WHERE EXACTLY ARE CÅRITRA, DEVIKOṬA AND HIMAVAT?
A SACRED GEOGRAPHY CONTROVERSY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TANTRIC BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE SITES IN TIBET

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"This snow mountain (Sn-se) and the holy lakes, all three, are a meditation place which was prophesied by the Buddha. And, if one does not respect those who criticize them, then not only will those slanderers heap up sins but the greatness on this meditation place will also be violated!"
Mi-la Ras-pa (1040-1123)

Introduction

Over the last millennium a major Buddhist pilgrimage network has developed in Tibet and Tibetan areas of the Himalaya. It is based upon the pītha traditions found in the influential amitārayaṇa-tantra cycle of Cakrasaṃvara, and related traditions such as the Hevajra, Vajrācala, Dīkṣāraya, and so forth. Along with the pilgrimages developed more recently to the persons and places of leading incarnate Lamas of the dGe-lugs-pa school, especially the Dönyi Lamas and Panchen Lamas, and to sites associated with the Indian sages

* My thanks are due to Paul Harrison, together with whom I read many of the difficult Tibetan sources, and to Hubert Deleer, Leonard van de Kuijp and Dan Martin for their useful critical comments during the preparation of this article.
1 Ru-pa'i 'Gya-can (alias gTsang-myon, He-nu Rd) 1989:417)
Padmasambhava, the holy places dedicated to the cult of Saññvara Tantra in Tibet rank as one of the main pilgrimage networks patronised by Buddhists in the region. The three leading sacred mountain sites of Saññvara and consort, namely Tse (i.e. Kaññir), La-phyi and Tsa-ni are among some of the oldest systematised Buddhist sacred mountains in Tibet. Pilgrimages to them are inspired by the status they were given in Tibetan interpretations of Indian Buddhist Tantric and to a lesser extent 'Vajrā'. Traditions date back at least to the beginning of the *p'gyi-dar* or 'earlier diffusion' of Buddhism to Tibet from about the 11th century on.

The study of these sites is of central importance for an understanding of Buddhist pilgrimages in Tibet. This is not only because of their long-standing popularity as pilgrimage venues and the large numbers of individual pilgrims involved in visits to them, but also because of what the Tibetan literary and oral sources concerning them can tell us about the processes which A.W. Macdonald has recently referred to as 'Buddha-isation' and 'Lama-isation' that is, the 'conversion' of Tibetan culture to a Vajrayāna Buddhist one.

It is undoubted that the three holy mountains dedicated to Saññvara, and other associated sacred sites, were established as important pre-Buddhist sites which were the preserves of Tibetan autochthonous deities and their cults. What is poorly understood at present is how this conversion process operated and what its consequences were for Tibetan pilgrimages and religious culture in general. The primary narratives which account for the conversion of these Tibetan holy places are now becoming more familiar to us: 1.) The Buddha-isation 'drama' of the subjugation of Ruda/Mahāvīra by Vajradhara/Cakravāvana at the twenty-four *p'yi* sites of the vajrakīyas, and 2.) the dramas of Lama-isation which followed depicting the conquests of magic at individual Tibetan locations when yogins, such as Mi-la Ras-pa and GTsang-pa Ṛgya-ras, 'opened' these regions as sites of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage by conquering local spirit forces, 'binding them by oath' into the services of Buddhism. These two themes are widely employed in the Tibetan pilgrimage literature.

Both these types of narratives are of great importance for an understanding of the ideological schemata and their styles of presentation which members of the Tibetan Buddhist clerical elite invoked in their literary and oral efforts to bring about and account for this conversion. Some studies have now been directed towards this issue. However, in the Tibetan literary sources on pilgrimage, both in the guide-books *gnas-p'ig, dkar-chag,* etc.) and the commentaries on sacred geography, there is another set of prominent issues relating to the Buddhist conversion of Tibetan holy places which have never been analysed.

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and which I would like to begin investigating in this paper. This alternative set of sources, which I refer to collectively as the materials on the 'sacred geography controversy', take the form of a polemical dialogue between leading Tibetan scholars belonging Principally to the Sa-skya-pa and certain lineages of the Bka'-rgyas-pa, and also various other claims by Tibetan authors concerning the Tantric, statues and Buddhist identity of certain Tibetan holy places. By using this body of material we can begin to address such fundamental questions as: How was it that the original Indo-wide sacred geography of the vajra-skya doctrine became relocated to the Himalaya, and by what mechanism did this Indian Buddhist pilgrimage cult of Tantric pīṭha sites become established in Tibet?; what were Tibetan reactions and responses to this process?; and what subsequent developments have resulted from this conversion, viz. were Buddhist-Lamaist and Lamaisation Exilic or on-going phenomena in the cultural history of Tibet? Herim, I will present relevant materials and make some tentative suggestions regarding these and other related questions. There is still much that could be said about this topic and I hope that the present paper will stimulate others to do so.

