pa hegemony, both secular and religious like the 1290 *gling log* proves.

Although the bKa' brgyud pa schools received patronage from several Mongol princes at a price of tribute given to them, they sided with the losers in the Mongol hierarchy when the several Hor princes fought for power. With the exception of the Tshal pa who stood by the winning faction of the Mongols, the bKa' brgyud pa were seen with an antagonistic eye by the Hor who emerged victorious from the internal feuds.⁴¹² Due to the combination of the two

412. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.894 lines 8-18): "De nas lo lnga pa lcags spre la rgyal po chen po de sMan tse'i yul du gshegs/ rgyal po'i sras dang blon po rnams kyis Jing gi sras bdun pa A ri bo ga rgyal sar bton/ rgyal bu Go dan sogs Mi nyag na yod pa rnams kyis Jing gi sras bzhi pa Go be la Se chen gan rgyal sar bton te rgyal po gnyis su chad/ Sa Tshal phyi slob ma rGa ras bya ba gShin rje la nus pa thob pa zhih gis rgyal po A ri bo ga 'gugs chog gis bkug ste bkrongs/ rgyal khams thams cad 'khrugs/ spyir Sa skya'i dpon chen Shākya bzang po/ Tshal pa'i Zi na Shes rab skyabs/ Khams su rin po che sTon tshul rnams Go be la rgyal bur bzhugs dus kyis bskyangs pas sa chod shin tu che ba'i tshel/ 'Bri khung pa'i khri dpon rDo rje dpal dBus kyi dpon byed pas rgyal po Mong gor gan gyi drung du phyin te A ri bo ga la brten nas Go be la dang gdong bsher byas/"; "Then, five years later, in iron monkey (1260), that emperor (i.e. Mon 'gor rgyal po) died in the land of sMan rtse. The king's son and ministers put A ri bo ga, the seventh son of Jing gi, on the throne. rGyal bu Go dan and those staying in Mi nyag put Jing gi's fourth son, Go be la Se chen gan, on the throne. [The kingdom] was divided between two kings. The one known as rGa ras [pa], who was the *phyi* (sic for *spyi*?, "common") disciple of Sa [skya pa and] Tshal [pa], who had

factors the Hor pa aggressive policy towards the neighbours as well as the fact that the bKa' brgyud pa had picked up the wrong horses, the fortunes of the bKa' brgyud pa declined sensibly after years of effulgence.

Another major factor responsible for the bKa' brgyud pa schools' failure to climb to a dominant position in Tibet in the long run, was that, despite their interest in secular affairs, they never gave up the main feature of their tradition, i.e. the practise of meditation and the adoption of hermit life. This distanced them from the powers with whom they had established relations. On the other hand, they were not enough detached from secular events to avoid coming into a collision route with the Sa skya pa when they felt that they had suffered wrongdoings on their part, which was fatal to their fortunes.

Beyond Gangs Ti se: the deeds of bKa' brgyud bla ma-s on other lands on the "upper side"

▪ Ye shes bla ma, a sTag lung pa in the "Western Regions"

Ye shes bla ma (1279-1312), a disciple of bKra shis bla ma (1231-1297) and thus a sTag lung dKa' brgyud pa, is a master reputed for his frequentation of the "upper side", for he travelled all the way to U rgyan (see his biography in *sTag lung chos 'byung* p.318 line 14-p.326 line 8).

Ye shes bla ma went first to the Kathmandu Valley in iron pig 1311 and then moved from territory to territory, heading towards the Indo-Iranic borderlands. He reached U rgyan but soon after he met an untimely death on his way back. The peculiarity of Ye shes bla ma's journey rests upon his going to U rgyan not by crossing the Tibetan plateau but through the lands of India.

A major weak point of the short *Ye shes bla ma'i rnam thar* in *sTag lung chos 'byung* that describes his travel is that the territories he went to are often unidentified. They are simply called *rgyal phran* ("minor kingdoms"). The biography makes a few exceptions in this absence of identifications since it mentions U rgyan, Dza lan dha ra, Kha che and Ma ru.

The miracle that grub thob La ba pa performed in U rgyan, recorded for instance in Zla ba seng ge's *U rgyan pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa* which says that hostile *mkha' 'gro ma-s* pelted him

power over gShin rje, "summoned" (*bkug*) rgyal po A ri bo ga with a ritual of "summons" (*'gugs chog*) and killed him. The entire kingdom was in unrest. In general, since Sa skya'i dpon chen Shākya bzang po, Tshal pa'i Zi na Shes rab skyabs, and rin po che sTon Tshul in Khams were ruling when Go be la was [still] a prince, their share of land greatly expanded. At that time, rDo rje dpal, the *khri dpon* of the 'Bri khung pa, who was the dBus kyi *dpon*, due to his leaning towards A ri bo ga, went to see Mong gor Gan and had a confrontation with Go be la. He asked [him] various [explanations] about what was true and false. He spat in Go be la's face and left". This proves that the loyalty of the Sa skya pa bloc towards Go pe la had already materialised during the reign of Mon 'gor rgyal po, which was subsequently rewarded by Se chen rgyal po.

with a shower of huge stones which he stopped in the sky where they remained still, is useful to confirm that Ye shes bla ma went to U rgyan since he had a *tshogs 'khor* under those rocks.⁴¹³

The journey of Ye shes bla ma took him, in summary, to the following lands:

- he went on a pilgrimage to some holy places and lands of Central Tibet—the Ra sa Jo bo, gDan sa thel, lHo brag, Sa skya, rTsibs ri and Ding ri lha 'khor—and then crossed the Himalayan range to Bal po. After a sojourn here, he moved to areas of Gangetic India to the south of the Kathmandu Valley;⁴¹⁴

- he returned to Bal po and conceived the idea of going to U rgyan, which he then did;⁴¹⁵

- he left this land, only briefly treated in his *rnam thar*, crossed an unidentified *rgyal phran*—definitely more than one—and proceeded to Dza lan dha ra;⁴¹⁶

- he then travelled to Kha che, where he saw such famous images as the statues of sGrol ma and rDo rje Phag mo, the footprints of Nā ro pa and a big city;⁴¹⁷

413. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.321 line 19-p.322 line 3): “Ri shin tu che ba gnyis kyi bar du chu bo 'bab pa ri'i rked pa tsam nas sba zam nas gyis sbrel ba gcig 'dug pa sogs la bde bar byon/ slob dpon Lwa ba pa la mu stegs kyi mkha' 'gro mas rdo char phab pa rdzu 'phrul gyis nam mkha' la chags pa de phyis ze dma' la song nas lag pas reg tsam na dga' ba de'i 'og tu tshogs 'khor gcig btang/'”; “There was a river flowing between two very high mountains. They easily crossed a bamboo bridge linking the peak of the mountains. Slob dpon Lwa ba pa was attacked [here] by several *mu stegs mkha' 'gro ma*-s with a shower of stones (p.322), which he miraculously stopped in the sky. Later, [the stones] descended lower and lower until they were within the reach of one's hand. Under these stones they (i.e. Ye shes bla ma and his disciples) performed a *tshogs 'khor*”.

414. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.320 lines 13-15): “De nas rGya gar du byon/ lho phyogs kyi rgyal phran zhid gi yul du lo thog la cha ga ba'i gnod pa byung 'dug pa bsal/ des Indra bhu ti'i thugs dam mGon po'i rdo sku gcig phul/'”; “Then [Ye shes bla ma] went to Gangetic India. In a minor country (*rgyal phran*) to the south [of Bal po?], the crops suffered from a disease which he eliminated. This one (i.e. its king?) gave him a stone statue of mGon po which was the personal image of Indra bhu ti”.

The allusion to “this one” (perhaps the king of the *rgyal phran*), which does not fit properly into the context, seems to indicate that another (lengthier) version of *Ye shes bla ma'i rnam thar* existed and that it was abridged into the present version because the narrative does not always flow smoothly.

415. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.320 line 19-p.321 line 2): “Nub phyogs U rgyan du 'byon par dgongs te lha khang zhid tu brtag pa mdzad pas/ dkon gnyer la bKra shis Tshe ring ma bab ste U rgyan du 'byon ring zhabs tog byed par khas bsangs/ (p.321) rim gyis byon/ U rgyan gyi dur khrod cig gi dBus na 'phags pa yi ge drug ma rang byung gi lha khang gcig 'dug/'”; “He thought to go to U rgyan in the west. Having sought a divination (lit. “a sign”) in a *lha khang*, the bKra shis Tshe ring ma manifested as its *dkon gnyer*. They promised to render service to him on the way to U rgyan. (p.321) He progressed there in stages. In the centre of a cemetery of U rgyan was a *lha khang* that housed a noble self-originated six-syllable inscription [on stone]”.

416. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.321 line 14): “dPon slob bcu gsum gyis Dza lhan darar byon/'”; “Then the master and his disciples, thirteen of them altogether, went to Dza lhan dara (spelled so)”.

417. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.322 lines 3-12): “Kha che sGrol ma rang byung gi sku'i drung du zhag bdun zas sgom yid la ma byas par bsgrubs pas sGrol ma'i zhal mthong zhing Phyag rgya

- in another *rgyal phran* he performed the miracle of making a *mchod rten*, which stood in the middle of a lake, come to its shore so that he and his disciples could offer their prayers.⁴¹⁸ The *mchod rten* returned to the centre of the lake after he left;

- he moved on to a mountain where medicinal plants grew and to a land where he abolished the custom demanding that three wives, whose husband-ruler had recently died, perform *sati*.

He made offerings to a *mchod rten* miraculously built by a king, who was an incarnation, with a statue of Bir wa pa in front.⁴¹⁹

chen po'i dngos grub thob pa'i rnal 'byor pa gcig lo gnyis brgya lon pa mi sha'i tshod ma 'thung zhing 'dug pa nas drangs pa rtog pa med par gsol/ rDo rje Phag mo'i sku gsang ba nas sin dhu ra 'bab pa dang/ pha bong la dpal Nā ro pa'i dbu dang sku dang phyag zhabs thams cad kyi rjes yod pa dang/ sa la don gru bzhi pa sgo tsam zhig snang pa de'i nang du mkha' 'gro ma'i gnas brgyad yod bya ba zhig 'dug pa sogs la tshogs brgya btang/ grong khyer chen po gcig nyid kyi rgyang grags tsam du khyab/'"; "Having meditated in front of the self-originated statue of the Kha che sGrol ma without thinking about food and drink, he had a vision of sGrol ma. One *rnal 'byor pa* who had obtained the power of *Phyag rgya chen po* and had reached the age of 200 [used to] drink the broth of human flesh. He (i.e. Ye shes bla ma), without hesitation, drank [that broth] which was offered [to him]. Vermillion (*sin dhu ra*) was coming out from the secret organs of the statue of rDo rje phag mo. The imprints of the head, body, hands and feet of dpal Nā ro pa had been left on a rock. [Ye shes bla ma] performed one hundred *tshogs* on the ground [where] there was a hollow square about the size of a door, inside which the eight holy places of the *mkha' 'gro ma*-s were manifested. [One had to go for] the distance of one *rgyang grags* to cross a big town".

418. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.322 lines 15-20): "Khong dpon slob brag mgul gyi zam pa 'jigs su rung ba'i sne mor skas bdun brtsegs yod pa la nyes pa med par thon te lung nang gcig tu byon pas jag pa kha bdun dang 'phrad kyang chos rje la ci yang ma byas/ nye gnas rnams brdungs/ de'i phar rgyab na mtsho'i dbus su mchod rten khyad par can zhig yod zer ba mjal du byon/'"; "The master and his disciples crossed without difficulties a dangerous bridge, with seven steps at its extremity, hanging from the neck of a rock, and went inside a valley [where] they met seven robbers. They did no harm the *chos rje* at all [but] they beat his attendants. They went beyond that [valley] to see an extraordinary *mchod rten* which was said to stand in the centre of a lake".

The miracle of the *mchod rten* follows. This holy place may correspond to Pang pure, visited by sTag tshang ras pa centuries later, where a *mchod rten* stood in the centre of a lake. The *mchod rten* was famous because it marked the place of a miracle performed by Nyi ma sgung pa to defeat the *klu* who had attacked him (Tucci, *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley* p.68-69). Tucci identifies Pang pure of *sTag tshang ras pa'i rnam thar* with Pampur (ibid. p.68 n.18).

419. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.324 line 21-p.325 line 9): "Lam du rgyal phran (p.325) zhig gi nad bsal bas dad pa thob ste/ yul chos kyi rgyal po shi ba'i ro dang lhan du btsun mo gsum re bsreg pa'i srol yod pa rtsa ba nas 'phul te slan chad bgyi bar gtsigs la phab/ yul gcig na sprul pa'i rgyal po zhig gis rNga yab gling nas srin po gsum bos nas brtsig tu btug par grags pa'i mchod rten logs re la mda' rgyang re tsam dpangs su de'i nyis 'gyur tsam gyi tshod blos mi 'khyud pa gcig dang/ de'i mdun du dpal chen Bir was pa'i rdo rku slob dpon dngos dang khyad par med zer ba'i byin rlabs can bzhugs pa zhig snang ba la'ang mchod pa mdzad/'"; "On the way, (p.325) he cured a disease in one *rgyal phran* and [the local people] grew faith in him. [Here] was the custom that three queens at one time had to be burned together with the corpse of the deceased religious king of the land. [He made them] abandon [this custom] completely. He thus brought them to the

- Here Tshal pa Ye shes bla ma contracted an infectious disease;⁴²⁰
- he opted to go to Ma ru, defined as the “thumb” of the twenty-four *Mar rgun* territories (lands of “grapes in the lower country”), where he died.⁴²¹

An episode in this *rnam thar* is useful to assess the rarity of Tibetan presence in U rgyan during the 13th and early 14th centuries. The passage reports the words of the *dkon gnyer* of the *lha khang* located in a cemetery of U rgyan, where a self-originated six-lettered *mantra* was kept. The *dkon gnyer*, who had reached the respectable age of 150, told Ye shes bla ma that in his life he had seen only two flat-nosed Tibetans come to visit his temple in U rgyan. One was U rgyan pa”.⁴²²

realisation that they did not have to do it (i.e. perform the *sati* ceremony any longer). He made offerings to a *mchod rten*, each side of which can be measured by the distance of an arrow shot and its height being double that size. [The *mchod rten*] was famous because three *srin po*-s from rNga yab gling were forced to build it by the king of the country, who was an incarnation. In front of it was the stone statue of dpal chen Bir wa pa bestowing blessings, [which are] said to have been no less extraordinary than [those given by] the *slob dpon* (i.e. Guru Padma) himself”.

420. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.325 lines 9-11): “sByin bdag cig gi sar mi bzhed bzhin du rab gnas shig mdzad dgos byung ba dang/ dam sel can zhid drung du bsnyen pa'i grib kyis sku khams ma bde//”; “He was forced to perform a consecration at a place of a sponsor although he did not want [to do so]. Hence he did not feel well because he was contaminated by an infectious disease inflicted upon him by someone who had broken his vow”.

421. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.325 lines 11-18): “Mar rgun bya ba'i yul nyi shu rtsa bzhi'i the bo Ma ru yin pa der byon/ rgyal phran zhid gi sar bzugs/ nyin gcig phyag phyir 'breg ba'i sgom chen nmams la zhal ta rgyas pa cig par mdzad/ phung po 'di bsreg la thal ba Zangs dkar gyi chu bo pho shos sman 'di nmams sTag lung du skyol/ 'di nas rGya gar shar phyogs su bram ze gcig gi bur skyes nas sems can dpag tu med pa'i don grub par 'dug sogs gsungs nas dgung lo bzhi bcu rtsa drug pa chu pho byi ba'i lo stag zla'i bco lnga la gshegs//”; “The thumb (*the bo*) of the twenty-four [lands], called Mar rgun, is Ma ru. [Ye shes bla ma] went there. He stayed in this *rgyal phran*. One day, while instructing the meditators who were accompanying him, he expressed the wish that his body be cremated and his ashes thrown into the river of Zangs dkar, and the medicinal herbs [he had collected] brought to sTag lung. After announcing that he was going to be reborn as the son of a *brahmin* in Eastern Gangetic India in order to benefit sentient beings, he died when he was forty-six (sic thirty-six) years old in water rat 1312, on the 15th day of *stag zla ba*”.

Although Ma ru is often identified with Chamba, it is actually situated between Kha che and Zangs dkar. Moreover, Ma ru rtse (the “Ma ru peak”) is the mountain of Gar sha in front of Triloknath (Re pag), on the other side of its river where the village of Udaipur with its Markuladevi temple is located. Zangs dkar and its river are parallel to Ma ru on its north and divided by a mountain range, so that the water course does not cross both territories.

422. *sTag lung chos 'byung* (p.321 lines 2-4): “dkon gnyer lo phyed dang nyis brgya 'gro ba zhid snang ba des nga'i ring la Bod sna leb pa gnyis byung zer/ gcig grub chen U rgyan par 'dug//”; “Its *dkon gnyer*, who had reached the age of 150, said: “During my life, two flat-nosed Tibetans came [here]. [One] was grub chen U rgyan pa”.”.

The surprise with which the decrepit *dkon gnyer* welcomed Ye shes bla ma could be an indication that dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (1235-?), the Bon po *ger ston* who had an extraordinary 'das log experience (see my “dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal: the 'das log travelogue

Hence, the only Tibetans who were able to reach U rgyan in a period that extended from the late 12th century to the early 13th were U rgyan pa and Ye shes bla ma. U rgyan pa's journey was made especially difficult by the warfare in the 1250s.

Although oriented towards describing Ye shes bla ma's spiritual realisations in the course of his pilgrimage and also because it is quite short, *Ye shes bla ma'i rnam thar in sTag lung chos 'byung* does not tell anything about the political status of the lands to which he journeyed.

Historical evidence indicates that the sTod Hor—the Chagatai rather the Il-Khanid successors of Hu-la-hu—were active in mNga' ris stod they used as a front. This was an alternative to the more traditional battleground area known to non-Tibetan historians as Khurāsān, in order to keep the Delhi Sultanate under pressure (ibid.).

The years between 1305 and 1318 which covered the time of Ye shes bla ma's journey in the region, witnessed a conflict that became especially fierce in the area of U rgyan in the successive year. That he travelled, according to his biography, across the Indian lands rather than the Tibetan plateau could be a sign that the lands on the "upper side" were not safe, for the sympathies that the various Tibetan schools nurtured for the *ulus*-s were not a deterrent to the political and military manoeuvres of the various Mongol power houses.

▪ Pi rang ras chen

The credit for the definitive establishment of the 'Brug pa school in Nub ra after its establishment by U rgyan pa goes, according to Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, author of *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, to an obscure son of the soil by the name of Pi rang ras chen, an intriguing personality.⁴²³ By founding Yar ma mGon po'i *dgon pa*, Pi rang ras chen ensured

and *gter ma* rediscoveries") never made it to U rgyan, but the old man's statistics could have been wrong or may have not met him.

423. Nyung stod pa O rgyan Rig 'dzin, "Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs" (p.74 lines 2-6): "Bla ma Pi rang ras chen 'di nyid Nub ra'i Yar ma'i Yul rdzong gsar zhes pa'i nang du de ring las lo 670 tsam zhig gi sngon la chos rigs gtsang zhing yab yum phun sum tshogs pa'i khyim du 'khrungs/"; "Bla ma Pi rang ras chen was born at Yul rdzong gsar of Yar ma in Nub ra some 670 years (ca. 1320) before the present time (before 1995) in a pure religious family of yore, the household of excellent father and mother".

Ibid. (p.75 lines 4-13): "Bod khams phyogs la phebs nas/ yul mang po zhig la 'gro don mdzad/ khong sgrub pa drag po zhig ldan pa mtshan gyi snyan pa phyogs kun tu grags/ Bod kyi sku drag mang po zhig gis ma dga' nas bsam ngan gyis btson du bcugs/ bla ma kho rang btson khang du bzhugs skabs khab bsnams nas yod pas/ rtsig pa khab dang khung bur 'dus nas sbrang ma zhig la rdzu sa te phyi log du thon phebs/ Pi rang ras chen mtshan thogs/"; "[Pi rang ras chen] went to the realm of Tibet and laboured for the benefit of the many localities where he went. He performed strict meditation so that his name became well known in all directions. Many Tibetan dignitaries were not happy and owing to their ill thinking he was thrown into jail. He brought in a needle which he had with him. He pierced a hole in the wall, turned into a honeybee and came outside. He escaped from the hole which was [as thin as] the stick of a brush. He got the name Pi rang ras chen".

Ibid. (p.75 line 17-p.76 line 1): "De nas khong la mnar gcod kyi khirms gtong rtsi sa yod pas/ bla mas mkhyen nas mNga' ris yul phyogs la bskyod de dus nas Nub ra (p.76) ru khong rang gi khang par phebs/"; "Then given that there was a consideration to inflict a punishing law upon

continuity to the religious practice devoted to Mahakāla in Nub ra, the deity seen by rGod tshang pa in a vision when—the local lore claims wrongly—he purportedly was in this land. Pi rang ras chen's pioneering work for the sTod 'Brug in Nub ra was enhanced by a series of foundations of meditation places in caves around the region, which he personally opened and frequented.⁴²⁴ This gave impulse to a more thorough takeover of the Nub ra valley by practitioners of gTsang pa rGya ras's doctrine.

A statement in Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin's biography of Pi rang ras chen, found in his article entitled “Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs”, is of use to validate the two phases that occurred at Yar ma mGon po: the initial reconnaissance which led to the opening of its “door” and the subsequent occupation of the holy site by practitioners of the 'Brug pa school. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin refers to an old scroll which laments the absence of a place for congregating when the “door” of the Yar ma mGon po holy place was opened, counter to

him, the *bla ma* knew about that. He left for the land of mNga' ris and went to Nub ra (p.76) and to his house”.

Ibid. (p.76 lines 1-2): “De dus bla ma dung grangs 45 lhag lon par mngon//”; “At that time the *bla ma* had actually reached the age of forty-five (ca. 1365)”.

Ibid. (p.77 lines 2-9): “lHag chung zhig dang sgrub khang gcig bzhengs par mdzad/ sgrub khang de da lta'i 'du khang rnying pa'i 'og phyogs kyi rtsig rnying zhig yod pa de yin/ mi mams kyi bshad srol la de nang na Sog dmag gi mi re re yod zer/ lhag chung nang gi rten gyi gtso bo Ye shes mGon po'i 'bur sku zhig yod pa de yin/ srung ma bka' gnyan can jag pa me len bzhengs par mdzad//”; “[Pi rang ras chen] built a *lhag chung* (an “annex”) and a meditation room. The meditation room is presently below the '*du khang*, where there are old walls. An oral tradition holds that inside them are the corpses of Sog *dmag* (Mongol troops). Inside the *lhag chung* the main statue is a bas relief of Ye shes mGon po. Powerful protections and devices to shoot at bandits are placed inside it”.

Ibid. (p.78 line 17-p.79 line 5): “Pi rang ras chen nas sgrub phug mang po zhig phyag btab par mdzad/ Nub ra/ Lwar gyi ting/ A yi/ Pa na mig phu'i mtshams (p.79) phug dang gSham ma mGon po sogs la sgrub phug phyag btab nas snyen sgrub mang po mdzad/ de nas dgung lo 70 zhig lon pa nas Tshe ya can g.yas phyogs kyi phu yi nang du mtshams la bzhugs//”; “Pi rang ras chen personally set up many meditation caves. In Nub ra, Lwar Gyi thing, A yi, higher Pa na mig (Pha na mig *phu*). (p.79) He personally set up meditation caves such as retreats in caves and gSham ma mGon po (the “lower mGon po”). He performed much meditation. Then, at age seventy (ca. 1390), he stood in retreat in a cave to the right side of Tshe ya can”.

424. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.17 lines 1-4): “Bla ma Pi rang ras chen gyis rDzong gsar sgrub phug/ Pa na mig phu'i sgrub phug/ A yi sgrub phug byin can dang/ Sha ma mGon po'i mtshams khang sogs phyag btab par mdzad/ A yi rdzong gi sgrub phug nang Pi rang ras pas Seng ge gdong pa can gyi bsnyen sgrub mdzad par brten sgrub khang de byin can yin pa'i tshul Ku bhed me me Tshe ring dpal bzang gis bshad pa'i yig cha zhig tu lo rgyus zhib par yod//”; “Bla ma Pi rang ras chen built rDzong sar sgrub phug, the *sgrub phug* of Pa na mig phu, the *sgrub phug* of A yi rdzong, which bestows blessings, and the *mtshams khang* of Sha ma mGon po. The account of the manner in which it bestows blessings owing to Pi rang ras pa's meditation on Seng ge'i gdong pa can inside the *sgrub phug* of A yi rdzong should be investigated in a document by Ku bhed me me Tshe ring dpal bzang, based on oral accounts”.

the oral tradition which holds that before then there existed Pi rang ras chen's *lhag chung*.⁴²⁵ This was a residence that Pi rang ras chen occupied later on.

In *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin has gone through sensible revisions to his earlier article "Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs". In particular, he has dropped his chronological hypotheses about Pi rang ras chen's life in favour of a choice that antedates his existence and activity by one full *rab byung*. Hence, one wonders whether the calculation of Pi rang ras chen's existence in the text he has used as his source is based on the sexagenary cycle, whose identification gave him some difficulty.

In *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin says that the master from Nub ra founded Yar ma mGon po'i *dgon pa* in water hare 1303.⁴²⁶ In his article he wrote between 1985 and 1990, which was published in 1995, he places Pi rang ras chen's birth to ca.1315/1320.⁴²⁷

425. Nyung stod pa O rgyan Rig 'dzin, "Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs" (p.81 lines 7-15): "Mi yi kha skad re la/ gnas sgom phye gong du Pi rang ras chen gyi lhag chung yin ces bshad srol 'dug/ de nor 'khrul yin pa tan tan mngon/ ci phyir zhu na gnas sgo phye skabs rgyal ba rGod tshang pa'i bu slob kun bzhug ga cig bzhugs pa yin ces gnas yig rnying pa shog sgril ma'i nang nas gsal por mngon/"; "According to some speeches by people, their oral account is that before the opening of the holy place's "door" there was the *lhag chung* of Pi rang ras chen. This is actually a mistake. If one wonders what it could have happened, it is actually clearly said in an old document in scroll form that, at the time of the opening of the "door" of the holy place, all the disciples of rGyal ba rGod tshang pa did not obtain any dwelling place and stayed on for seven nights in congregation to render service".

426. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.14 line 13-p.15 line 2): "Rab byung lnga pa'i nang tshan lo 27 mdzes byed zhes pa chu mo yos kyi lo phyi lo 1301 zla ba bzhi pa'i nang bla ma Pi rang ras chen gyis dgon pa chung ba zhig phyag btap par mdzad/ nang rten du lHa mo/ mGon po/ dgon pa'i (p.15) srung ma Jag pa Me len bcas bzhengs/ sngar chags mGon po zhus nas da lta mGon po'i phug tu bzhugs/"; "In the fourth month of water female hare, known as *mdzes byed*, corresponding to 1301 (sic: the *chus mo yos* year, known as *mdzes byed*, was 1303), the twenty-seventh year of the fifth *rab byung* (sic: this would be 1293), bla ma Pi rang ras chen founded the small monastery [of Yar ma mGon po]. He made [images of] lHa mo and mGon po as its *nang rten-s* and (p.15) [appointed] Jag pa Me len as the *dgon pa's* guardian. He requested mGon po, who had previously settled there: "Stay now in the *dgon pa's* cave".

Ibid. (p.40 lines 5-11): "Yar ma ming thogs tshul ni/ Nub ra'i sa sbyibs gong du zhus pa ltar srin mo'i rkang g.yas su yod pa g.yas ma dang/ sngon byon rnal 'byor pa chen po Chos kyi bshes gnyen yar la phebs skabs shig la yul A ra nug gong ma nas 'di nas yar la pho long dang brag ri la gnas rang byon mjal nas rkang pa bor sa mi 'dug gsungs pas Yar ma zhes ming thogs tshul kha rgyun du 'dug/ phran gyis g.Yas ma dang Yar ma gnyis ka bris yod/"; "The way the name Yar ma was given is as follows. It is g.yas *ma* (the "right side") because it is on the right foot of the *srin mo*, this being, as mentioned above, the shape of Nub ra. When Chos kyi bshes gnyen, a great *rnal 'byor pa* who lived in earlier times, went up (*yar*), farther up from the locality of A ra nug gong ma, he saw a self originated holy place with jasmine plants and a rocky cliff. He said: "This place does not resemble a *rkang* ("foot")", and there is an oral tradition which holds that he gave the name Yar ma to it. It is written as both g.Yas ma and Yar ma in some cases".

427. In "Pi rang ras chen gyi khrungs rabs" Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin says that Pi rang ras chen was born 870 years earlier (ibid. p.74 lines 2-6). The years he steps back in time to approximate

This wavering in chronology makes a substantial difference in the attribution of the establishment of the sTod 'Brug's institution in the area of the Yar ma mGon po.

Pi rang ras chen would have gone to Yar ma mGon po in an unspecified year after he turned forty-five (Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, "Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs" p.76 lines 1-4), where he built his *lha chung* and a *sgrub khang* (ibid. p.76 line 18-p.77 line 3). Hence his foundation of the small Yar ma mGon po monastery would have improbably taken place ca.1360/1365, almost a full *rab byung* difference from the revised and more reliable date 1303 of *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*.

The years after 1277-1280 in La dwags and the rest of mNga' ris stod

▪ Instability in La dwags: the Hor, the role of Sa skya and the ousting of the bKa' brgyud
The repartition of the lands of Tibet into the *chol kha gsum* to guarantee dominance to the Yuan took place on various occasions and did not include the same territories. The official passage of most lands of Tibet under the control of the Mongols, marked by the award of lands on the plateau by means of the attribution to the Sa skya pa devised as three divisions, is an indication of how long mNga' ris stod retained its autonomy from foreign authority.

Two grants characterised the control of the regions of Tibet awarded by Se chen rgyal po to the Sa skya pa. The intermediate repayment of the empowerments Se chen rgyal po received from 'gro mgon 'Phags pa—they were three—included the grant of the *chol kha gsum* to the Sa ya pa master.⁴²⁸ In the passage dedicated to this grant, *rGya Bod yig tshang* identifies the three *chol kha* as dBus gTsang, Khams and A mdo. dBus gTsang was up to mNga' ris smad (Gung thang) and thus mNga' ris stod was not included.

the birth date of Pi rang ras chen should be calculated from around the second half of the eighties of the last century (1985/1990 – 670 = 1315/1320), for the completion of his article goes back to those years, which was published in 1995. This would lead to a birth of Pi rang ras pa to around 1320. O rgyan rig 'dzin did not propose this order of dating anymore in his *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*.

428. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.278 lines 8-14): "Chol kha gsum phul ba'i Ja yul mNga' ris Gung thang man Sog la skya bo yan/ dam pa Chos kyi chol kha/ Sog la skya bo man rMa chu Gug pa yan/ mgo nag mi'i chol kha/ rMa chu Gug pa man/ rGya mChod rten dkar po yan/ bdud 'gro rta'i chol kha dang gsum po de/ mi rta Chos gsum gyi 'bul ba'i lugs su byas nas/ phul bar 'dug cing/ chol kha re re la/ dpon chen re re/ rgyal po yon mchod bka' gros su bstun nas bskos mdzad dug/"; "The [emperor] gave ['gro mgon 'Phags pa] the *chol kha gsum*. It was the intermediate [of three] repayments for the *dbang-s* [he had received]. The *chol kha* of the Noble Religion was from Ja yul mNga' ris Gung thang up to Sog la sKya bo. The *chol kha* of the black-headed men was from Sog la sKya bo to rMa chu Gug pa. The *chol kha* of animals and horses, the third one, was from to rMa chu Gug pa to rGya [nag] mChod rten dkar po. Having introduced the system that [granted] the donation of men, horses and religion, he did such donations. Each *chol kha* had a *dpon chen*. Owing to the agreement deriving from the *yon mchod* with the emperor and from consultations, [the *chol kha*] were established".

The next event was Se chen rgyal po's appointment of Phyag na rdo rje to exercise the Mongol law over the *chol kha gsum*.⁴²⁹ The grant to 'gro mgon 'Phags pa is not dated in the text. The endowment to Phyag na rdo rje is fixed to before 1263 by A mes zhabs's *Sa skya'i gdung rabs*. Hence the *chol kha gsum* were established between 1260, the year of Se chen rgyal po's ascension to the imperial throne of China, and 1263 when Phyag na rdo rje was sent to exercise Hor *khri ms* over the three regions of Tibet. mNga' ris stod, in those years, was not a region under the control of the Yuan dynasty and their Sa skya pa emissaries.

The inclusion of mNga' ris stod into the *khri skor bcu gsum* introduced after the census held in 1268, as done by dPal 'byor bzang po in *rGya Bod yig tshang*, is disproved by its actual annexation of 1277-1280. Its inclusion in the *khri skor gsum gsum* enforced in 1268 is perhaps due to dPal 'byor bzang po's absence of recognition of the failed attempt in 1265 to annex mNga' ris stod to the Sa skya pa lands, when 'gro mgon 'Phags pa was in Tibet and participated in the parley with the bKa' brgyud bloc (see p.236 and p.265).

That the inclusion of Upper West Tibet among the *chol kha* could not occur before the 1277 divide when the Gung thang king 'Bum lde mgon began to organise the *glang gi las stabs bcu gsum* in fire ox 1277 is hinted at by a cryptic passage in *rGya Bod yig tshang*. The text says that rgyal bu Jim kim in 1277, at the end of the *chos 'khor* held at Chu mig, granted the *chol kha gsum* to 'gro mgon 'Phags pa, a sign that the three divisions of Tibet had changed shape.⁴³⁰ Or else, it could be just coincidental but it would be surprising that Jim kim gave 'Phags pa a grant of territories which had already been awarded to him by Se chen rgyal po.

I have shown in *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (Addendum Three p.556-564) that the Sa skya pa, through their Zhwa lu pa and Gung thang pa feudatories, took control of mNga' ris stod. A look at the events that led mNga' ris stod to become Sa skya pa shows that its annexation was not so completely achieved. Apparently obvious in view of its political

429. *Sa skya'i gdung rabs* (p.233 line 18-p.234 line 3): "Hor chas su bcug ste sa chol kha gsum gyi khri ms bdag tu bskos/ Bod la ti shri dang dbang (p.234) gi las kha thog mar sku mched 'di gnyis kyi sku ring la byung bar grags pas Bod la bka' drin shin tu che zhing/ Byang ngos su lo bco brgyad tsam bzhugs nas/ de nas dgung lo nyer lnga pa la gdan sa chen po chos 'khor phebs/"; "Owing to the appointment by the Hor, [Phyag na rdo rje (1239-1267)] was nominated head of the law of the lands of the three *chol kha*. In Tibet, the post of *ti shri* and the power [derived from it] (p.234) was enforced during the lives of the two brothers and thanks to their kindness. After he spent eighteen years in Byang ngos, [Phyag na rdo rje] went for teachings to the great *gdan sa* at the age of twenty-five (1263)".

430. The *chol kha gsum* were granted by Se chen rgyal po to 'gro mgon 'Phags pa, whereas mNga' ris stod passed under the Sa skya pa in 1277-1280. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.329 lines 12-16) says: "Me mo glang lo la/ rgyal bu Jim kim gyis chos 'khor mdzad dus dge 'dun khri phrag bdun lhag la/ gsum bar du/ gser zho re re phul 'dug/ de rting yang/ bla ma 'dis/ gong du byon/ dbang bskur rim par mdzad pa'i dbang yon la/ rgyal pos Bod chol kha gsum dang/ rGya yi Yur ma chen mo phul/"; "In fire female ox 1277, when the *chos 'khor* was held by rgyal bu Jim kim, a *zho* gold up to three [times] was offered to each of the over 70,000 monks. After its end, this *bla ma* ('Phags pa) went to the imperial seat. In return of the empowerments and for the series of initiations he received, the emperor granted him the Bod *chol kha gsum* and the great rGya Yur ma".

simplicity, the *chol kha gsum* classification inclusive of mNga' ris stod hides historical aspects not explicated in the official literature that talks about the deeds of the Yuan and their Sa skya pa emissaries.

Evidence that the situation in Mar yul La dwags was not so obviously in favour of the Mongols of China and the Sa skya pa transpires already from sources such as *gDung rabs zam phreng* and the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* used in my "Some conjectures on change and instability during the one hundred years of darkness in the history of La dwags (1280s-1380s)".

A progress in dealing with the local historical situation of the period is possible by virtue of a source that contributes unexpected historical material. This text helps to ascertain a few facts in the history of La dwags during those one hundred years of darkness, a phenomenon that was not restricted to this land but encompassed other regions of Upper West Tibet, from Gu ge Pu hrang to Glo bo and other areas. The fact that those years of historical darkness correspond to the period of Sa skya pa authority over mNga' ris skor stod through their feudatories seems to me utterly coincidental and cannot be imputed to the control of these territories by Sa skya, a school whose historiographical concern was protracted and impeccable.

A set historical point is that the bKa' brgyud pa alliance was forced to release mNga' ris stod by a Sa skya pa intrigue, as shown by *Si tu bKa' chems (Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* p.113 line 11-p.114 line 8). The date of this drastic political change is not fixed with precision but can be assigned with a good amount of confidence to the years 1277-1280 when Gung thang established its network of forts called *glang gi las stabs bcu gsum gsum* by the local king 'Bum lde mgon (1253-1280) (*Gung thang gdung rabs* lHa sa ed. p.108 line 8-109 line 2).

The next phase after the sTod Hor intruded in Mar yul and Ru thog was marked by a progressive shift in their military aims. With mNga' ris stod under the Sa skya pa and their feudatories from 1277-1280 at the expense of local sovereign rulers and their bKa' brgyud pa allies, this land became less accessible as a transit point for the sTod Hor's attempts to launch their campaigns.

rGya Bod yig tshang says that, after the military expedition led by Sang gha to Tibet in iron snake 1281 to punish the Sa skya dpon chen Kun dga' bzang po, embroiled in the affair that caused the death of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa (1235-1280), Yuan troops were left behind in Tibet to be deployed at the border of the land of the sTod Hor.⁴³¹ This event assumes the connotations of a step taken by the Yuan/Sa skya pa administration of Tibet to protect mNga' ris stod from hostile raids soon after its takeover of the region.

431. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.291 lines 11-13): "Hor dmag stong skor bdun gyi nang nas/ bdun brgya/ sTod Hor gyi so kha bsrung mi la bzhags//"; "Seven hundred among the seven thousand Hor (i.e. Yuan) troops [led by Sang gha to Tibet] were left (*bzhags*) to be the men in charge of the protection of the sTod Hor border".

▪ A new scenario in Tibet

Owing to the establishment of the Il-Khanate of Baghdad by Hu-la-hu, headman of the sTod Hor who had been active in the Indian Northwest, his *ulus* had moved away from the lands contiguous to La dwags since long but still kept protecting their interests in the affairs of Central Tibet. A wind of change affected their share of power in dBus. The turning point was the 1290 'Bri gung *gling log* that crushed the assertiveness of the 'Bri gung pa and ousted the sTod Hor, Hu-la-hu's Il-Khanids,⁴³² from Tibet during the reigns of his successors, so that the political situation on the plateau and the wider world of the Mongol conquests changed remarkably. The sTod Hor were no more controlling a territory near the Western Himalaya and the Indo-Iranic borderlands.

The intrusions of those still called sTod Hor by the Tibetan literature into the western side of the Tibetan plateau continued during the following decades after Sa skya secured control of mNga' ris stod, inclusive of La dwags, but with a significant divergence. The turning point was the 'Bri gung *gling log* of 1290, which marked the reinforcement of the Chagatāi's political influence from Turkestan and other areas of Central Asia over the affairs of mNga' ris stod.

Like Hu-la-hu's horde, the Chagatāi of before the 1290 divide were allies of the bKa' brgyud pa. Due to the ousting of the political power of the bKa' brgyud pa from mNga' ris stod, the Yuan and the Sa skya pa exercised their authority with a different attitude towards Upper West Tibet since this region was for them a territory prone to the military presence of the Chagatāi. On their part, the Chagatāi antagonised the Yuan/Sa skya coalition owing to reasons of military strategy, for the control of La dwags offered them chances to deal with the Delhi Sultanate. But the evolution of the situation gave them other opportunities (see p.306-312).

The Chagatāi still supported the 'Bri gung pa sometime after 1290 when the school founded by 'Jig rten mgon po sought their help in the aftermath of the *gling log* ('Bri gung *gser phreng* p.125 lines 12-17), and again in 1295 when Sa skya dpon chen Ag glen repulsed them.⁴³³ But the aim of this warring activity again was not Mar yul La dwags principally.

432. The 'Bri gung *gling log* did not only enfeeble the school founded by 'Jig rten mgon po. The bKa' brgyud pa in general found themselves in a weak position. U rgyan pa, who had refused to bow to the Mongols and several invitations to join the court of Se chen rgyal po, was obliged to travel to Yuan capital. After his short stay at the court, U rgyan pa was one of the great souls of Tibet who went in pilgrimage to sKyid grong to be in the presence of 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po. The biography of him in *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.746 lines 15-18) briefly mentions his mystical experiences induced by the sKyid grong Jo bo: "De nas sKyid grong du dpon Zhang mTshan Thog gis Jo bo'i dbu la gser gdugs phul ba'i ka ru mdzad nas gsang spyod gsungs pa'i tshe bya gag gi ro snyom byed cing/ sgom btab pas ting nge 'dzin gsha' ma rang skyes//"; "After mTshan Zhang performed the *ka ru* (?) of offering a golden umbrella over the head of the [sKyid grong] Jo bo on behalf of dpon [Men] Zhang, [U rgyan pa] uttered [formula] of secret practice. He attained the stillness of action and inaction and meditated, stainless bliss was spontaneously born [in him]".

433. *Deb ther rdzong dmar* (f.177a line 6-f.177b line 1): "De rjes su lug lo ston/ sTod Hor gyi dmag byung dus/ dpon chen Ag len gyis/ rta mgo re spar nas rta\mgo srang bcu gnyis (f.177b) dang zho gnyis re byas 'dug/ brgyags nas khal drug bcu re yin//"; "Thereafter, in the autumn of the sheep year (1295), when the sTod Hor troops came, dpon chen Ag glen increased [the taxation imposed] on each *rta mgo* ("horse head", a tax on horse owners), which amounted to twelve *srang*

▪ Another sTod Hor invasion of La dwags (early 14th century)

The invasion of Upper West Tibet by the sTod Hor in wood snake 1305,⁴³⁴ introduced in visionary terms by the biography of the first Karma Zhwa dmar pa, Grags pa seng ge (1283-1349) is found in Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas's *Karma Kam tshang gser 'phreng*. Its record is entrusted to a dream that occurred to him when he was in Khams and was wondering whether it was safe to proceed to dBus for further studies. His dream told him that dBus was safe, which indicates that no sTod Hor invasion had touched Central Tibet, but was confined to a more peripheral area, near their own border.⁴³⁵ This shows well enough that the sTod Hor did

(f.177b) and two *zho*, whereas the supply of provisions remained fixed at sixty *khal* of barley”.

The economic situation must have improved during the dozen years from water sheep 1283, when a tax exemption for dBus gTsang was proclaimed by the Yuan/Sa skya pa rulership of Tibet, and wood sheep 1295, when Ag len imposed heavier burdens on the population of Central Tibet, as recorded in the passage of *Deb ther rdzong dmar* mentioned in this note. For the 1283 tax exemption see Nel pa pandi ta, *sNgon gyi gtam me tog phreng ba* (lHa sa ed. p.53 lines 2-5): “dPon chen Byang chub sems dpa' Kun dga' gzhon nus/ dBus gTsang gi mi sde dang lha sde nmams la/ dar rgan lo gsum dang/ chos khirms dar dkar gyi yol ba lta bu bka' drin gnang//”; “By his graciousness, which was like a curtain of white silk, dpon chen Byang chub sems dpa' Kun dga' gzhon nu, the compassionate one, sanctioned a three year tax exemption (*dar rgan*) and monastic laws in favour of the religious and lay communities of dBus gTsang”. On the translation of the term *dar rgan* as “tax exemption” see Uebach, *Nelpa Panditas Chronik Me-tog Phreng-ba*, n.1064.

434. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan ('*Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng* p. 127 lines 19-21) says that the eighth 'Bri gung *gdan sa*, bCu gnyis rin po che rDo rje rin chen, he sent at least a group of one thousand *ri pa*-s each to Ti se, La phyi and Tsa ri just before reaching his twenty-eight years of age (wood snake 1305). Leaving aside the usual exaggeration in statistics, a wave of *ri pa*-s left for Gangs Ti se after mNga' ris stod had passed under the Sa skya pa, and thus during the period when the secular conditions were not particularly favourable for the bKa' brgyud pa in the region. Did the unsettled situation in Upper West Tibet detrimental of the Sa skya pa stability, caused by the presence of the sTod Hor, encourage the 'Bri gung pa to dispatch a group of *ri pa*-s to Ti se?

435. When, in 1305, Grags pa seng ge was in Khams ready to leave for dBus, *Grags pa seng ge'i rnam thar* (in Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho, *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* p.237 lines 2-4) reports the following: “De dus sTod Hor yod zer pa'i skad Kar ma skor pa nmams kyis thos nas 'ur chen po 'dug pas/ zla bo rigs gcig yul la log rigs gcig yar la 'gro ba e 'thab yin zer nas sems bde bas/ nub cig tho rangs kha tsam na mi nag po dar gyi gos gon pa zhig re/ da res sTod Hor mi yod/ dBus gTsang la 'deng/ lam la bar chad med pa ngas byed pa yin zer/ de'i nang par zla bo gcig gnyis la/ nged la rmi lam 'di 'dra ba zhig byung byas pas/ zla bo kun na re khyed kyi de chos skyong gi ltas su 'dug/ sngar yang khyed kyis gang gsungs pa de bden pa zhig yod pas/ nged kyang khyed kyi zla la yar 'gro zer nas 'ong pas lam la bar chad med par dgung lo nyi shu rtsa gsum la sTod lung mThur phur phyag phebs so/ dBus su phyag phebs pa'i dus su chos nyan bshad gang dar dris pas gSang phu dar zer nas gSang phu Ne'u thog su byon//”; “The Karma *skor pa* (“members of the Karma retinue”) heard the rumour that there were the sTod Hor, and such a rumour was a big one. [But] once it was discussed whether it was better for one group of companions (*zla bo*) to go back to their own place (*yul*), and for another group to proceed upwards (i.e. to Central Tibet), [Grags pa seng ge] felt comfortable. One night, towards dawn, a black man wearing a silk garment told

not make Central Tibet the target of this campaign of theirs. One can conjecture that they

him: "This time, the sTod Hor will not come. Go to dBus gTsang! I will arrange that there will be no obstacles along the way". The following morning, he disclosed to one or two companions that he had had such a dream. All the companions said: "This [dream] of yours is a sign [sent] by the *chos skyong*. Since whatever else you said earlier came true, we will go up together with you", and they left [together]. When [Grag pa seng ge] was twenty-three years old (1305), he reached sTod lung mTshur phu without obstacles along the way. After coming to dBus, he asked where giving teachings and debating were most popular. He was told that gSang phu was [where they were popular], and thus he went to gSang phu Ne'u thog".

Ibid. (ibid p.240 line 5-p.241 line 3) reads: "De dus nyams rmi lam du U rgyan dang rdzong drug la phyin pa yang yang byung nas de rnams su phyin na thugs dam gyi bogs che bar dgongs nas/ chos rje'i drung du U rgyan dang rdzong drug la 'gro ba zhus pas/ U rgyan du 'gro ba la rdzu 'phrul thob dgos gsung nas/ rje btsun Ti lo pa'i gtam rgyud kyang gsungs/ de dus thugs dam ni Chos drug dang rje btsun ma rkyang pa la gcig (p.241) dril du byas pa yin te/ rgyu mtshan yang/ mgur las/ sgom chen Grags pa seng ge ngas/ gdams ngag Nā ro Chos drug zhus/ gtum mo'i bde drod nang as 'bar/ rnam rtogs bde stong ngang du thim/ zhes gsungs/ physis kyang chos rje'i drung du U rgyan dang La stod la 'gro ba'i zhus ba drag po byas pas/ U rgyan du byon pa mi dga'/ rdzong drug la gnas skor zhig gyis/ yar lam bla ma Byang sems pa la sByor drug cig zhus gsungs nas bka' gnang/ de nas drung chos rje ru mtshams su byon pa'i phyags phyi la phyin pas/ sNye mo phyags phyi ba rnams kyis skyel chang la chang ban chung du drug cu bdun cu zhig bteg pa 'thungs pas gzi ba'i skyon med pa/ nyams shin tu 'ur ba byung nas/ dā ma ru dkol gyin byon pas drung nas dpon slob rnams kyang thugs g.yo ba tsam byung gsungs//"; "At that time the journey to U rgyan and the *rdzong drug* appeared again and again in his consciousness and dreams. Since he thought that going to those holy places would benefit his meditation, having asked the *chos rje* whether he could go to U rgyan and the *rdzong drug*, since he said that he should have miraculous powers to go to U rgyan, he preached rje btsun Ti lo pa'i *gtam rgyud* ("story") to him. At that time, his meditation was coordinated on *Chos drug* and the solitary [form of] *rje btsun ma* (p.241). According to his song, the reason [of this] was: "I myself, sgom chen Grags pa seng ge, have obtained the teachings of *Nā ro chos drug*, the blissful warmth of *gtum mo* is burning inside [me]. My discriminative understanding is dissolved into bliss and emptiness". So he said. Again later, since he earnestly requested *chos rje* to go to U rgyan and La stod, since he said: "It is not good to go to U rgyan. You should go on pilgrimage to the *rdzong drug*. On the way up, you should receive *sByor drug* from bla ma Byang sems", he gave him such orders. Then, since the *drung chos rje* went up to the *ru mtshams* to accompany him, at sNye mo, he drunk *chang* served to him by sixty or seventy *ban chung* as *chang* for the journey given by those who were with him, but was not drunk. Since he was mentally very aware ('ur ba), he left playing the *dā ma ru* and said that the *dpon slob* were shocked [to see that]".

Ibid. (p.242 line 7-p.243 line 1): "De nas bla ma Byang sems chen po la sngar chos rje'i drung du yang zhus yod pas/ U rgyan mi dga' rDzong drug Yangs rdo yin 'di (p.243) kar bsgom gsungs//"; "Then, he asked bla ma Byang sems chen po what he questioned the *chos rje* earlier, since he had asked whether he could go to U rgyan and the *rdzong drug*, he said: "U rgyan is not good. rDzong drug Yangs rdo is [good]. (p.243) You should meditate there".

Ibid. (p.243 lines 6-7): "Nub cig rmi lam snang ba la/ U rgyan gnas su phyin pa rmis/ mi ro rta ro'i khri stengs su/ Yum gyur rDo rje rnal 'byor ma/ skyil krungs phyed pas bzhugs pa mthong/ zhes gsungs/ de nas La stod la byon te/ yar lam Ding ri Glang gor du rin po che Karma pa'i slob ma 'Dam pa zhig po dang mjal chos gsung gleng mang du byas//"; "One night he dreamed he went to the sacred land U rgyan in his dream. In a song, he told how he had the vision of *rje btsun ma* (i.e. sGrol ma): "One night in the vision of a dream, I dreamt I went to U rgyan. I had the vision

preferred to remain far from their Mongol adversaries' seat of power. The first Zhwa dmar pa Grags pa seng ge wished to go to U rgyan but he abandoned the project owing to its unsafe conditions,⁴³⁶ caused by the sTod Hor who had invaded Upper West Tibet.

The allusion to an unsettled situation is documented more realistically by a regional work which contains signs of a major Hor pa intervention into the land of wider La dwags during those days. The biography of Pi rang ras chen in Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin's *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* contributes the historical circumstances surrounding the wood snake 1305 invasion of the sTod Hor into Nub ra and Mar yul.⁴³⁷ Therefore, this biography, which records

of Yum gyur ("transformed into Yum"?), is Yum chen mo? or "mother"? rDo rje rnal 'byor ma sitting half cross-legged on a throne of human corpses and horse corpses". So he said. Then he went to La stod. On the way up, he met 'Dam pa gzhi po, the disciple of rin po che Karma pa, at Ding ri Glang gor (spelled so) and had conversations about religion with him".

Ibid. (p.245 lines 3-5): "De nas Bal yul du phyin te/ lam na sKyid grong du yod tsa na/ snang ba thams cad sbrul du song nas de la 'jigs skrag dang bcas pa zhig byung/ de klui' cho 'phrul yin las snyam nas physis chos rje la mjal dus zhus pas/ de klu'i cho 'phrul min lus kyi rtsa mthong ba yin/ 'jigs skrag de dbu mar rlung sems 'dus pa yin gsungs/ des srog rlung gi gegs las grol pa yin//"; "Then, he went to Bal yul and, on the way, while he was in sKyid grong, since all sorts of perceptions manifested as a snake, fear arose [in him]. Given that he thought that this was the miracle of a *klu*, and since he later met the *chos rje* and asked him [about it], the latter said that it was not a miracle of a *klu* but that he had seen the arteries (*rtsa*) of his body, and his vital energy (*rlung sems*) was concentrated in the central one. He was liberated by this from the obstruction of the vital force".

436. Che tshang bsTan 'dzin padma'i rgyal mtshan (*'Bri gung gser phreng* p.127 lines 19-21) says that the eighth 'Bri gung *gdan sa*, bCu gnyis rin po che rDo rje rin chen, sent at least a group of one thousand *ri pa* each to Ti se, La phyi and Tsa ri just before turning twenty-eight years old (wood snake 1305). Leaving aside the usual exaggeration in numbers, a wave of *ri pa*-s would have left for Ti se after mNga' ris skor gsum had passed under the Sa skya pa, and thus during the period when secular conditions were not particularly favourable for the bKa' brgyud pa in the region. Opposite to Grags pa seng ge's decision not to travel west, did the unsettled situation in Upper West Tibet, caused by the presence of the sTod Hor, traditional allies of the 'Bri gung pa, encourage the 'Bri gung pa to dispatch a group of *ri pa*-s to Ti se?

437. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.15 line 7-p.16 line 2): "dGon pa bzhengs pa nas lo gnyis kyi rteng nas Yar rkyen phyogs nas Dung mkhan zer ba'i Sog yul gyi mi rigs yin pa'i dmag mi re 'ongs/ Dung mkhan ni Yar rkyen gyi ming tshig zhig yin pa 'dra/ Sog dmag kyang zer/ Sog dmag dGa' Idan Tshe dbang gi Sog dmag Nub ra phyogs la sleb pa'i skor rgyal rabs lo rgyus nang mi gsal/ Yar rkyen gyi lo rgyus Gu bhed me me sKal bzang gis bshad pa ltar/ Yar rkyen nas yong ba'i Sog dmag ni Yar rkyen phyogs kyi ljongs khag zhig gi nang rang dbang rtsod pa'i sde zhig yin pas rting nas yul der rGya nag gzhung gis dbang bsgyur (p.16) ba dang/ dmag sde kun yul nas shor dgos byung ba'i tshul Dung mkhan dmag sde'i mi res zhib par bshad kyi 'dug zer//"; "Two years after the foundation of the *dgon pa* (i.e. in 1305), troops came from Yar rkyen. They were a detachment of people from Sog yul, known as the Dung mkhan. Dung mkhan seems to be one name for Yar rkyen but also refers to Sog [po] troops. This Sog [po] troops were not a division of dGa' Idan Tshe dbang's military. Concerning whether the Sog [po] troops of dGa' Idan Tshe dbang came to Nub ra, there is no sign of this in the *rgyal rabs*-s and *lo rgyus*-s. According to the history of Yar rkyen told by Gu bhed me me sKal bzang, these Sog [po]

events of political nature during the existence of Pi rang ras chen, provides an expansion to the record of the Mongols' presence in the Senge ge kha babs region I have dealt with earlier (see my "Some conjectures on change and instability during the one hundred years of darkness in the history of La dwags (1280s -1380s)").

If the chronological assessment in Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin's "Pi rang ras chen khrungs rabs" for the foundation of Yar ma mGon po dgon pa is reliable, this order of dating would push the Mongol invasion to some sixty years after its happening and into a different historical context. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin's biography of Pi rang ras chen mentions that the invasion of Nub ra was conducted by people defined as Hor and Sog po.⁴³⁸ They came from Yarkand, most likely across the Karakorum Pass, and would have entered Nub ra via Drang rtse. The composition of the invading army, being made by Mongols and Muslims, if the expression is read verbatim, describes a feature of the Hor military forces that continued to exist from the heydays of the empire founded by Jing gir rgyal po.

According to this reckoning based on the biography of Pi rang ras chen in "Pi rang ras chen khrungs rabs" (b. ca. 1315/1320, d. after 1390), the invasion would have occurred during a wide time *delta*—after ca. 1360/1365—when he would have returned to Nub ra from Central Tibet—and before his death in 1390.

Had it happened during that span of years, the invaders could have been a Timurid army, given the Tamerlane's takeover of territories in Moghulistan near Mar yul La dwags. They were active in those years on a wide front of Central Asia and neighbouring regions. Their troops, too, were known for being composed of a Mongol and Muslim mix.

However, these calculations limp chronologically given the revision in his *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, where Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin opts for more reliable dates than those he has

troops that came from Yar rkyen were one [military] body from within the territory of Yar rkyen. They had internecine fights. Later, the Chinese government (sic) extended its power over this land. (p.16) There is an account that the entire military unit had to flee. It is believed that there is a detailed oral account of the people of Dung mkhan's military detachment".

O rgyan rig 'dzin's treatment of the invasion of Nub ra takes into considerations aspects of history that fell well after the 1305 Hor pa campaign and have nothing to do with other events. This applies to his denial that the invasion was by dGa' ldan Tshe dbang's dGa' ldan pho brang and the passage of Turkestan under the Chinese. Not equally conclusive, instead, is his reference to Dung mkhan, which he says it was a name for both Yarkand and troops from this locality, which should be corroborated further.

438. Nyung stod pa O rgyan Rig 'dzin, "Pi rang ras chen gyi 'khrungs rabs" (p.78 lines 4-11): "De nas Yar rkyen phyogs nas Hor dang Sog po'i dmag mi sogs Tshe ya can yang nas Se ya can lam rgyud nas 'grul yod pas/ Pi rang ras chen nas gnas la grib mang po phog pa gzigs nas Tshe ya can lam Rong Phra mo zhig nang rta shong sga mi shong ba yod pa de la sol ba ras phad gang khyer nas dgags pa mdzad/"; "Then Hor and Sog po troops of Yar rkyen moved from Tshe ya can via the Se ya can route. Pi rang ras chen realised that many defilements would be suffered at this holy place (i.e. Nyung stod where Yar ma is situated). Along the Tshe ya can road and within Rong Phra mo ("narrow *rong*") there were many horses and saddled men. In order to stop that, he performed obstructions carrying with him a full cotton bag".

proposed in “Pi rang ras chen khrungs rabs”. The account in *Nub ra’i gnas bshad* contributes the date of the invasion, a crucial detail that helps to establish the inception of the prolonged tenure of Mar yul La dwags by the Hor in the first half of the 14th century. The 1305 invasion provides the background to the presence of foreign (Hor pa) rulers being the sovereigns of La dwags. 1305 is the *terminus post quem* to insert foreign rulers of the period in the genealogical succession on the throne of the region. The foundation date of Yar ma mGon po’i *dgon pa* (1303) stated in Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig ’dzin’s *Nub ra’i gnas bshad* assumes reliability, for the text says that, two years after the foundation of the monastery, the Hor invasion of Nub ra took place, a date confirmed by the dream of Grags pa seng ge.

Being more than half a century before the approximation proposed by Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig ’dzin in “Pi rang ras chen khrungs rabs”, the invaders were the Chagatāi who controlled Yarkand during those years rather than the Il-Khanid.⁴³⁹ The fact that the troops were sent from Yarkand in 1305 is also confirmed by the history of this locality in Turkestan told by Gu bhed me me sKal bzang—an oral account?—who adds that the troops were levied locally.

They renewed the pursuit of the older La dwags strategy to engage the Delhi sultan militarily, implemented in episodes of occupation during the second half of the 13th century. The enmity between the Delhi Sultanate and the Chagatāi, which envisaged a different military use of the La dwags front, led to a change of the sTod Hor’s strategy.

439. As is well known, the identity of the sTod Hor has been debated for a long time among Tibetologists and scholars of Mongol studies. The view that has long been accepted is that this name applies to the Mongol occupants of the dominions in Southern Turkestan (see, *inter alia*, Wylie, “The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted”), in a location that is, virtually, bordering on mNga’ ris skor gsum.

Hu-la-hu is considered by the Tibetan tradition to have been a sTod Hor *rgyal po*, and his proto Il-khanid to have been the sTod Hor, when they were in the lands of Northwest India and contiguous Central Asian territories before they left to seize Baghdad.

For a list of Tibetan principalities assigned in iron dog 1250 to various Mongol princes, including Hu-la-hu defined as the sTod Hor *rgyal po* see *Si tu bka’ chems* (in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* p.449 lines 3-17). Soon thereafter, the Chaghatai are being referred to as sTod Hor. The divide is iron monkey 1260, when the unity of the Mongol tribes broke up after Se chen rgyal po was made emperor, and several conflicting clans came into existence. However, this is not a clear-cut divide, for the sTod Hor who fought side by side with the ’Bri gung pa in the 1290 *gling log* were from the Il-Khanate of Baghdad (see my “The year the sky fell in: notes on the *gling log* of iron tiger 1290 in Vitali, *Essays on the history of Tibet*).

Another factor identifies the Chagatai as the Hor active in Mar yul La dwags in the period besides Hu-la-hu’s Hor had become the Il-Khanids rulers of Baghdad by then, thus stepping away a long distance from the Central Asian sector from where the invaders of La dwags had come. This was the warfare with the Delhi Sultanate that was undertaken by the Chagatai who were in control of the land Khurāsān.

The outcome of the 1305 campaign had a diverging point from the previous occasion. Rather than temporary, as it had been beforehand, it was a prolonged Hor pa tenure of La dwags. Despite the Yuan's overall control of the Tibetan plateau, the enmity between the Delhi Sultanate and the sTod Hor led fringe areas of the highlands to be occupied and ruled by the Chagatāi. They implemented this strategy aimed against their Islamic foes. It was not the result of a direct antagonism with the Yuan although the Yuan/Sa skya pa control of the plateau influenced the move. The Chagatāi conquest of La dwags at the expense of the Yuan dynasty took place during the reign of Se chen rgyal po's successor Ol ja du (on the throne 1294-1307). Was this direct control the consequence of an escalation of the conflict against Delhi on the La dwags front?

The campaign fell during the tenure of Du'a (on the throne 1282-1307), who held the dominions of the Chagatāi tribe in Central Asia and Turkestan, inclusive of Yarkand. He ruled them before the united territories of the erstwhile Chagatāi Mongols split into two provinces, Moghulistan and Transoxiana. The latter was under ulus Chagatāi.⁴⁴⁰ The split occurred after Du'a's demise. Like in similar cases of Mongol campaigns, the Yarkandi invading troops, too, must have been a mix of Mongols and converts to Islam. All these considerations point towards the fact that the campaign occurred during the 100 years of obscurity in the history of La dwags from the third quarter of the 13th century to the third quarter of the 14th.

In recording this invasion, Pi rang ras chen's biography in *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* mostly deals with the campaign in Nub ra but does not omit to say that the Hor pa troops focused on the core area of the Mar yul La dwags kingdom. The text says that the bulk of the Mongol army moved to Gle and captured it, so that the Chagatāi would have set their headquarters at the town rather than at Shel/She ye, the old seat of power.

In the following of Pi rang ras chen's biography, the account of the Hor pa invasion of his days deals with the military activity of a detachment of warriors which was left in Nub ra to subdue the region.⁴⁴¹

440. Saying that "they had internecine fights", Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin—or his authority Gu bhed me me sKal bzang—seems to be aware of the split of the Chagatai Khanate into those two rival political entities.

441. Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig 'dzin, *Nub ra'i gnas bshad* (p.16 lines 3-15): "rTa mi sum cu bzhi bcu re yul la jag bcom byed bzhin mang nyung re Sha yog rong rgyud Gle ru yong ba dang/ sTod lung bu rgyud nas yong mkhan sde zhig da lta'i Ma 'ong sTod lung pa phyogs la lam nor nas der mang nyung shi chad song/ da lta Ma 'ong sTong gangs ri ming du grags/ Ma 'ong ba der shi ba dang Ma 'ongs sTong ming du chags/ Tshe ya can lam 'gag pa dang dmag sde re Pi rang grong pa'i lung pa rgyud nas g. Yas ma mGon po'i phyogs su slebs/ de mi ku la 'brum pa'i nad yams yod pa'i nye 'khor du shi chad byung mkhan kun gyi ro bla ma Pi rang pa'i dgon pa'i 'og tu nang chung chung zhig brtsigs nas der dgra tshogs mnan par mdzad da lta 'du khang rmying pa'i 'og du yod par mngon/'"; "Thirty or forty horsemen plundered the land. While they were doing so, quite a number of them, by way of the lower course of the Sha yog, reached Gle. Given that the community of those who are the sTod lung descendants, [known] at present as the Ma 'ong sTong lung pa, erred taking the road, a number of them found their death. [The snow mountain] is known

Hence, the Hor troops attacked along two invasion fronts. After crossing the Karakorum pass, the army split. A smaller contingent of just thirty or forty warriors intruded into the Nub ra territory crossed by the homonymous river. In the meantime, the bulk of the troops went straight to Gle from the Karakorum pass by way of the area of the lower course of River Sha yog.

The itinerary of the Hor pa invasion—across the Karakorum pass from Yarkand that set its centre of action at Gle—is an indication that Shel/She ye, the major royal seat of Mar yul in those days, must have been taken over. In “Pi rang ras chen khrungs rabs” it is said that the Hor invaders came via the Se ya can road (ibid. p.78 lines 4-7). In *Nub ra ’i gnas bshad* (p.14 lines 12-13 and n.437), the text has it that the Tshe ya can (spelled so) road was interrupted, manifestly owing to the movement of Hor pa troops.

The small Hor pa contingent that followed the course of River Nub ra upstream all the way to Yar ma mGon po met a tragic end. This military action is described in some detail. They first took a wrong road which proved to cost them bitterly, for some of them died en route. They were joined by more troops in the area of Yar ma mGon po. This perhaps is a claim to boast of the powers of mGon po phyag bzhi pa who dealt with them by causing a smallpox infection, so that they died in numbers. They were buried in a common chamber. Whether or not the episode of Yar ma mGon po phyag bzhi pa dealing with the Mongol troops to the extent of causing their death may be seen in the light of a *Sog brzlog* practice, popular with the rNying ma but also used by the bKa’ brgyud, I opine that mGom po phyag bzhi pa’s performance was enacted in the typical *chos skyong* style.

The 1305 invasion touched an expanse of land in mNga’ ris stod much wider than Nub ra on which the account of Nyung stod pa O rgyan rig ’dzin focuses with a touch of provincialism. Besides covering the core of La dwags, the invasion extended as far as west to U rgyan, a traditional battle ground between the Chagatai and the Delhi Sultanate.

▪ The next Hor pa military operation in Nga’ ris stod

There are signs of the sTod Hor in mNga’ ris stod on another occasion. Years later, in earth horse 1318, the first Zhwa dmar pa, Grags pa seng ge, again concerned about their presence in Upper West Tibet, saw in a dream that the sTod Hor who were roaming around Ma pham g.yu mtsho had turned away from there.⁴⁴²

by the name Da lta ma ’ong sTong gangs ri. The name Ma ’ong sTong was established for the Ma ’ong pa who died there. The Tshe ya can road was interrupted. Various detachments of troops came to g.Yas ma mGon po via the Pi rang ravine. There all men got infected with smallpox and therefore even a greater number of men died on the way. In the area of g.Yas ma mGon po a small edifice was built below the *dgon pa* of Pi rang pa for the corpses of all who had died. This detachment of enemies was buried in it. It indeed is [still] at present below the old *’du khang*”.

442. *Grags pa seng ge ’i rnam thar* (in *mKhas pa ’i dga’ ston* p.975 line 19-p.976 line 5): “Nyer brgyad pa lcags khyi la rje Rang byung ba Tshal pa dga’ bde gshegs pa’i chos ’khor gyi gral dbu mdzad pa’i tshe thog mar mjal bas mi phyed pa’i dad pa thob/ lo bdun du slob gnyer mdzad/ sgos gsar rnying gi chags snang la skyo ba skyes te chos rje rin po che dpon slob bcu tsam mdzad nas sKungs na bzhugs pa’i drung du byon/ mdangs Ber nag can slebs byung khyod la chos skyong

The 1318 episode belongs to the changed political scene. rGyal bu Chos dpal, the Yuan emissary of Mongol nationality in charge of Tibetan affairs, proceeded towards sTod in order to expel the sTod Hor from the Ma pham g.yu mtsho area.⁴⁴³ *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* confirms this turn of events saying that rgyal bu Chos dpal was in Sa skya, ready to intervene against the sTod Hor, and offers the detail that this happened sometime after the *lo gsar* of 1318.⁴⁴⁴

(p.976) 'khor bar 'dug gsungs/ de lo tshes rjes mTshur bDe chen btab/ Chos drug kyi khrid zhus nas Seng ge lung du rtse gcig tu bsgoms pas drod rtags dpag med shar/ sems ting nge 'dzin gar gtad du sdod/ yi dam chos skyong gi dag stang mtha' yas/ dgun bDe chen du bsgoms pas sgyu lus rmi lam la rtsal thon sTod Hor gyi dmag mtsho Ma pham nas log par gzigs/'; "In iron dog (1310), when [Grag pa seng ge] was aged twenty-eight, Tshal pa dGa' bde died. When rje Rang byung rdo rje was the *gral dbu mdzad* ("head of the row") of the *chos 'khor*, [Grag pa seng ge] met him for the first time, whence he developed unflinching faith in him. He studied under him for seven years (1310-1317). In particular, after the *chos rje rin po che*, some ten *dpon slob* [altogether], left since he was tired of the jealousy of the new and old [disciples], [Grag pa seng ge] met him when [Rang byung pa] was staying at sKungs. The latter said: "Last night, Ber nag can appeared [to me]. You will be protected by the *chos skyong*". (p.976) In that year, the *chos rje* founded mTshur bDe chen. After receiving the *khrid* of [Na ro] *Chos drug*, [Grag pa seng ge] meditated one-pointedly, and uncountable spiritual realisations arose [in him]. His mind stood steady in whichever meditation [he practised]. He had uncountable pure visions of [his] *yi dam* and *chos skyong*. Since he meditated at bDe chen in winter (i.e. early 1318?), being well versed in dreams which are illusory bodies, he saw that the troops of the sTod Hor had turned away from mtsho Ma pham".

Ibid. (in *Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho*, *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* p.240 lines 4-5): "Yang lan gcig rmi lam na La stod kyi rgyab gangs ri zhig gi rtsa na rkya mi mang po 'dug pa mthong nas drung du bzhugs pas/ sTod Hor gyi skad yod par 'dug da rung ltos gsung pa la/ rmi lam bzung nas bltas pas/ phyir log nas khong rang gi pho brang du song/"; "Again, on one occasion, [Grag pa seng ge] saw in his dream that many lay (*rkya* spelled so for *skya*) people were at the foot of a snow mountain at the back of La stod. They reported to him that there was a rumour that the sTod Hor [would come], whence he said that he would take another look at [the matter], and examined [the signs] basing [himself] on his dreams. [He realised that the sTod Hor chieftain] had turned back and returned to his palace".

443. *Grag pa seng ge'i rnam thar* (in *Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho*, *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* p.240 lines 5-6): "De dus rgyal bu Chos dpal sTod Hor la 'thab du song pas 'thab ma dgos par log byung/"; "At that time, rgyal bu Chos dpal left to fight against the sTod Hor, but no need of fighting being there, he came back".

However, *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.166 line 18-p.267 line 1) says that rgyal bu Chos dpal was the one who conquered the sTod Hor, which does not match with the unfolding of the 1318 events, unless it refers to another occasion.

444. Petech ("Princely Houses of the Yuan Period Connected with Tibet") says that the presence of rgyal bu Chos dpal in Tibet, the emissary in charge of the Yuan affairs in Tibet, coincided with the activity of the sTod Hor in the area of Ma pham g.yu mtsho, which did not result in an open confrontation. Petech dates these events to 1321 because he links them to the bird year in which a *bka' shog* was issued by rgyal bu Chos dpal in favour of Zha lu sku zhang Kun dga' don grub. He was not the Zhwa lu *sku zhang* in that year, as I think I have proved in my *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (p.101-102). In line with the turn-over system of the Zhwa lu *sku zhang*-s, Kun dga'

Grags pa seng ge'i rnam thar in *mKhas pa'i dga'ston* has an account, styled as another prophecy by sGrol ma to the first Zhwa dmar pa. She appeared to him in one more dream of Grags pa seng ge who planned to go to mNga'ris and U rgyan. She advised him not to go to U rgyan because it was ravaged by war and was unsafe, which shows that, at the same time when the sTod Hor were active at Ma pham g.yu mtsho, U rgyan was devastated by a much fiercer warfare than Upper West Tibet.

These events are too coincidental not to represent a coordinated military enterprise, given that the two contenders in U rgyan in the same year 1318 could not have been other than the Chaghatai and the Delhi Sultanate who are indicated as the Du ru ka in the passage.⁴⁴⁵

don grub succeeded his father Grags pa rgyal mtshan and was the Zhwa lu *sku zhang* in the next bird year, 1333, when, in my view, the *bka'shog* was issued. This does not only disprove that rgyal bu Chos dpal's military response to the sTod Hor happened in 1321, but also contributes to ascertain that the state of turbulence prevailing in vast tracts of Northwest India and the plateau before or around 1333 (see the section entitled "The Qarāchīl Expedition" in my "Some conjectures on change and instability during the one hundred years of darkness in the history of La dwags (1280s-1380s)") was closely monitored by the Yuan, to the point that rgyal bu Chos dpal was compelled to come to Tibet.

Si tu bka'chems clarifies with remarkable precision the chronology of events that led rgyal bu Chos dpal to make preparations to fight the sTod Hor in Upper West Tibet. When this work comes to discuss the events of earth horse 1318, it begins with *lo gsar* (ibid. p.132 line 20). It then introduces events occurring during the second month (roughly April 1318), and adds notions during that spring (ibid. p.133 line 1). At that time, the text says, rgyal bu Chos dpal was at Sa skya ready to intervene and repel the sTod Hor (ibid. p.134 lines 11-12).

Si tu bka'chems adds other events of the same year, recounting that, in the fourth month—around June—of 1318, rGyal mtshan skyabs was elected Phag mo gru *khri dpon*, a nomination in which rgyal bu Chos dpal had some part. Petech suspects that rGyal mtshan skyabs was removed from his assignment in 1322, a fact clearly mentioned by *Si tu bka'chems*. The text states that rGyal mtshan skyabs was *khri dpon* until the eighth month of 1322 (ibid. p.134 line 20-p.135 line 1).

445. *Grags pa seng ge'i rnam thar* (in *mKhas pa'i dga'ston* p.976 lines 5-20): "rMi lam du U rgyan gyi gnas dang rDo rje rNal 'byor ma yang yang gzigs nas 'byon par zhus pas nyams myong gi rta rgod bya ba mtshar gsungs/ chos rje rin po che sNye mor byon pa'i phyag phyi nas gTsang la byon te grub thob Karma Pakshi'i gsol ja ba physis Jo nang gi gdan sa mdzad pa yang sems chen po rGyal ba ye shes dang mjal Dus 'khor gyi dbang sByor drug zhus sngon gyi nyams myong phul bas sor bsam srog 'dzin kyi yon tan mthar phyin nas rjes ting gi dus la slebs 'dug gsungs/ mnal lam du sGrol mas O rgyan du mi thon gsungs/ Byang sems chen pos kyang da rGya gar gyi bstan pa nub/ Tu rushka'i bar chad 'ong bas O rgyan la ma 'byon gsungs bas spros pa bcad/ Shong lo tsa ba Blo gros brtan pa la Don dam bsnyen pa dang sGrub thabs rgya mtsho zhus/ dngos rigs kyi rnal 'byor pa bzang po zhig la gdams pa 'ga' gsan/ lo gsum du rdzong drug rnam mnal lam du mjal/ rje btsun Mi la dang rGod tshang ba sogs mnal lam du mjal/ sKyi rong gi bar byon/ Bal ras sNyi ston chen po/ grub thob Ring mo/ mkhas btsun bSod nams 'od zer/ grub thob 'Dam zhig/ O rgyan pa'i sprul sku sogs mjal/'"; "Since, again and again, he saw in his dreams the holy places of O rgyan as well as rDo rje rnal 'byor ma, she advised him saying: "[This] experience is wondrous [like] the behaviour of a wild horse!". After accompanying the *chos rje rin po che* to sNye mo, he proceeded to gTsang and met Byang sems chen po rGyal ba ye shes, who earlier was the teaman of grub thob Karma Pakshi and then became the abbot of Jo nang. He received *Dus 'khor gyi*

dbang gong ma and *sByor drug*. Since he shared (*phul*, lit. "offered") his previous experiences [with him], he said: "You have reached the completion of *sor bsam srog 'dzin gyi yon tan* ("the ability to bring *prana* to discriminative thought") and you are entering upon *rjes gting gi dus* ("the stage of subsequent meditational realisations"). In his dream *sGrol ma* told him not to go to O rgyan. *Byang sems chen po* too told him: "The teachings have been destroyed in rGya gar. Do not go to O rgyan since calamity [in the form] of the Tu ru shka (spelled so) has come", whence he abandoned his undertaking. He received *Don dam bsnyen pa* and *Grub thabs rgya mtsho* from Shong lo tsa ba Blo gros brtan pa. He received a few teachings from a good *rnal 'byor pa* who had true knowledge. He expanded his meditational [skills] during his three year pilgrimage to the *rdzong drug* (i.e. hermitages where *Mi la ras pa* meditated). He met in dreams people such as *rje btsun Mi la* and *rGod tshang ba*. He went up to *sKyi rong* (spelled so). He met people such as *Bal ras* ("Newar *ras pa*") *sNyi ston chen po*, *grub thob Ring mo*, *mkhas btsun bSod nams 'od zer*, *grub thob Dam zhig*, and the incarnation of O rgyan pa".

Ibid. (in *Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho*, *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* p.240 line 6- p.241 line 3): "gZhan bDe chen du bsgom dus nyams kyi 'char tshul gzhan kyi sems shes pa dang/ rmi lam 'od gsal gyi gzigs tshul mang du gsungs te mdor bsdus tsam bkod pa yin zhes 'byung/ de dus nyams dang rmi lam du U rgyan dang rdzong drug la phyin pa yang yang byung nas gnas de rnams su phyin na thugs dam gyi bogs che bar dgongs nas/ chos rje'i drung du U rgyan dang rdzongs drug la 'gro bar zhus pas/ U rgyan du 'gro ba la rdzi 'phrul thob dgos gsung nas/ rje btsun Te lo pa'i gtam rgyud kyang gsungs/ de dus thugs dam ni Chos drug dang rje btsun ma rkyang pa la gcig (p.241) dril du byas pa yin te rgyu mtshan yang/ mgur las/ sgom chen Grags pa seng ge ngas/ gdams ngag Nā ro'i chos drug zhus/ gtum mo'i bde drod nang nas 'bar/ rnam rtog bde stong ngang du thim/ zhes gsungs/ phyis kyang chos rje'i drung du U rgyan dang La stod la 'gro ba'i zhu ba drag po byas pas/ U rgyan du byon pa mi dga'/ rdzong drug la gnas skor zhig gyis/ yar lam bla ma Byang sems pa la sByor drug gcig zhus gsungs nas bka' gnang/ de nas drung chos rje ru mtshams su byon pa'i phyags phyi la phyin pas/ sNye mo phyags phyi ba rnams kyis skyel chang la chang ban chung ngu drug cu bdun cu zhig bteg pa 'thungs pas gzi ba'i skyon med pa/ nyams shin tu 'ur ba byung nas/ da ma ru dkrol gyin byon pas drung nas dpon slob rnams kyang thugs la g.yo ba tsam byung gsungs/"; "Again, when he was meditating at bDe chen, he said that he awakened his consciousness, could apprehend other people's mind and had many cases of visions of 'od gsal ("pure light") in his dreams. This became known as *mDor bsdus tsam bkod pa* ("a slightly concise [account of] manifestations"). The journey to U rgyan and the *rdzong drug* appeared again and again in his [waking] consciousness and [his] dreams. He thought that going to those holy places would greatly benefit his meditation, and asked the *chos rje* whether he could go to U rgyan and the *rdzong drug*, but he replied that he had to have miraculous powers in order to go to U rgyan and told him the *gtam rgyud* ("story") of *rje btsun Te lo pa*. At that time, his meditation was focused on *Chos drug* and the solitary [form of] the *rje btsun ma* (p.241). According to his song, the reason [for this] was: "Given that I myself, *sgom chen Grags pa seng ge*, have obtained the teachings of *Nā ro chos drug*, the blissful warmth of *gtum mo* is burning inside [me]. My discriminative understanding has dissolved into bliss and emptiness". So said he. Later, he again put an earnest request to the *chos rje* [to be allowed] to go to U rgyan and La stod, who retorted: "It is not good to go to U rgyan. You should go on a pilgrimage to the *rdzong drug*. On the way up, you should receive *sByor drug* from bla ma Byang sems pa". He gave him such orders. Then, the *drug chos rje* having gone up to the *ru mtshams* [of dBus, given bDe chen's location?] to accompany him, at sNye mo, he drank *chang* served to him by sixty or seventy junior monks, this being the *chang* for the journey given by those who were with him, but he did not [become] drunk. Being mentally very alert ('ur ba), he set out playing the *da ma ru*, and said that the *dpon slob*

They, once more, were at war in the Khurāsān sector.

Was Upper West Tibet again being used to put pressure upon the Delhi Sultanate on the opposite flank? Possible ulterior military objectives did not prevent the sTod Hor, on this occasion, to create some nuisance in mNga' ris stod, a land which had passed under the control of their other enemies, the Yuan, and their Tibetan allies. Or else, the readiness of rgyal bu Chos dpal to move west and fight the sTod Hor would be inexplicable.

The reason for the sTod Hor to leave Ma pham g.yu mtsho, thus forestalling rgyal bu Chos dpal's intervention, was not so much the mercy of sGrol ma who had appeared to Grags pa seng ge and had told him that they were not going to pose any problem. It rather was the *quriltai* being held at that time to choose the new head of the Chaghatai. As is well known, it was Mongol custom to interrupt military campaigns in order to attend a *quriltai*.

The head of the Chaghatai, Isen Buqa (r. 1310-1318), died in 1318 and was succeeded by Khan Kebek (1318-1326) in the same year (see, *inter alia*, "Table IV: Chaghatai Khanate" in Boyle, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* p.345, and the entry Chagatāi Khān in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol.1, p.813b-814a). This caused an interruption in their military enterprises in order to attend the next *quriltai* that marked the appointment of Khan Kebek.

Were the instances of the sTod Hor presence in Upper West Tibet during those decades, viewed as a whole, unrelated to the change of secular control in mNga' ris stod in the meantime? This is the impression that one gleans from the concomitant Chaghatai activity on the Khurāsān front (U rgyan) and farther to the east in mNga' ris stod.

Hence a first historical consequence is that the control of mNga' ris stod by the Yuan/Sa skya pa alliance was challenged by other Mongol forces, the sTod Hor from Southern Turkestan, who, for political objectives going far beyond the Tibetan horizon, broke their monopoly of the plateau. All in all, the events described in the dream of Grags pa seng ge and the biography of Pi rang ras chen are signs that the control of mNga' ris stod by the Yuan/Sa skya pa bloc was enfeebled and temporarily subverted by Chagatāi attacks, especially in La dwags.

▪ rGyal bu Rin chen/Rinchana Bottha/Rin chen shah

The identity and deeds of rgyal bu Rin chen are a topic I have addressed profusely in the past (Vitali, "Some conjectures on change and instability during the one hundred years of darkness in the history of La dwags (1280s-1380s)"). Here I reiterate my previous assessments with the addition of the evidence derived from the 1305 Hor pa campaign which reinforces my points of view.

marveled [at that]".

Also see *Grags pa seng ge'i rnam thar* in *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.286 lines 11-12) for a much abridged version of the same events.

In comparison with the evidence provided by the two passages of this note, dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba's is more circumstantial than Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas's concerning the cause of the turmoil in U rgyan, attributed to the Delhi Sultanate (the Tu ru shka of *mKhas pa'i dga'ston*) while *Karma Kam tshang gser phreng* does not identify even one of the sides involved in the conflict. This confirms that, in 1318, warfare had broken out between the Tughluq and their Chaghatai foes, who were deployed along the Khurāsān front in those decades.

Most authors have accepted that rgyal bu Rin chen was a La dwags pa despite Jonarāja has considered him a Bottha in his *Rājataranginī* (Dutt transl., *Rajatarangini of Jonaraja* p.20-21). He believed that he came to Kashmir from a Tibetan region where he held sway.

Basing himself on *La dwags rgyal rabs*, Petech in *The Kingdom of Ladakh* (p.21) wrote that the people of La dwags would have never called one of their kings only *rgyal bu* ("prince").⁴⁴⁶ Consequently he sees an interpolation in the inclusion of rgyal bu Rin chen in the royal genealogy of *La dwags rgyal rabs*.

I think that being addressed as *rgyal bu* is an indication of his origin and the role he held in La dwags, for *La dwags rgyal rabs* does not recognise him as a local king. This indicates that he was from a territory different from La dwags, where he was a *rgyal bu* although he came to have authority in La dwags. This would explain the fact that *La dwags rgyal rabs* retained the term *rgyal bu* in his name.

I opine that rgyal bu Rin chen was a stranger to La dwags. He established his sway by further curbing the power of the royal house of Mar yul at Shel/She ye, whose genealogy is dealt with in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*. I introduce here several leads provided by Jonarāja in his *Rājataranginī* to decipher the identity and activity of rgyal bu Rin chen.

▪ The title *rgyal bu*

Often Tibetan sources apply Tibetan names and Tibetan terms of nobility such as *rgyal bu* to Mongol princes, but do not always apply it to noblemen of other ethnicities. One *rgyal bu* who also bore the name Rin chen was at the head of the sTod Hor troops during the 'Bri gung *gling log* of 1290 (*Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* p.254 lines 11-12). His troops were defeated by the Sa skya dpon chen Ang len.⁴⁴⁷ Other *rgyal bu*-s were Chos dpal, the emissary in charge of the Yuan affairs in Tibet, and, for instance, the Mongol Jim kim who sponsored the 1277 *chos 'khor* at Chu mig ring mo (*rGya Bod yig tshang* (p.329 lines 12-16) but the list could be longer.

▪ Rinchana's conversion to Islam

Another indication of the origin of Rinchana Bottha is his famous conversion to Islam during his three-year reign in Kashmir. Behind his decision to embrace Islam one can see sheer political opportunism, as mentioned by several authors. Nonetheless, the Mongols, after

446. Petech, in the other argumentation that he uses to dismiss the reliability of the presence of rgyal bu Rin chen in the genealogy of *La dwags rgyal rabs*, the one that Rinchana was included in the genealogy of La dwags for reasons of local pride deriving from the fact that a local man sat on the throne of Kashmir. This implies that the anonymous author of the *rgyal rabs* must have known and read Jonarāja's *Rājataranginī*, a possibility nowhere documented in any form, or else this source was so popular in La dwags to have become common lore.

447. Petech (*Central Tibet and the Mongols* p.30-31) says that, after the defeat of the sTod Hor, rgyal bu Rin chen was brought to the Yuan capital, but he does not say what source he has used as his authority to provide such a detail.

coming into contact with Islam earlier than the period in which Rinchana lived and around his time, did convert to Islam especially in the regions of Central Asia under their control of ulus Chagatai.

The Tibetans did not embrace Islam, except isolated groups. The subsequent conversion to Islam of regions of Tibetan culture contiguous to Kha che and La dwags, such as sBal ti,⁴⁴⁸ were not personal enterprises but the outcome of the advance of Muslim culture in these valleys.

▪ Rinchana's slave trade and his warfare potential

Two further elements in Jonarāja's account disprove rgyal bu Rin chen as someone who Jonarāja did not hesitate to define a Bottha several times. One is that Rinchana sold people of Kashmir to the Bottha, a trade that earned him huge profits (Dutt transl., *Rajatarangini* of *Jonaraja* p.17). The Tibetans of mNga' ris stod, to whom the statement manifestly refers, if accepted as it is, never engaged in slave trade either as givers or recipients. No traces of this activity are found in the sources I have read. The recipients of the trade more likely were splinters of Mongols still stationed in La dwags.

The second is a general consideration. The people of Upper West Tibet did not pursue wars of conquest outside their boundaries after sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon took ethnically different La dwags by force to found the kingdom of mNga' ris skor gsum in the 10th century.⁴⁴⁹ They fought wars with other Tibetan principalities, sometimes moving their troops—in insignificant numbers—to other regions of Tibet. After the imperial period, they did not have the military strength to lead a war of conquest. Had he been a Tibetan, probably rgyal bu Rin chen would have not have the might to intervene in the ongoing warfare between two major powers such as the Chagatāi and the Tughluq of Delhi, vying for supremacy in an expanse of territory from Khurāsān to Punjab. Moreover, there is no trace in the sources (Tibetan, Mongol and Muslim) of a third power strong enough to dispute the supremacy of the Chagatāi and the Delhi Sultanate.

Under this light, the claim that rgyal bu Rin chen was a Tibetan is unconvincing. The slave trade might have been an unusual and regrettable episode in Tibetan Buddhist history, although improbable, but the conquest of Kashmir by a Tibetan ruler of La dwags when the Mongols had set foot in Mar yul more than once and the Tughluq were extremely assertive in the vicinity of Kashmir should be taken with a good dose of scepticism.

The facts gathered here do not favour this suggestion either. Jonarāja, writing centuries after the brief reign of Rinchana, was not privy to the latter's identity, having to rely on the

448. Bru sha, by contrast, underwent a process of Islamisation already during the 11th century when Turkic converts to Islam took control of this land and caused serious trouble to the kingdom of mNga' ris skor gsum (see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.281-293).

449. Nyang ral describes the La dwags campaign by Nyi ma mgon in bloody terms. *Nyang ral chos 'byung* (p.458 lines 11-12) says: "De nas Mar yul du byon/ rgyal khriims bcas nyes pa shor ba nams la nyes pa blangs/ mgo bregs/"; "Then [sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon] proceeded to Mar yul. Punishments were inflicted on those who had broken the law he had established. Heads were cut off".

accounts that the tradition had preserved. He records the Kashmiri tradition according to which he was a Tibetan, but details about him he put together do not concur to make this beyond dispute. Was he a Hor pa, as I think?⁴⁵⁰ This hypothesis has further supporting evidence I have introduced here.

▪ rGyal bu Rin chen and Sa bu

An impressive reference by Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan to the existence of a history of rgyal bu Rin chen in the possession of the king of Tog, bSod rgyal, makes the search for facts about this ruler an important contribution to establish set points about his identity, life and deeds.

Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan's allusion to his inability to consult it amply proves how baffling the search for sources can be. He says that the death of the 18th Bha ku la rin po che (fire snake 1917), in whose possession the work was, prevented him from reading it. His words are useful to pinpoint the years in which Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan was busy working on *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter*, an early time in his life (d.1946). This is one of several indicators that this underrated master of history was a precursor in virtue of both his scholarly attitude and focus on sources.

A footnote in Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan's *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* has the potential of revising a piece of history of 14th century La dwags, for it questions lha chen Shes rab's role and even his existence.⁴⁵¹ He talks about a consistent literary elaboration

450. Cases of mistaken identity were not unusual, especially between Mongols and Tibetans, even in the area of Kashmir, the theatre of rgyal bu Rin chen's activity. Although not entirely analogous—not referring to an army of conquest but to an individual—U rgyan pa was taken for a Mongol in a public square, when Hu-la-hu was in Kashmir on the way to conquer Baghdad, and narrowly escaped a miserable end by dressing in local garb and fleeing in great hurry (Zla ba seng ge, *U rgyan pa 'i rnam thar rgyas pa* p.71 line 7-p.72 line 3).

451. The footnote in Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan's *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* (p.344 n.1 appended to p.343) reads: "lHa chen Shes rab mi dag go/ snga ma'i Bod yig gi rgyal rabs sI so gsum dang bka' shog che brjod de nang lha chen Shes rab gyi mtshan tsam yang med pas 'di mi dag go/ sNye mo rTa sgo Gong ma pa lag yod pa'i rgyal rabs snying pa naI du Hang rtse mo'i mkhar grong dang yul Sa bu sPyang mkhar btsugs pa ni rgyal bu Rin chen yin zhes bris 'dug lha chen Shes rab kyi mtshan yang mi 'dug go/ rgyal bu Rin chen gyi lo rgyus kyi dpe cha chung ba zhig Tog rgyal po bSod rgyal gyis dPe thub sku gshog Bha ku la g.yar nas btang ste Bha ku la grongs nas khong gi dpe cha tshang ma the mo brgyab yod pas de dpe cha ma thob//"; "[Historical references to] lha chen Shes rab are a corruption. In none of the three [relevant] *rgyal rabs* in Tibetan language and the *bka' shog che brjod* ("ordinance with eulogy") is there anything similar to the name of lha chen Shes rab, so that [his genealogical inclusion] is not reliable. In the old *rgyal rabs* in the possession of sNye mo rTa sgo Gong ma pa it is written that the builder of the castle and settlement of Hang rtse mo, and also the locality of Sa bu along with sPyang mkhar, was rgyal bu Rin chen. Even [in this text] the name of lha chen Shes rab is absent. Tog rgyal po bSod rgyal lent one short *dpe cha* with the history of rgyal bu Rin chen to dPe thub sku gshog Bha ku la. Bha ku la has died and all his books have been sealed, so I could not obtain it".

in historical sources, currently not available but perhaps traceable, that ignores the existence of lha chen Shes rab. Three old *rgyal rabs* consulted by Yo seb dGer gan bSod nams tshe brtan do not mention lha chen Shes rab at all.

Which *rgyal rabs* are these? It is a pity that Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan has not been more exhaustive and could not incorporate at least the passages from these sources that concern the period under consideration. One could have been *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*, where lha chen Shes rab does not appear but then also many other rulers and I speculate that another text could have been *mGo zlum das chad*.

According to the thesis expounded by Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan, a more important historical aspect is that Sa bu was built by rgyal bu Rin chen to be the Chagatāi outpost in Mar yul La dwags, from where the sTod Hor ruled the region. Hence, rgyal bu Rin chen moved the Hor's headquarters from Gle, where they had originally settled, to Sa bu.

The year of rgyal bu Rin chen's foundation would have fallen sometime before 1318, when the sTod Hor unleashed a major offensive against the Delhi Sultanate, raiding Pu hrang stod and then conquering Kashmir. One chieftain of this campaign was rgyal bu Rin chen himself. It is symptomatic of a change of political perspective operated by the sTod Hor who, after occupying the area of Gle in 1305 and avoiding to rule from the erstwhile capital Shel/She ye, decided to have a capital of their own before their campaign of 1318.

How long Sa bu remained the capital of the Chagatāi in Mar yul is not known. The next ruler mentioned in *La dwags rgyal rabs* was lha chen Shes rab. If truly existing, he must have been reigning a few decades after rgyal bu Rin chen who left La dwags presumably in 1318/1319.

The choice of Sa bu as the headquarters of the sTod Hor led, the Mongols gone, the locality to retain its role as a local capital in the post- Chagatāi period.

▪ rGyal bu Rin chen and Kashmir

He seized the throne of Kashmir in 1320, but the antecedents to this event played out either in 1318 or 1319, when he had come to the Valley.⁴⁵² The antecedents which favoured rgyal bu Rin chen's capture of the throne of Kashmir have significant implications for the history of La dwags. He faced a local revolt by people called Kālamānya in Jonarāja's *Rājataranginī* (Dutt transl., *Rajatarangini of Jonaraja* p.16-17),⁴⁵³ belonging to the Mon ethnicity of La

452. Jonarāja's *Rājataranginī* (Dutt (transl.), *Rajatarangini of Jonaraja* p.17) says that Dulucha, the other invader of Kashmir of that time, left the Kashmir Valley during the winter of 1319-1320, fearing Kashmir's winter cold, after causing much havoc and spoliation, but Rinchana stayed on. One can, therefore, say that the military phase characterised by the presence of two armies in Kashmir, recorded at some length in the same source (Dutt (transl.), *ibid.* p.16-18), dates to 1319 at the latest. Rinchana took the throne of Kashmir after Dulucha left.

453. They are the sKal Mon, Ha le Mon etc. (spelled in several variants) of the Tibetan literature. For instance, *La dwags rgyal rabs* (Zi ling ed. p.7 lines 5-8) includes this population, inhabitants of non-Tibetan areas in the West Himalaya and the Karakorum, among the four ancestral tribes of

dwags. Kālamānya stands for sKal Mon (*Mar lung pa'i rnam thar* f.29b line 1).

The insurgence led to the killing of his father, an event in the logic of a confrontation on the battle field.⁴⁵⁴ rGyal bu Rin chen avenged the latter's death, but purportedly had to move to Kashmir. Jonarāja's account turned conquest into a compulsion to leave. His account is styled as if those Kālamānya managed to grow in strength to the point of obliging him to leave. Yet rgyal bu Rin chen was not weakened—alternatively he was able to regroup—or else he could not have taken Kashmir.

Besides the evidence provided by *Pi rang ras chen gyi rnam thar* concerning the Mongol invasion of Nub ra and La dwags that corresponds to the years soon before rgyal bu Rin chen's activity all the way to the Indian Northwest, his father's assassination by the Kālamānya, Mon pa from the region, corroborates the statement that the people of La dwags were seditious.

The Mon pa of La dwags were rebellious inasmuch as the Chagatāi horde, of which rgyal bu Rin chen was a headman, were conquerors of the Sindhu region. The alliance between Hindu and Muslim dignitaries in Kashmir mentioned by Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi (*Sufism in Kashmir* p.70-72 and n.1 on p.71) was meant to keep the Valley under local control vis-à-vis the threat of Hor pa domination during a time of grave political uncertainty.

It cannot be ruled out that the critical time in the Mongol's system of governance, occurring in correspondence with a *quriltai* which the sTod Hor troops went to attend after leaving the Ma pham g.yu mtsho area in 1318, may have encouraged a local rebellion against rgyal bu Rin chen that culminated with his father's death.

The two fronts (Khurāsān and mNga' ris stod) of the same Chagatāi offensive against the Delhi Sultanate are episodes that tend to credit an orchestrated Hor pa campaign that led Richana Bottha to take over Kashmir.

The conquest of Kashmir by rgyal bu Rin chen, who ruled La dwags before he attacked the Valley and seized its throne according to *Rajatarangini of Jonarāja* (Srinagar ed. p.27-28) is one more confirmation that his rule of La dwags was a step towards a more distant military goal. The Hor pa campaign that targeted La dwags, besides opening a new front in the warfare against the Delhi Sultanate, was meant to gain control of the Kashmir Valley that

the borders (*mtshams kyi mi'u rigs bzhi*). This source says they were Gam shang rGya, Gyim shang Hor, Ha le Mon and sPu rgyal Bod. The inclusion of sPu rgyal Bod among the people at the borders of the plateau should not be considered surprising, because the integration of the proto-Tibetan tribes had not yet been accomplished and the Tibetan race had yet to be formed (on this issue see my "Tribes which populated the Tibetan plateau (as treated in the texts collectively called the *Khungs chen po bzhi*)", in R. Vitali (ed.), *Cosmogony and the Origins*, Lungta 16). The ancestral tribes, internal to Tibet (*nang gi mi'u rigs*), were, according to the same source, sMra Zhang zhung, sTong Sum pa, lDong Me nyag and Se 'A zha.

454. rGyal bu Rin chen's father, perhaps an important dignitary assigned to La dwags, is named Vākatānya in Jonarāja's *Rajataranginī*. If Kālamānya is a transliteration of sKal Mon, with *manya* standing for Mon (see immediately below in the text), *tanya* may render a dental syllable, such as *ston* or *ldan*; *vaka* or *vak* could stand for **chag* and thus perhaps mChog—hence mChog ldan.

allowed the Mongols to engage their Muslim foes more directly.⁴⁵⁵

The length of rGyal bu Rin chen's tenure on the throne of Kashmir although short-lived—meeting with his death three years after—is a sign of a temporary Hor pa occupation of the Valley in their struggle against the Delhi Sultanate. The background of his ousting and demise is not recorded in *Rajatarangini* of *Jonaraja*.

As for the two warriors who torched the Kashmir Valley, Dulucha was a Hor from Turkestan,⁴⁵⁶ so was Achala. The campaign of Dulucha against the Valley before rgyal bu Rin chen's and the one by Achala after rgyal bu Rin chen lost his life in 1323 were meant to weaken Kashmir. Dulucha's plunder of Kashmir was an antecedent that encouraged rgyal bu Rin chen to annex the Valley and take its throne for himself. Dulucha served the purpose of his Chagatāi fellow warriors. Achala, too, invaded the Valley for he pursued the same objective of his predecessors, the one of keeping the La dwags-Kashmir front open against the Delhi Sultanate after rgyal bu Rin chen's death and the Hor pa loss of that strategic region.

▪ The Hor pa segment in the royal genealogies of Mar yul: a tentative reconstruction

The dynastic literature of La dwags preserves the names of several rulers of the land during the dark period but little more than mere names is known about them.

La dwags rgyal rabs lists a single lord for some two hundred years after dNgos grub mgon, who began his rule in 1215, until Grags pa 'bum lde and Grags pa 'bum who reigned during the second quarter of the 15th century; the latter of the two perhaps slightly later on. In that long span of years, this *rgyal rabs* mentions rgyal bu Rin chen—a flat entry in that only his name is recorded—and, after him, the two rulers of Sa bu, lha chen Shes rab and Khri gtsug lde (*La dwags rgyal rabs* lHa sa ed. p.44 lines 14-19).

For its part, *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*, during the dark years in the history of La dwags, records the generations of the royal line of Mar yul with its seat at Shel/She ye, the ancient capital since the pre-Nyi ma mgon time.⁴⁵⁷ Bla chen gZi di khyim/De khyim, whose reign coincided with the two sojourns of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal, was followed by several rulers. None of them was rgyal bu Rin chen. *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* enumerates the next monarchs after gZi di khyim/De khyim, namely bKra shis mgon, lha chen Di gin, followed by De mur. The first of these lords obviously was a La dwags pa of Tibetan origin

455. There are no hints in the literature about where independent Kashmir stood in the contention between Delhi and the Chagatāi. Given the Hor pa invasions of the Valley, one hypothesis is that Kashmir sided with Delhi.

456. Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi (*Sufism in Kashmir* p.64) dismisses Dulucha's Kandahar origin asserted by various Muslim authors and correctly points out that he was a Mongol, for *Rashid al-Din* says that his provenance was Southern Turkestan, hence he was a Chagatāi. However, Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi naively accepts the notion that rgyal bu Rin chen was a La dwags pa.

457. Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan, *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* (respectively p.338 lines 11-13; p.339 line 2; p.339 line 11; p.339 line 13-p.340 line 1; p.340 lines 7-11; p.340 lines 18-20; p.341 lines 3-4; p.341 lines 14-18).

and the second a ruler of indigenous stock, while the presence of De mur in the genealogy is most puzzling.

The gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, which deals with the dynasty of Mar yul centred in Shel/She ye, does better. It contains a more complete segment of rulers than the other sources. The genealogical section of the obscure period is similar to the royal line of *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* but with some noteworthy deviations (ibid. p.548 line 2-p.551 line 3). The lineage includes Di mgon (the De khyim of *U rgyan pa'i rlam thar rgyas pa* and the gZi di khyim of *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*), bKra shis mgon, followed by lha chen Di win and Di mur (respectively the lha chen Di gin and De mur of the *gdung rabs*). The next ruler makes the presence of De mur even more significant. He is named Mo gol, who is missing in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*. La ldan, another ruler of alien origin, ruled after him.

That the Pu hrang pa supporters of the 'Bri gung pa and, thereafter, the local Indo-Iranic rulers had lost momentum in La dwags is evinced from the substitution of local kings—the Indo-Iranic royal segment which had interacted with the exponents of 'Jig rten mgon po's school—with sovereigns of foreign origin.

The peculiarity of the names De mur, Mo gol and La ldan calls for a closer look at the fragments relating to the secular history of La dwags and mNga' ris stod against the background of events that took place in the Indian Northwest to see whether these inclusions in the regnal line of Mar yul are historically justified.

The account of the Hor invasion from Yarkand that led to their occupation of Mar yul La dwags has important implications for the dynastic history of the region, Nub ra included.

Historical texts that deal with the royal genealogies of the period—those at Shel/She ye, Gle and Sa bu—are not without lacunas. These omissions amount to the exclusion of lha chen Shes rab in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*, the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and the historical works mentioned by Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan that he could not consult. The almost complete segment of Hor pa rulers is missing in *La dwags rgyal rabs*.

A parallel chart of their lineages attached here shows differences. The chart is a starting point to complete the fragmentary genealogical sequence found in each of them:

<i>La dwags rgyal rabs</i>	<i>gDung rabs zam 'phreng</i>	<i>rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long</i> (gNam rtse ed.)
	gZi di khyim (i.e De khyim)	Di mgon (i.e. De khyim)
	bKra shis mgon	bKra shis mgon
	lha chen Di gin	lha chen Di win
	De mur	Di mur
	Nyi 'od rdo rje	Mo gol
	(?)	(?)
rgyal bu Rin chen		

	Go de khyim	La ldan
	mnga' bdag Jo btsun	mnga' bdag Jo btsun

None of the texts dealing with the royal segment of the period gives regnal years for any king of its genealogy. The lack of dates also applies to the Hor pa segment in these genealogies.

Nonetheless, a placement of these rulers into a sequence can be achieved by the reference to few years. This fairly accurate historical positioning of the rulers of the sTod Hor segment can be attempted thanks to the cross-evidence provided by the works mentioned in these pages—the regional text *Nub ra'i gnas bshad*, *Rājataranginī* of *Jonarāja*, *Grags pa seng ge'i rnam* thar and *Si tu bka' chems*. *La dwags rgyal rabs*, too, contributes to the sequence of reigns. Despite the almost absent treatment of the royal lineage from the second half of the 13th century to the first half of the 14th in this *rgyal rabs*, the entry of rgyal bu Rin chen in the text is historically crucial since it expands the period of the Hor pa occupation of Mar yul La dwags.

rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long (gNam rtse ed.) introduces Mo gol in his royal lineage of Mar yul after De mur/Di mur. This king is also found in *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* which omits Mo gol. The reigns of De mur/Di mur and Mo gol with the addition of rgyal bu Rin chen and perhaps La ldan are a confirmation of the rule exercised by the sTod Hor in Upper West Tibet.

It is hard to suggest an identification for De mur/Di mur and Mo gol from the Mongol material. Nowhere in the documents is a Yuan dignitary indicated as ruler of a specific Tibetan principality. The Chagatāi rulers in La dwags are the exception.⁴⁵⁸ It is thus legitimate to hold, by considering the issue from this angle too, that De mur/Di mur and Mo gol were not Yuan loyalists.

De mur/Di mur and Mo gol were rulers who broke the local rulership and imposed Mongol power in Mar yul. By means of the Mongol campaigns in the two-pronged sector that extended from U rgyan and Khurāsān to Pu hrang stod, De mur/Di mur brought about a dynastic interruption of the autochthonous lineage from Shel/She ye. Neither *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.) nor *Dung rabs zam 'phreng* record any local ruler associated to De mur/Di mur, whereas the next Hor pa kings had a local counterpart. Their sway in Mar yul led them to superimpose themselves upon the alternate reigns of indigenous lords of Dardic and Tibetan stocks in the period.

An assessment of this segment of foreign kings is achieved by crossing the two available dates—the 1305 of the Hor invasion of Mar yul La dwags and the 1318/1320 of rgyal bu Rin chen's attack on Kashmir and its consequent conquest—with the royal lines found in *gDung rab*

458. As is too well known to require elaboration here, Tibet was ruled by the Sa skya pa on behalf of the Yuan, and its governance was based on the *khri skor-s*, the *chol kha gsum*, several administrative units in China in charge of Tibetan affairs. Mongol princes were delegated to run affairs from a distance (Go dan) or inside the plateau (e.g. The mur bho ga) and military campaigns—often protracted—were waged in the country.

zam 'phreng, the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and *La dwags rgyal rabs*.

A few aspects help to realise to which *ulus* these rulers belonged, their place in their line and the role they played:

- the name sTod Hor did not apply to Hu-la-hu's tribe anymore but addressed the Chagatāi after this great Mongol's military expedition that led to the conquest of Baghdad and the definitive transfer west;
- De mur, Mo gol and rgyal bu Rin chen were Chagatāi rather than Yuan. Their royal segment came from Southern Turkestan and, therefore, they could not have been Yuan.
- De mur/Di mur, the first Hor pa king in their segment, must have ruled from 1305 on the grounds of the date of the earlier Chagatāi invasion of Mar yul La dwags. Two generations of local rulers—bKra shis mgon, lha chen Di gin—reigned from after 1266-1270 to 1305.
- Mo gol of the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* was the successor to De mur/Di mur.
- It cannot be ruled out that rgyal bu Rin chen, still a sTod Hor, belonged to a group of the Chagatāi army different from that of his predecessors since he moved the headquarters from Gle to Sa bu and founded sPyang mkhar as the new capital before 1320 when *Rājataranginī of Jonarāja* records his ascension to the throne of Kashmir. I suggest, that rgyal bu Rin chen ruled sometime after Mo gol.
- With rgyal bu Rin chen leaving La dwags to undertake the conquest of Kashmir, the vacancy on the throne in Mar yul La dwags was supplemented by La ldan, from the same Hor pa faction of De mur/Di mur and Mo gol. He sat on the throne at the new capital Sa bu after 1320.

The Hor pa rulership in Mar yul La dwags led to a subaltern status of the local kings at Shel/She ye. A juxtaposition of these local kings with the Mongol rulers provides a chronological framework for their tenure of the throne. In the interplay of rulers derived from a cross-reading of the sources, *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* has Nyi 'od rdo rje, a La dwags pa of Tibetan origin, ruling when the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* has Mo gol. After rgyal bu Rin chen, *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* has Go de khyim, an Indo-Iranic king, while *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.) goes for La ldan as ruler, a Hor in all probability.

The discrepancy between the two sources concerning the successor to De mur on the throne of Mar yul signals a state of affairs that was not coexistence of rulership.

The presence of Go de khyim in the lineage of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (gNam rtse ed.) is one more case which indicates that the indigenous lords kept been somewhat preserved in the exercise of power, but they did so under the superior authority of the sTod Hor.

These cohabitations indicate that a local ruler had to accept the overlordship of a foreigner. Rulers from Shel/She ye kept the throne nominally under the sovereignty of the Chagatāi who had a direct say on the governance of the region as operative lords.

That, according to the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, these foreign rulers held Mar yul one after the other is a sign of a steady occupation of the Mar yul throne in its wider region than the short reign of rgyal bu Rin chen in Kashmir.

The most important historical aspect of this evidence, provided by *gDung rabs zam phreng* and the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, and supported by *Pi rangs ras chen gyi rnam thar*, is that the sTod Hor controlled Mar yul during the time of the Yuan/Sa skya pa domination of Tibet.⁴⁵⁹

The biography of the first Zhwa dmar pa Grags pa seng ge expands the presence of the sTod Hor up to Pu hrang stod. The Chagatāi invasions mentioned in these pages show that the Yuan/Sa skya pa alliance could not keep the sTod Hor at bay in Upper West Tibet during those decades. The control of the region by the Yuan and the Sa skya pa was broken several times in favour of their rival Mongol tribe who held Mar yul during the span of a few decades.

A bibliographical note

Some biographies used in this book of mine—early specimens of the genre—deserve closer attention owing to intriguing features that cannot stay without a comment. I will not refer so much to the many archaisms in their spellings and expressions which are well known to the philologists. They reflect the linguistic peculiarities encountered in the Tun-huang documents, which indicate that these archaisms were still of common use as late as the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th when these biographies were written.

I scrutinise here the issue of the authorship of the *rnam thar*-s of gNyos lHa nang pa, 'Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa and Seng ge ye shes. Together with the biography of sKyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po written by his nephew 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas (1175-1255) at

459. Despite the existence of a single diminutive temple in Mar yul —Guru lha khang—the Sa skya pa did not exercise continuous control over the land, unlike elsewhere on the plateau.

The reign of mnga' bdag Jo btsun marked the end of the presence of Muslim Kashmir after they had removed Hor's domination of Mar yul La dwags. Haidar Malik's *Tārīkh-i-Kashmir* (f.87a) says that Sultan Shāh-ab-udin, the son of the Kashmiri king Shāh Mirza, led an army to La dwags and defeated troops from "Kashgar" which controlled the territory (Zain-ul-Aabedin Aabedi, *Emergence of Islam in Ladakh* p.5). They were the sTod Hor of the gNam rtse edition of *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and *gDung rabs zam 'phreng*.

The sovereignty of local rulers was reintroduced. They regained control of Mar yul after the sTod Hor interregnum. Their definitive recovery of local power in Mar yul La dwags is documented by a date that occurs several decades thereafter. *Yar lung Jo bo'i clos 'byung* says that mnga' bdag Ras chen was the king of Mar yul at the time this work was completed by its author, Rin chen sde, in fire dragon 1376 (ibid. p.70 lines 9-11).

mNga' bdag Jo btun ruled from Shel/She ye. lHa chen Shes rab, if he is given historical credibility disputed by Yo seb dGe rgan bSod nams tshe brtan, reigned from the erstwhile Hor pa capital at Sa bu.

The existence of the two royal houses, together with those of Zangs dkar and Nub ra, created the conditions for the region to be fragmented into territorial dominions, a trade mark of the second half of the 14th century and the 15th. The impulse given to this political state of affairs in the region of the Seng ge kha babs was the sTod Hor occupation of the territory.

'Bri gung, as its colophon says but without giving the year of composition (p.123 lines 3-5), they form an impressive corpus of early 'Bri gung pa biographies.

gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar was authored by Dznya na badzra, his youngest disciple, at ri khrod Bla dmig dgon pa of Nyang stod 'Gru (*gNyos lHa nang pa'i rnam thar* p.123 line 17-p.124 line 2). In the absence of the date of composition in its colophon, it should be assumed that it was written sometime during the 13th century given that gNyos chen po died in 1224.

I deal here with the evidence that attributes '*Gar dam pa Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* to his nephew U rgyan pa (1239-1313) aka Nub gling ston pa (the "master of the land in the west", i.e. U rgyan?), rather than the great U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal (1230-1309). That they were homonymous and contemporary does not simplify the matter.

A disciple of rGod tshang pa in his youth, the *grub chen* is associated with the sTod 'Brug pa. He is considered the main disciple of Karma Pakshi, although he met the second Karma pa only for three days. A karmic nexus linked them throughout many lives and thus he was a Karma pa, too (see Vitali, "The early Karma pa rebirths and the question of the Black Hat" in my *Essays on the history of Tibet*).

His affiliation to different bKa' brgyud schools from the 'Bri gung pa is, for sure, no sign that U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal did not write the biography but there are more stringent reason to attribute the *rnam thar* to the other one who bore the same appellative.

U rgyan pa Nub gling ston pa proclaims his paternity of the biography in both colophons of the work. The first of the two that covers 'Gar Dam pa's life until his last days consists of seventeen chapters (ibid. p.561 lines 1-2) and dates to wood sheep 1295. It was written by U rgyan pa at Chos sdings Rin chen spungs pa'i dgon pa (ibid. p.561 lines 6-7). The colophon of the second part of the biography—practically another *rnam thar*—dates to wood dragon 1304. It was again written by U rgyan pa at the same monastery (ibid. p.633 line 6-p.634 line 3). Both works fall during the life of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal but this is no evidence to attribute the paternity of the biography to him.

U rgyan pa, the author of his biography, nurtured an interest in Chos sdings pa's life because they belonged to the same 'Gar family from Khams. He was the son of sTon sgom dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, Chos sdings pa's youngest brother according to U rgyan pa's short biography found in *sPo bo'i lo rgyus*. This work adds to stress the family further that he was the grandson of dPal gyi rtse mo, Chos sdings pa's father.⁴⁶⁰ He thus was Chos sdings pa's

460. *sPo bo'i lo rgyus* (p.14 line 18-p.15 line 6) has this to say about Gar dam pa's nephew U rgyan pa, the author of his biography: "De nas sgom byon dPal gyi rtse mo'i chun ma'i sras dPal gyi rgyal mtshan gyi sras su bla ma O rgyan pa'am mtshan gzhan Nub gling ston pa zhes mtshu rtsal nus pa zhig byung nas chos kyi khri la phebs/ de'i dus su "chos kyi khri la bla ma O rgyan (p.15) bzhugs/ khrims kyi nga ro dkon gnyer sPo bos grogs" zhes yongs su grags shing/ bla ma O rgyan pa dgun lo bdun cu don lnga bar bzhugs/ bla dpon 'di gnyis kyi dus su/ Kong po Klu nang nas sNye brag/ lHo rgyud/ lDem gzhis sogs man chad 'go btsugs pa ma zad/ sTod Byu ru stag rtse nas smad Ji ngom yan chad kyi ban gsum stong rgyad brgya la dam pa'i chos kyi bskor cing smin grol la bkod/ mdzad rjes shin ti che/"; "Then, bla ma O rgyan pa, whose other name was Nub

nephew (see the chart with the 'Gar genealogy). Another fundamental clue to identify him as the author of the biography is that he was a follower of Pha rin po che, the disciple of Chos sdings pa, whereas there are no clues to link U rgyan pa rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal to Chos sdings pa.⁴⁶¹

Chos sdings pa 'i rnam thar is structurally similar to *'Jig rten mgon po 'i rnam thar phyogs bcu dus gsum ma*, commonly known as *'Jig rten mgon po 'i rnam thar ling tshe* and again authored by 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas, due to the organisation into episodes in both of them. The biography of 'Jig rten mgon po defines them as *mdzad pa-s*, that of Chos sdings pa as *skabs-s*.

'Jig rten mgon po 'i rnam thar ling tshe was originally conceived in visual terms and was based on the *skya ris* that his nephew 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas drew himself on the walls of Kha char lha khang during his sojourn at this temple in Pu hrang.⁴⁶²

gling ston pa, was the son of the son of dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, who was the son of the wife of sgom byon (“meditator”) dPal gyi rtse mo. After becoming powerful in the skill of performing *mtshu*, he was appointed to the religious throne. At that time, the proverb “Bla ma O rgyan sat on the religious throne; (p.15) the loud voice of the law was proclaimed by dkon gnyer sPo spo” is universally known. Bla ma O rgyan pa lived for seventy-five years. During the time of both the *bla [ma and]* chieftain, not only they introduced imposing taxation from Kong po Klu nang to sNye brag, lHo rgyud and lDem gshis, but they turned the wheel of the teachings and set on the path of liberation 3,800 noble monks from Byu ru sTag rtse in sTod to Ji ngom in sMad. The imprint of their achievements was great”.

461. The brief biography of U rgyan pa, the nephew of 'Gar Dam pa Chos sdings pa and his biographer, in *lHo rong chos 'byung* (p.440 line 16-p.441 line 5) reads: “De'i slob ma rnams kyi nang nas bla ma U rgyan pa ni/ sa pho phag la sku 'khrungs/ Pha rin po che la bKa' brgyud kyi chos skor rnams rdzogs par zhus/ gzhan yang bla ma dga' zhis la dbang gdams ngag sogs kyis phyug par mdzad nas nus pa che zhing grub rtags ston pa dang/ Pha rin po chegshegs pa'i rjes su chu pho 'brug gi lo dgung lo lnga bcu nga bzhi la gdan sa mdzad nas Nam mkha' rdzong du dpal rDo rje 'jigs byed sku byin rlabs che (p.441) zhing/ ngo mtshar che ba bzhangs shing/ gzhan yang dgon pa'i dar rgyas dang mi mtshun pa'i phyogs rnams mngon spyod kyis tshar bcad nas/ dgung lo bdun cu don lnga chu mo glang gi dByar tha chung gi nyi ma nyi shu lnga la gshegs so//”; “Among his (Pha rin po che's) disciples, bla ma U rgyan pa was born in earth female pig (1239). He received the cycle of bKa' brgyud teachings from Pha rin po che completely. Moreover, he was enriched by [teachings], such as empowerments and secret instructions, from a few *bla ma-s*. He became extremely powerful and exhibited signs of his achievements. After the death of Pha rin po che, he became the *gdan sa* in water male dragon (1292) when he was aged fifty-four, and built a statue of dpal rDo rje 'Jigs byed at Nam mkha' mdzod, which bestowed great blessings (p.441) and was extraordinarily large. Moreover, he expanded the monastery and, after completing his activity in different places, died on twenty-fifth of the last summer month of water female ox (1313) when he was seventy-five years old”.

462. A statement in *'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* needs clarification. *'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p.23 lines 3-4) reads: “De nas sPu rangs Kho char du bzhangs pa'i dus su/ rNam thar Phyogs bcu Dus gsum ma'i lha bris thugs la 'khrungs pas gtsug lag khang gi gyang log skya bris su btab nas bzhangs pas physis 'Bri gung du yang dar ro//”, “Then, when he was residing at sPu rangs Kho char, since the depiction of the gods of the *rNam thar*

They are also similar to the biography of rGod tshang pa known as *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma* ("biography written in sections") which is also divided into many chapters. The main difference from the others is that it has a large number of chapters, some of them as short as one line. More bKa' brgyud pa *rnam thar*-s have used this genre for the biographies of the various schools' members.

The *rnam thar*-s of 'Jig rten mgon po and Chos sdings pa share another common point in that there are frequent citations of these masters' personal statements by the authors of the respective biographies. This was a formula used in the period. *rGod tshang pa'i rnam thar tsag bris ma*, too, records, like the biographies of the two 'Bri gung pa masters, the words in many cases, told by rGod tshang pa to his disciples and the persons who interacted with him. This aspect shows that a direct and continuous record of his deeds and words was kept by people of his entourage. The colophon of this biography (ibid. p.510 line 6-p.511 line 2) says that chos rje Sangs rgyas 'gro mgon and bla ma Rin chen put into written form the words of rGod tshang pa while he was speaking (*gsung pa'i dus na yi ge*). Such a statement vividly documents the tradition that some disciples were demanded to the task of transcribing the words of the master.⁴⁶³

The authorship of *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* which contains a collection of bKa' brgyud pa biographies appended to a *chos 'byung* is more problematic with focus on the culture of Upper West Tibet. This approach is found in its *chos 'byung* part and the successive *bKa' brgyud gser 'phreng* which canonically begins the biographies of the Indian ancestors of the school and the Dwags po bKa' brgyud. Going west, it is followed by the biography of grub thob Seng ge ye shes, the autobiography of Don mo ri pa, a biography of the latter master, and by those of his four main disciples, and then the last one dedicated to Legs ldan ye shes, the disciple of these disciples.

In his article ("The Sacred Crystal Mountain in Dolpo: Beliefs and Pure Visions of Himalayan Pilgrims and Yogins" p.62), Mathes has proposed that *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* was written by Don mo ri pa for the first part until well into the biography of Seng ge ge ye shes, while the remaining part of this master's *rnam thar* and everything else until the end was the work of rDo rje mdzes 'od.

Phyogs bcu Dus gsum ma came into his mind, he made murals of them on the clay walls of the *gtsug lag khang*. As they were painted [there], they were later copied at 'Bri gung".

The reference made to the *lha* of *rNam thar Phyogs bcu Dus gsum ma* does not mean that those painted on the walls of Kha char lha khang were deities. The *lha* is 'Jig rten mgon po and the *skya ris* (or "pictorial outline") was painted to depict the main episodes of sKyob pa rin po che's life. These depictions correspond to the '*Jig rten mgon po'i rnam thar ling tshe*, his biography divided into episodes often mentioned in this essay. The *Ling tshe* was originally conceived by 'Bri gung gling pa pictorially.

463. The biography of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Seng ge dpal, written by rTogs ldan Zla ba seng ge, should be added to these groups of bKa' brgyud pa *rnam thar*-s, although of later composition. It is conceived as a frequent record of the words spoken by the masters to his retinue and sponsors.

The clue to assess the authorship of the work are the interlinear notes frequently appearing in the biographies of Seng ge ye shes and his successors.

On p.473 line 3 of *bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo*, one of these notes says that, up to that point in the biography of Seng ge ye shes, the work was written by Don mo ri pa. Equally true is that the colophon attributes authorship of the work to rDo rje mdzes 'od was,⁴⁶⁴ and consequently Mathes has opted solomonically to give to Don mo ri pa the paternity of most of the work and to rDo rje mdzes 'od that of the last part.

However, Don mo ri pa and rDo rje mdzes 'od were one and the same person. This is proved by an interlinear note in which the name rDo mdzes 'od is added while, in the text that refers to him, he is cited under his appellative Don mo ri pa. The coalescence proves that they are used alternatively to address him, like I have done in many instances that are found in this work of mine. The sentence (*bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo* p.495 lines 1-2) that establishes the identity between Don mo ri pa and rDo rje mdzes 'od reads:

“Khyad par du gdung rgyud 'dzin pa'i sras gcig pu ni/ yongs kyi dge ba'i bshes bsnyen/ bla ma rin po che Don mo ri pa chen po [note: rDo [rje] mdzes 'od] yin no//”;
 “In particular the only spiritual son, holder of [Seng ge ye shes'] lineage, is the *yongs kyi dge ba'i bshes bsnyen*, bla ma rin po che Don mo ri pa chen po [note: rDo [rje] mdzes 'od]”.

Another sentence (ibid. p.470 line 5) in which Don mo ri pa talks about himself in his interaction with Seng ge ye shes in the first-person singular he indirectly establishes the identity of the two names that both refer to him:

“bDag gis note: rDo rje mdzes ['od]] shangs len gyi bsnyen bkur zhig bgyis//”;
 “I myself [note: rDo rje mdzes ['od]] gave a service to reciprocate him”.

Another interlinear note (ibid. p.136 lines 1-2), the one concerning Don mo ri pa as part of the transmission lineage of *'Dul ba* which reached mNga' ris stod from dBus gTsang and and

464. The relevant part of the colophon of *bKa'brgyud rnam thar chen mo* (p.525 line 5-p.526 line 2) reads: “Gangs kyi rgyal po Ti se dang/ mtsho Ma pham dang/ sman nags sNyl gyi rtsa ba/ phun sum tshogs pa'i yul Pu rangs kyi dbus/ grub pa chen po bzhugs shing/ chos gsungs pa'i sa Shākya (p.526) Be le'i khang steng/ dpal Gu zur phug gi dgon pa/ rgyal ba'i zhing khams Gyam po cher/ Shākya'i dge slong rDo rje mdzes 'od kyis yi ge'i ris su bkod pa/ Lo rgyus rin po che gter mdzod dgos 'dod 'byung gnas zhes bya ba rdzogs so//”; “In the centre of the virtuous land of Pu rangs, at the foot of Gangs Ti se, the king of snow mountains, and mtsho Ma pham, at the foot of the dense forest (*nags snyil*) of medicinal plants, [both] praised by the Buddha-s of the Three Times, above the building (*khang*) of Shākya Be le, the place where Thub pa chen po resided and preached the teachings (p.526), at rGyam po che, the paradise of the Victorious Ones, [of] dpal Gu zur phug dgon pa, Shākya dge slong rDo rje mdzes 'od put [this work] into written form. *Lo rgyus rin po che*'i gter mdzod dgos 'dod 'byung gnas zhes bya ba is completed”.

mDo Khams (see n.388), confirms beyond doubt that Don mo ri pa was no one else than rDo rje mdzes 'od. This identity is stressed once again in the same passage with the help of the additional quotation of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od's appellative Dus gsum Sangs rgyas.

Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar (entitled *Bla ma rin po che'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rmad du 'byung ba dngos po'i gnas lugs*) was written by Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od up to p.473 line 3 (“[note: 'di yan bla ma Don mo ri pas mdzad]//”), which covers events until wood snake 1245. The passage that contains the interlinear note in which it is said that, up to that point, the work had been authored by him is meaningful because Don mo ri pa, using once again the first-person singular to refer to himself, asks Seng ge ye shes the permission to write either a history of the bKa' brgyud pa *bla ma*-s or their biographies basing himself on the information conveyed to him by Seng ge ye shes. Seng ge ye shes consented urging him to write both.⁴⁶⁵

This is not only significant because it helps to establish that the biography of Seng ge ye shes was not entirely written by Don mo ri pa. It shows that the historical material—written and oral?—was provided to him by his teacher Seng ge ye shes, which did not only concern his life. This evidence also documents that Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od began to write his portion of *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* in Sle mi in 1245.

How is it possible that Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od says in the colophon that he penned *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*, if he did not write the last part of his teacher's biography and presumably the biographies of his four direct disciples as well as that of Legs ldan ye shes?

I wish to examine the remaining sections of the work in further detail. The part of *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar*—i.e. the biography of Seng ge ye shes from p.473 line 3 up to p.489 line 2, which corresponds to the period in Seng ge ye shes's life from 1245 until the fifteenth of *cho 'phrul chung ngu'i* (extra month?) *zla ba* of 1255 when he died, is without a title and anonymous.

465. Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od, *Ri khrod dBang phyug gi rnam thar* (p.472 line 5-p.473 line 3): “Lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang pos bsgrubs pa mdzad pa'i sa der sGom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas rgyal ba Ye shes rdzong rtsig pa'i dus su/dgon pa bag 'og gi phug der zhag gcig gi dus na bdag gis bKa' brgyud kyi bla ma nmams kyi lo rgyus sam rnam thar ji ltar gsungs pa bzhin du (p.473) yi ge'i ris su cig bri lags sam zhus pas/ de bzhin legs pas bKa' brgyud kyi bla ma nmams kyi lo rgyus rnam thar ji ltar bshad pa bzhin du bris shig gsung nas/ bla ma rin po che'i gsung las ji ltar byon pa las 'bri snon med par bla ma gong ma nmams kyi lo rgyus zur tsam phyogs cig tshu rol mthong pa nmams kyi don du yi ge'i ris su bkod pa yin no//”; “While [Seng ge ye shes] was building sGom phug dPal gyi 'byung gnas rGyal ba Ye she rdzong in this place where lo tsa ba Rin chen bzang po had his meditation, when he spent one night in the cave below the *dgon pa*'s rock, I myself (Don mo ri pa) asked him: “Should I put into written form, according to whatever [you] said, a history (*lo rgyus*) of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s or else their biographies (*rnam thar*-s)?”. (p.473) Since he replied: “This is excellent. You should put into written form the history and biographies (*lo rgyus rnam thar*) of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s according to whatever [I] said”, basing myself on the accounts of *bla ma rin po che*, without omissions ('*bri* spelled so for *dbri*) or exaggerations (*snon*), I have put glimpses of a history of the past *bla ma*-s into written form for the sake of our own (*tshu rol*) readers (*mthong ba nmams*) [note: up to here it was written by bla ma Don mo ri pa]”.

This is followed by a first biography of Don mo ri pa under the title of *Dus gsum Sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar* (from p.482 line 2 to p.495 line 2), which covers his life until when he met Seng ge ye shes in 1237. This is an autobiography on the grounds of the lavish use of the first-person singular.

Next in *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo* there is an anonymous biography of Don mo ri pa (from p.495 line 2 to p.504 line 2) which covers his life until his appointment as general abbot of Gu ge Pu hrang in early 1245.

The biographies of 'Jig rten blos btang, 'Od sku brtse ba, Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma, Chun 'dor ba and finally of Legs ldan ye shes (d. 1344) follow. They are again anonymous.

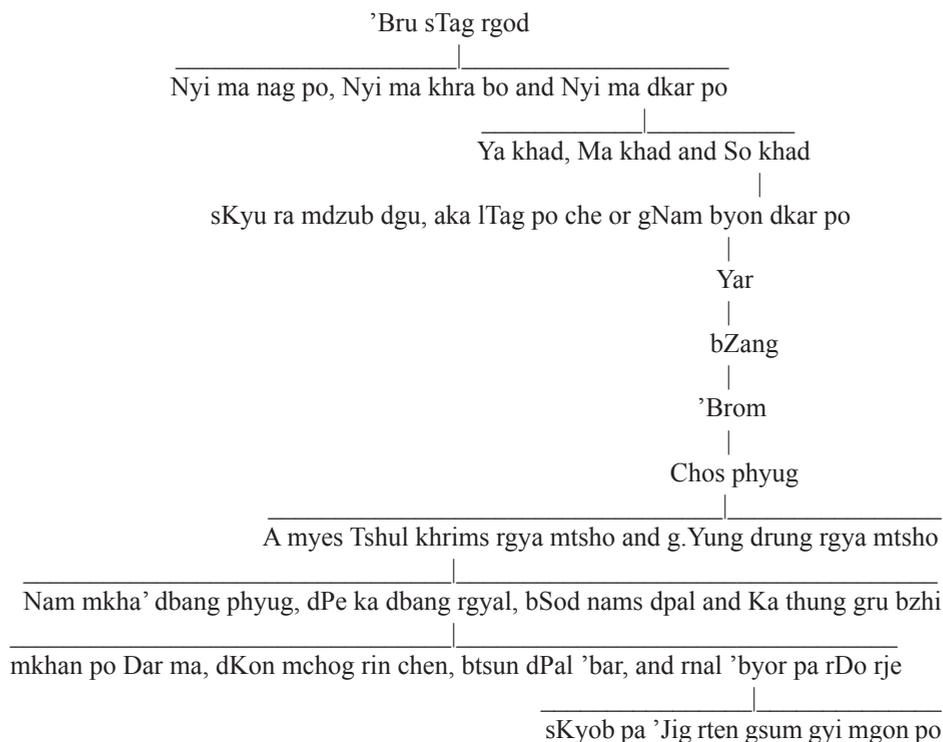
Summing up, an interlinear note attributes to Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od the biography of Seng ge ye shes until 1245 (see a few lines above) but, in the colophon of *bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo*, Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od attributes to himself its paternity. Hence:

- his works include the *chos 'byung* part, the biographies of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud pa *bla ma*-s and the biography of Seng ge ye shes (entitled *dPal ldan Ri khrod dBang phyug rnam thar bzhugs so*) until when his teacher came to reside in Sle mi in 1245 (p.473 line 3), along with his autobiography;
- the final part of *Seng ge ye shes kyi rnam thar*, the biography of Don mo ri pa and those of his four main disciples ('Jig rten blos btang, 'Od sku brtse ba, Yang bdag rdzong ba gong ma, Chun 'dor ba) plus the one of Legs ldan ye shes have been anonymously interpolated into the original version of Don mo ri pa rDo rje mdzes 'od's work before the colophon which still bears his name. An obvious evidence that all these biographies were interpolated is that Don mo ri pa could not have recorded his own death mentioned in the biography of Legs ldan ye shes!

Addendum One

The clans of some great bKa' brgyud pa

The sKyū ra clan lineage of 'Jig rten mgon po
(based on *Yul shul rdzong dgon sde lo rgyus mdor bsdus* p.39 line 5-p.40 line 18)



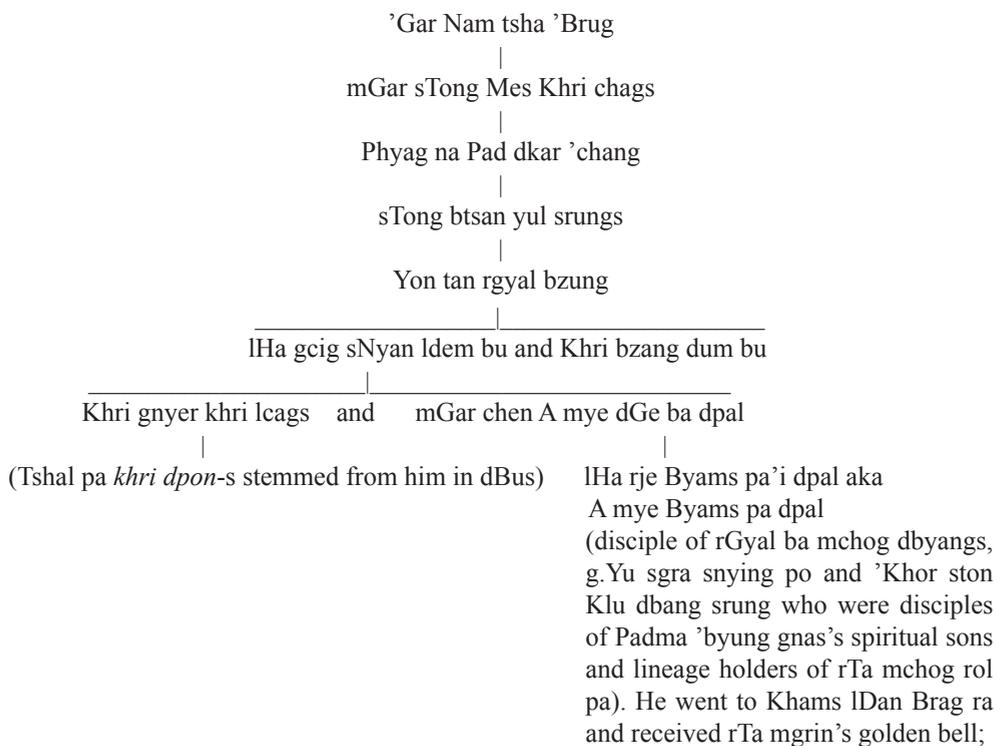
The four great lineages of the 'Gar clan

(*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.415 lines 2-4)

- the religious lineage (*chos rgyud*) of lHa rje dPal byams, which originated in the lands Yangs pa can, Dol zor and Li yul;
- the miraculous lineage (*'phrul rgyud*) of Sungts btsan (spelled so for sTong btsan) yul bzung, which existed in dBus rTsang, and Mon until Dol po;
- the heroic lineage (*dpa' rgyud*) of bTsan pa Dred po, originated in rGya 'Jang in *sa mda'* (the "lower, i.e. eastern land"), and elsewhere (*rnams su*); and
- the *kal rgyud* (sic) (or *bka' rgyud* according to *sPo bo'i lo rgyus*) of Nye rang Pha mdzug, which originated from Brag ra Gling chen, and Me nyag stod smad.

These four lineages did not originate concomitantly, as this genealogical table could allude.

The 'Gar line of Chos sdings pa known as the '*phrul rgyud*' ("miraculous lineage")
(*Chos sdings pa'i rnam thar* p.415 line 4-p.417 line 2)



"Byams pa dpal was blessed by mGon po Byams pa. He received five teachings of Byams pa. He was given his other name A mye dPal gyi byams pa. He enslaved all the worldly wrathful gods. They were made slave with the help of gSer khrab can ("wearing a golden armour"), the *srungs ma* of the *rigs* (sic) '*dzin*. When he played the golden bell emitting the neigh of a horse, the *mandala* of the peaceful and wrathful deities used to come in front of him. By playing the black bell emitting the sound *Hum*, the eyes of the enemies' faces (sic) fell on the ground. He was comparable to Phyag na rdo rje for his blessings, power, spells and miracles. When he reached the age of 184, after taking with him the golden bell uttering the neigh of a horse, he proceeded to *mkha' spyod* without leaving his body behind"

dPal gyi Yon tan, dPal gyi phur bu, dPal gyi 'byung gnas, dPal gyi shes rab and dPal gyi bkra shis
"During the time of the five dPal, the black bell emitting the Hum *mantra* still existed. Their spells and powers were the same as before. Then dPal gyi bkra shis, after taking with him the black bell emitting the Hum *mantra*, proceeded to lCang lo can (i.e. the abode of rNam thos sras)"

dPal gyi bla ma, bKra shis bla ma, Yon tan bla ma, Shes rab bla ma, Byang chub bla ma

Graggs rgyal, dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, dGe 'dun rgyal mtshan, Byams pa rgyal pa, Ye rgyal

Grub pa'i rtse (later called dPal gyi byams pa)

"wearing a cloak made of vulture's [feathers], he proceeded to dGa' ldan when he was aged 110"

dPal 'bum, dPal grags and dPal gyi rdo rje (sde pa Ka pa of sPo bu Bu lung descended from him)

'Gar dPal gyi bsod nams and dPal gyi rtse mo (settled in rMe mdo, the area of future sDe dge)

Chos sdings pa, Ye shes bzang po, sGon ston gTsong tor 'bum and sTon sgom dPal gyi rgyal mtshan

rDo rje 'dzin and sGom ston bSod nams rin chen

U rgyan pa, bSod nams rin chen and

rNgu pa Gu ru

The 'Gar line of blon chen sTong btsan yul bzung, known as
the *'phrul rgyud* ("miraculous lineage")
and the early Tshal pa chieftains stemmed from it
(*sMon lam rdo rje'i rnam thar* f.4b line 3-f.7a line 3)

'Gar Tshe gnam tshe 'drug and his wife g.Yu za 'Od dkar

'Gar mThing na rje

Gar Bla mkhyen chen po Khri sgra ljing smig

"As for the signs bestowed to him for his bravery, the document [he received] was equal to that of a king, the badge of bravery was a dark flag, the great insignia of his greatness was the golden letters. He claimed: "I am great". The golden sun shone above g.Yu'i g.yung drung rtse ma (sic for *rtse mo*). Three iron falcons of dGra lha ("war god") flew [close]. At that time, he exercised the law: 27,000 coins [were fixed] as compensation for [killing] the *rje*, and 17,000 coins as compensation for [killing] the subjects. For healing injuries, the [compensation] was set as 100 (*rgya* sic for *brgya*) divine white *g.yag-s*"

Me khri lcags

"He subjugated rGya Glang dmar po and seized Ging tho of rGya"

sTong btsan yul bzung

"He was the chief minister of the miraculous king Srong btsan sgam po. He brought the Jo bo rin po che from the *bkra shis khri sgo* (the "door of the auspicious throne") of China. He obtained Wun shing gung ju, the sister of emperor Thang Ka'u zung's son Thang Tha'i zung, [as Srong btsan sgam po's wife]. He subjugated the rGya, Gru gu and [also] 'Jang, altogether three. The Chinese emperor conferred upon him the rank of *g.yi'u spu ta'i tsang gun*. He was given a niece of Thang Tha'i zung in marriage"

Khyi mim; Yon tan rgyal gzungs; and Si ghu gcig pa Pho lun

"Yon tan rgyal gzung was conferred the rank of *kyu'i de kyun dbang* by the Chinese empress 'U ji then"

'Gar bTsan po tred po; bTsan gnyan gung ston; and bTsan gnyan ldom bu
 “bTsan po tred po seized sTag grus ma. bTsan gnyan gung ston was the *gung blon* of sTod.
 He reduced the royal family [to the status of] subjects. He was the owner of the golden letter.
 bTsan gnyan ldom bu became the *yul dpon* of gNye mo”

Khri bzang dom bu
 |
 Khri gnyer khri lcags
 |
 sTong mes khri snang

Khri ljang lha skyang, Khri to re stag gzungs, Khri bzher khus po & sTong bzher khus chung

Khri btsan 'phan gzigs
 |
 Chas pa sgo drug
 |
 rDor gzungs
 |
 Khri gzungs btsan

Khri btsan 'bar re, Gung gsum btsan po and Khri thog rgyal ba
 “The [line] of the eldest brother was interrupted. Khri thog rgyal ba went to mNga' ris stod”

Khri rje mang gnyen
 |
 Mu sgra 'phan gzigs
 |
 lHa legs
 |
 lHa po
 |
 Don po
 |
 gNam lha rgyal
 |
 bTsan lha rgyal
 |
 'Gar Yang thog rgyal ba

rGyal le and 'Phan ne
 “rGyal le split to Grib; 'Phan ne controlled Ram pa”

'Gar rGyal ba 'byung gnas
 “He attended the '*gro ba'i mgon po rin po che* (i.e. bla ma Zhang), received teachings and
 became the root sponsor at Grib”

The lineage of the Tshal pa *dpon*-s

Sangs rgyas dngos grub

"He became the *dpon* of the dge' dun Tshal pa, and entrusted the entire Tshal pa community to 'gro ba'i mgon po rin po che's spiritual son *dpon* chen po Dar ma gzhon nu"

|
his *nye gnas* 'Byung brtson

|
Sangs rgyas dngos grub's nephew, Ye shes gzungs

|
Ye she gzungs' *nye gnas*, *dpon* Sangs rgyas

"While Se chen rgyal po was [still] a prince, he offered a *lha khang* and was its man in charge (*agos mi*). He established the foundation of secular power. Later, he exclusively meditated for twelve years. He was born in fire female sheep 1187 and held the *dpon* post for twenty-four years (1221-1244). He died aged seventy-five (1261)"

|
dpon Sangs rgyas' son Rin rgyal

"He performed austerities after going to the bank of the eastern ocean. He pleased the emperor, the lord of the land. He received a *gsang sngags dam kha* and silk by decree, together with whatever else [was given to him]. As to the exercise of the Tshal pa secular power, he was given a decree over Yar 'brog lho shar nub, bZad Chu shul, Kha rag pa, 'Brug pa, Rab btsun pa, Phya (or Phyad), Zhogs, Dar pras, 'Brom Glang yer shes pa. He was the lord of the great Tshal pa community. He built Khag khra of Gung thang. He offered the great *lcags ri*. He left great signs of his kindness. He was born in iron female snake 1221 and took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow at the age of forty-four (1264). He held the post of *dpon* for twenty-six years (1244-1269) and died aged forty-eight (1269)"

|
the latter's son dge bshes Nyi ma shes rab

"He took monastic vows. During the time of bla ma chos kyi rgyal po 'Phags pa, he met Se chen rgyal po, studied [under the former] and was his *nye gnas*. He mastered all the Tantric teachings of the Sa skya pa tradition. He pleased his *bla ma* and became his most senior spiritual son. He was born in water female ox 1253 and held the post of *dpon* for eleven years (1269-1279). He died aged twenty-seven (1279)"

|
the latter's younger brother 'Tshal pa dGa' bde dpal

"Due to his graciousness, the power of the dge 'dun 'Tshal pa expanded. Although his appearance was the one of a powerful great man dedicated to secular enterprises, in reality he was not different from dpal Ma ha ka la, the great *srung ma chos skyong* who protects the teachings, due to the power of his [previous] merit and prayers. He was born in fire male dragon 1256) and held the post of *dpon* for twenty-five years (1279-1303). He died at the age of fifty-eight (1313)"

|
sMon lam rdo rje (1284-1346/7)

|
Kun dga' rdo rje (1309-1364)

Addendum Two

The Wan la inscription

“Gling mchog du ’phags pa lho phyogs su// rtsa ba Seng ge kha ’bab ’brug pa’i g.yon phyogs su// sa kha khol du thon pa rGya shing lha yi gnas// yang dgos ’bur du stod pa ldan pa rDo rje gdan//

In the noble south at the excellent enclave to the left of the root [river], the roaring Seng ge kha babs, at the sacred land rGya shing that was formed in this area which, in particular, rose to be [similar to] rDo rje gdan,

padma spungs pa lta bu mkhar gyi rtse mo la// rin chen ze’u ’bru bzhin du gnyen drung bskor ba’i dbus// dpa’ bo bzhin du blon sra sku mched bzhi// thugs dgongs rtse gcig mdzad nas mnyam pa nyid la bzhugs//

on the peak of the castle like a pile of lotuses and in its centre, surrounded by kinsmen and officers like precious pollen anthers, four steadfast ministerial brothers like heroes having come up with this single-minded thought, they stood firm in sharing the same view [or: to [fix] the decay [of the temple].

sku mched bzhi’i gcen po chen po khri dpon Bhag dhār skyabs// sngon tshe bsod nams bas gas pas dal ’byor mi lus thob// las kyī mtshams sbyor bzang bas blon sras gong mar ’khrungs// smon lam rnam par dag pas dam pas Chos dang mjal//

The eldest of the four brothers, the great khri dpon Bhag dhār skyabs, having accumulated merit, obtained the rarity of a human body. At the final ripening of his *karma*, as an application of it, he was born as a son of a previous minister. Through the impeccable prayers [he recited], he was introduced to the Noble Religion.

khams dang rlung rta dar bas rje rgyal gong mas byams// za kha dbang thad che bas bu bran ’og mas bskur// sngon gyi las ’brel bzang bas mi sde gtso bor bskos// ’phral gyi bya ba mkhas pas nye ring kun kyang smon//

Having increased his status and fortune, petty lords, kings and the emperor extended benevolence [to him]. Owing to his great power and challenges [he faced], followers and subordinates respected him. Given his previous favourable karmic links, he was appointed [to head] the main community. Being a master of deeds [that he undertook], all those near and far were immediately taken by admiration for him.

dam pa’i lha chos phyogs su lus ngag yid gsum gtad// ’phags pa sPyan ras gzigs la rtag tu yi dam mdzad// mDo rGyud lung rigs man ngag bstan bcos thugs su chud// nyi zla gza’ ’dzin la sogs phyi nang Dus ’khor mkhyen//

He dedicated his body, speech and mind, three in all, to the noble *lha chos*. He made of ’phags pa sPyan ras gzigs his steadfast *yi dam*. He became proficient in the exegesis and

praxis of *mDo* [and] *rGyud*, their instructions and the texts. He mastered exoteric and esoteric *Dus 'khor* including [the knowledge of] the sun, moon and stars.

'byung ba gab rtse'i rtsis kyis snang srid gtan la phabs/ 'gro ba mi lus kun gyi 'byung bzhi 'khrugs pa la// gso ba rig pa'i dpyad kyis tsha grang sdug bsngal sel// mkhyen pa'i yon tan bshad na 'Jam dbyangs sprul pa 'dra//

By means of *gab rtse* ("divination diagrams") calculations, he set standards [to understand] the phenomena. Owing to the clash of the four elements [that affect] the bodies of humanity, he eliminated the pain of fever through medical diagnosis.

dam pa'i Chos la mos pa shin tu ngo mtshar che// skye bo mi chos phyogs su lhag par phun su tshogs// pho lo sum cu lon nas yab mes rgyal srid ni// Wan las mgo bcas rGya shing lung pa thams cad bskyangs//

Having an extraordinarily great faith in the Noble Religion, he followed the *mi chos* of the people in an excellent manner. He protected the ancestral royal power in all land rGya shing, with Wan la at its head, for the lapse of thirty male calendrical years.

gzhan la shor ba phug nas chab srid legs par mnan// Wa kha mkhar po che dang rKan ji man Su ru// E nas Al lci Mang rgyu mnga' 'og mdzad// Kha che yul du bskyod nas khri dpon mnga' gsol byas//

As for other [rulers' lands], he intruded straying [into them]. He crushed their power in a brilliant manner. He reduced Wa kha mkhar po che, rKan ji down to Su ru, E nas [sku], Al lci and Mang rgyu under his sway. He advanced into the land of Kha che. He was appointed *khri dpon*.

byang gi ru ba bzhi nas khral thud mang po bsdus// dpa' rtsal ldan pas skyes bu gang phyin g.yul las rgyal// dmag skyon che 'bring 'gran gyi do med byas// 'gran gyi do byas thams cad rim gyis 'cham la phabs//

He collected much taxation and soft cheese from the four *ru* ("nomad camps") in [La dwags] Byang [thang]. Gifted with bravery, he was victorious in battle against anyone he confronted. He was unrivaled against big and mid-sized troops [which proved to be] useless. He crushed all rivals in succession.

sBal ti 'Brog pa la sogs phran tshogs zil gyis mnan// Gu ge Pu hrang tshun chad mNga' ris bskor gsum la// ci bsam don du grub pas snyan pa khyod la grags// dpa' bo'i las stabs smra na tshod dang grangs las 'das//

He brilliantly subdued minor entities such as the 'Brog pa (Dards?) of sBal ti. He obtained everything he planned all the way to Gu ge Pu hrang in mNga' ris skor gsum. "In terms of fame, you are renowned". The amount of words about his methods of heroic action exceed any count.

mdzangs pa 'phrul gyi 'gros la gzhan gyis 'gran zla bral// ngan song gsum la 'jigs nas skyabs
gnas dkon mchog bsten// dpa' nor mdzangs gsum ldan pa'i skyes bu dam pa des// 'jig rten
chos bgyad thams cad snying po med par rtogs//

Owing to his wise and miraculous stance, others got rid of their rivals. He served the triple jewel for the protection against the fear of the three hell realms. This noble being provided with bravery, wealth and wisdom, three in all, realised the futility of the eight phenomenal concerns.

skye rgan 'chi sdug pa bsngal bsam gyis mi khyab ces/ kun kyang 'chi ba'i chos can thugs la
shar nas ni/ bsags pa'i nor rdzas thams cad sgyu ma bzhin du dgongs// 'jig rten phyi ma dran
nas rgya ma 'di ltar mdzad//

Elder people who go through inconceivable suffering about the impending death, let the reality of death arise in their mind of all of them. He thought that the accumulation of all wealth and items is like a mirage. Being mindful of next life he carried out deeds accordingly.

'byung ba rim bzhin brtsegs pa'i Ri rab zur bzhi'i steng// sna tshogs rdo rjes mtshan pa rten
gyi gzhal yas khang// gru bzhi rin chen du mas rgyan gyis mdzes par spras// rtse mo yid bzhin
nor bu tog gis nye bar brgyan//

Over the square Ri rab built in successive levels, this *gzhal yas khang* with images [of deities] is decorated with various kinds of [motifs] and *mchod rten*-s. Many jewels in square [patterns] adorned it beautifully with decorations. The finial, a wish fulfilling gem, on its peak completes its decoration.

skyes bu g.yas g.yon gnyis dang ya them ma them dang// mchod pa'i lha mo rnam dang rin
chen shar bu dang// rta 'bab chos kyi 'khor lo bkra shis rdzas bgyad rnam/ brkos dang 'bur
ma la sogs Bal po'i bzo dang mtshungs//

The workmanship and three-dimensionality of the images to both left and right, the lintels above and below, the *mchod pa'i lha mo*-s, the precious cornices, the platforms to dismount from horses (*rta 'bab*), the wheels of the doctrine and the eight auspicious symbols are comparable to the artistry of Bal po.

'og gzhi bkod pa khyad 'phags gsar rnying lha tshogs bzhengs// bar khang rnam par rgyal ba'i
khang bzang dpe bzhin la// yang thog gzhal yas khang 'dra'i dpe dang mtshungs pa legs//
Wan las bKra shis gsum brtsegs e ma ho ngo mtshar che//

As to the making of the ground floor, it was built with groups of noble old and new deities. The middle floor—an excellent and victorious mansion—is exemplary. The additional floor—the *gzhal yas khang*—is an excellent comparable example. Wan las bKra shis *gsum brtsegs* is, *e ma ho*, truly extraordinary.

kun gyis lta bas mi ngom khyad par du 'phags shing// brten pa lha'i dkyil 'khor bsam gyis mi
khyab cing// re re mtshan nas brjod na dpag gis mi langs te// rDo rje 'chang gi dbu mdzad da
lta bzhugs kyi bar//

In everyone's views [Wan la *gsum brtsegs*] is splendid and particularly noble. Each one of the inconceivable *dkyil 'khor*-s of the deities that are based [there] is identified by name. In the middle of [the images] presently housed with rDo rje 'chang at their head

bKa' brgyud bla ma rnams kyi sku gzugs thog mar bzhugs// pho brang dbus kyi rtse la 'phags pa sPyan ras gzigs// Phyag stong 'khor lo sgyur ba longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku// rin chen rgyan gyis spras shing byin rlabs che bar bzhugs//

.... were earlier the statues of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*-s. On top in the centre of this palace are 'phags pa sPyan as gzigs and the image of Phyag stong 'khor lo sgyur ba ("with one thousand hands turning the wheel of the law") which perfected enjoyment (i.e. *longs sku*), finely decorated with jewels and bestowing great blessings.

gsang ba'i bdag po dbu mdzad Byams mgon la sogs// sku gsung thugs kyi rten la ris su bris pa dang// lugs su blugs pa rnams dang 'bur du gtod pa sogs// rGyud pa chen po bzhi'i lha tshogs thams cad dang//

The paintings of the images of body, speech and mind, such as the lord of secrets, the head [image], Byams mgon, and all the groups of deities of the four great Tantra, such as those cast three-dimensionally,

gSangs sngags gsar mnying rnams kyi dkyil 'khor tshad bar bzhugs// 'Dul ba mDo sde mNgon pa Phar rol phyin pa dang// Theg pa chen po'i mDo sde nram pa sna thogs dang// thugs dgongs nram par dag la thugs dam rim par bzhugs//

and various *dkyil 'khor*-s of *gSang sngags gsar mnying* are housed here inside. The various [deities of] '*Dul ba, mDo sde, mNgon pa, Phar rol [tu] phyin pa* and *Theg pa chen po'i mDo sde* are [also] housed here inside one after the other, as tutelary deities to the wisdom mind.

Sangs rgyas stong sku zhing khams bkod pa rnams// mdzad pa bcu gnyis rnams bkod pa phra zhib ngo mtshar che// Bi shwa karma'i sprul pa Legs pa'i blo gros dang// 'Jam dpal sprul pa lha bzo bSod nams kyis//

The making of the paradise of the Sangs rgyas stong sku, the making of *the mdzad pa bcu gnyis* are truly extraordinary in accuracy and detail. They were made by Legs pa'i blo gros, the embodiment of Bi shwa karma, the artist bSod nams, the embodiment of 'Jam dpal,

lha'i sprul pa dKon mchog ldo ra pha'u gsum// bzo'i rig pa'i 'byung gnas mkhyen pa can rnams kyis// ma g.yengs brtan por sku gsung thugs kyi rten// rkyen ngan bar chad med par thugs dgongs sgrub par bzhengs//

and the divine embodiment dKon mchog ldo ra pha'u, three in all. These masters, from whom art stems, without distractions and steadily made the images of body, speech and mind. Circumstances being not negative and without hindrance, [these artists] made [the images], thus achieving their planned creations.

de ltar phun sum tshogs pa'i dge las ngo mtshar che// drin can yab yum gnyis kyi drin lan
bsrab (bsab) pa dang// las 'brel sems la chags pa'i grogs kyi don du bzhengs// 'di bzhengs dge
bas 'gro drug sems can rnams//

Likewise, their virtuous deeds were excellent. The benevolence of the father and mother, who were kind, was repaid. [Wan la *gsum brtsegs*] has been built for the sake of like-minded people who keep karmic ties in mind. Inasmuch as this construction is virtuous, may the sentient beings of the six realms....

Rig lnga rgyal ba'i zhing khams myur du bskor nas kyang// sku bzhi'i ye shes lnga yi dngos
grub thob par shog// nam gzhag 'bul ba'i lugs kyang zur tsam brjod pa la// rkang bzhi dud
'gro rgyal po cang shes rta pho yang//

.... attain *dngos grub* ("spiritual realisations") [stemming] from the *ye shes lnga* ("five wisdoms") of the *sku bzhi* ("four emanation bodies"), having visited the victorious paradise of the Rig lnga quickly. To describe a little the system of giving guidance [and] making offerings, the all-knowing horse lord of the four-legged animals....

che chung mtho dma' med pa so bdun 'bul// gser dngul dar gos sbel ba de bas lhag pa tsam//
g.yag lug mdzo la sogs pa chung phran bsam gyis mi khyab// zang zing snam gos la sogs ri
bo bzhin du spungs//

.... was offered by thirty-seven big and small, high and low [people] without a difference among them. An exceeding [quantity of] gold, silver, silk and brocade; an inconceivable [lot of] minor [offerings] such as *g.yag*-s, sheep, *mdzo*-s; wealth, such as woollen cloths and brocade, were accumulated like a mountain.

dge bshes gong ma rnams la nam gzhag rim par phul// lha bzo gong ma mkhyen pa can
rnams 'jig rten dbul ba ste// che brjod rtsom pa po la yon du du rta zhig sbyin// gnyen drung
dge 'dogs mkhan rnams thar pa'i lam la bkod//

The best *dge bshes*-s provided the [religious and iconographic] guidelines one after the other. The best artists, who were knowledgeable, offered one horse to repay the indigent lay author of the *che brjod* ("eulogy"). Relatives, secretaries and those connected to the monks were set on the path of liberation.

yul mi nye ba rnams kyi snang ba chos la bsgyur// phyogs ris 'gron po rnams la bkra shis dga'
ston byas// long bkren ma nus pa rnams bkres skom sdug bsdul sel// zang zing nor gyis sngon
lugs yongs grags//

The interest of the nearby local inhabitants turned towards the [Noble] Religion. An auspicious feast was offered for pilgrim guests. The hunger, thirst and suffering of the indigent and disable were removed. It was public that material things and wealth [were handled] with the system of the earlier days.

'phags pa Chos la gtong bar shin tu ngo mtshar che// lha'i bu chung 'dra ba'i sras po bzhi yis kyang// yab kyi drin lan bsab phyir lha khang rim bzhin bzhengs// Nyo sTag lung mdo spur khang steng du yang/ mchod rten bzhengs nas mchod pa'i ma she btsugs//

It is truly extraordinary [to see] generosity in favour of the Noble Religion. The four sons, children of the gods, in order to repay the kindness of their fathers have built [this] stepped *lha khang*. Above the *spur khang* at Nyo sTag lung mdo they have built a *mchod rten* and established [the custom of giving] not a few offerings.

chen po A li Dar skya rig pa'i gnas lnga mkhyen// nu bo'i don du lha khang bKra shis thang sman bzhengs// e ma dar dang bkra shis bu gnyis pho rtsal phun su tshogs// tha chung shog gi rGyal mtshan 'Bri gung byon nas ni//

The elder brother, A li Dar skya, who has learned the five sciences, built *lha khang bKra shis thang sman* for the sake of his younger brother. The two young men, who spread around wonder and auspiciousness, had excellent skills typical of males (*pho rtsal*). The youngest rGyal mtshan went to 'Bri gung.¹

chos rje zhabs la gtugs nas Chos khrid mang du zhus// mdzangs dang yon tan ldan pa lha kun gyis smon pa'i// On ces sprul pa gces ma kha tun sBrong mo gnyis// lha khang rim bzhin zhabs tog zas nmams bdud rtsir bsgyur//

He touched the feet of the *chos rje* and received much religious guidance. Provided with wisdom and qualities, he was devoted to all deities. He and kha tun sBrong mo, beloved embodiment of On, turned the service to the stepped *lha khang* into the ambrosia of nourishments.

dpon nmams des pa'i mna' za rim bzhin phul la legs// rten dang rten par bcas pa'i lha mi pho brang 'di// dkon mchog gsum gyi bden pas byin rlabs che bar 'gyur// rgyal ba'i bstan pa gnas pas 'gro ba'i don mdzad nas// Byams pa'i bstan pa'ang 'gro ba'i don byed shog//

It is excellent that noble chieftains have taken an oath in succession. This palace of gods and humans, where images are housed, owing to the truthfulness of the triple jewel, are bestowing great blessings. [This] place for the victorious teachings is beneficial to sentient beings. May the teachings of Byams pa be beneficial to sentient beings!

Shākya'i rgyal po Byang chub bzang po bdag gis ni// thos pa chung ba'i rkyen tshig sdebs ma 'tshal yang// (p.671) skye bo blun po nmams kyis shes par mi 'gyur gyi// phal pa nmams kyis gzigs na phan sems gyis// kun mkhyen nmams kyis khrel na nongs pa bzod par gsol//";

I myself Shākya'i rgyal po Byang chub bzang po, although it is not appropriate that I have put [this epigraph] into written form owing to the little that I have heard, [know that] this will not improve the knowledge of foolish people. Given that, if commoners see [this inscription], may think that it is useful, I beg the erudite people's patience for [any] mistake".

1. The line of the epigraph has a pleonastic *gi*. If it is read otherwise, it would stand for: "The banner of the youngest brother went to 'Bri gung", which makes no sense.



Ta pho

The first of the two mchod rten-s: murals



Ta pho

The other mchod rten: murals



Khyung lung murals



Khyung lung murals



Khyung lung: cave (exterior)

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