The Pīṭha Tradition in India and its Beginnings in Tibet

Before introducing and analyzing some of the principal Tibetan sources concerning the sacred geography controversy there are some preliminary remarks which need to be made about the Indian Buddhist traditions and the initial period of their establishment by the Tibetans in their own zone of cultural influence. The role of the twenty-four (or in some schemes thirty-six) Tantric sites classed as pīṭha, ksetra, chandoha, and so forth, as fully developed in the mantra-yoga-tantras is now clearly understood as being related primarily to the internal practice of yoga. In this yoga the logic of the vajra-lītya and the 'body mandala' systems is directed towards the experience of unity referred to as dhīkṣāsamāra in the Tantras. But the pīṭha, etc., were also sites in the external world considered to be presided over by certain deities in the geographical vajra-lītya, and as such were places of gathering for an exclusive coterie of yogins and yoginis who followed specific Tantric practices. These were especially those who had reached the carya or 'action' phase of the Completion stage (cakrāpanātāma) of the mantra-yoga-tantras.

During the religious 'feasts' that were performed at these sites the internal yogic practices of dhīkṣāsamāra were performed as externalised rituals. The esoteric nature of these gatherings and the Tantric teachings and practices they involved meant that during the Pīṭha

period when these traditions enjoyed currency in certain Indian regions the true Tantric pilgrimages to them were the preserve of a relatively few initiated practitioners. And even they remained aloof from the 'public' by using a system of secret signs (chomd) through which to identify and meet each other at these sites. It is important to note here the original 'secret' and exclusive nature of the cult of these sites in Indian Buddhist Tantrism as it contrasts strongly with the way they were developed and promoted later in Tibet, as will become apparent below.

Another important sub-division of sites in the pīṭha cult is that of the eight cemeteries (aṭṭa-śālāna). These Indian channel grounds, well known to Tantric ascetics, were sites frequented for the purpose of performing certain meditations and rites. Symbolically they are represented as part of the vajrakīya around the perimeter of the Śāhvara mandala. In his earlier description of the symbolism of the eight cemeteries, G. Tucci has pointed out that there are eight mountains, such as Kailāsa, Himavat, Śrīparvata, etc., each related specifically to a cemetery and arranged in a cosmographic symmetry around the mandala, and a set of tree species associated with them also. As will be seen, the tradition of relating together sacred mountains and Tantric cemeteries, and to a lesser extent certain trees, became a significant one when these doctrines were introduced into the Tibetan geographical and cultural context, and certain Tibetan claims about Tantric sites to be investigated below may have been inspired to some extent by such symbolic relationships.

During the phyi-snar, particularly from the 11th century onward, the anuttarayoga-tantras and their cult were introduced systematically and became popular in Tibet. In this period Tibetan masters, such as 'Bro-mi (992-1074), Mar-pa (1012-1096), Rwa Lo-tsa-ba (1016-128) and others, visited and obtained the anuttarayoga lineages from Indian yogins and scholars in Buddhist Bihār, Bengal and Nepal. By this time the main Indian area of influence for the diffusion of Buddhism to Tibet had shifted from the North-west to these Eastern Indian regions which were the chief centres of activity of the Indian Vajrayāna Siddhas and also the influential Saiva Nātha yogins. It is in these regions and in the teachings of these groups of yogins that the pīṭha cult was developed into its sophisticated form. Although limited in number of individual practitioners, the traditions from which the Tibetans gained their knowledge of the pīṭha system were indeed a vital source at that time. The Tibetans also took up the cult which had developed around the most famous of the Indian Buddhist Siddhas whose life-stories abound with references to the important Tantric geography of India. It is by way of pioneering figures such as 'Bro-mi and Mar-pa that the then fledgling Sa-skya-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa lineages respectively took up the

6 See Dowman (1985), Templeman (1983) and (1989) as good sources of this material.
annutarayoga-tantras in Tibet, and it is in these same two schools that the sacred geography controversy over the development of the pilha cult in Tibet has its origins.

The Tibetan Sacred Geography Controversy

The exact historical details of the conversion of the sites of Ti-se, La-phyi and Tsa-ri to places of Tibetan Vajrayana pilgrimage in the 11th-12th century remain somewhat vague. bkak-bgyud-pa sources and some early chos-byings all claim that the development of these sites as meditation places with the status of Tantric pilha dedicated to Sampurasana was instigated by the founders of the so-called 'Hearing Lineage'. These include Mar-pa, Mi-la Ras-pa, sGam-po-pa and Phag-rgya Grwa-pa. It appears more certain that by the time of 'Jig-rten mGon-po (1143-1217) large and regular expeditions and pilgrimages were being undertaken to the three sacred mountain retreats. 7

During the early period of this development of the three holy mountains as Sampurasana sites it was claimed, most probably by bkak-bgyud-pa Lamas (although this is not precisely established), that each of these three sites on Tibetan soil were either pilha or Tantric cemeteries (depending on which classification one resorts to) of the vajra-khyay or Sampurasana mandala listed in the Indian texts. Tsa-ri in Southern Tibet was said to be the site of Citrinus or Devikata, Ti-se was taken to be Bimavat or Himalaya (Gangs-can or Ri-bo Gangs-can in Tibetan) and La-phyi identified as Godhavari. Also it was claimed that Ti-se was the mountain mentioned by the Buddha in other cosmographical references in important sttva texts. In addition there were various other claims about famous Indian Tantric cemeteries existing in Tibet. 8 At the time these specific transpositions of Indian holy places, which often violated the existing sacred geographical traditions of India, appear to have been part of a more general relocation of the entire vajra-khyay to the Himalayan tone.

This process is at present poorly understood, although Tucci has ventured that it was a result of the decline of Indian Buddhism in the late Pala-period due in large part to the stress of successive Muslim invasions. 9 I think it is fairly certain that both Indian and Tibetan

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7 On these early developments see Petermann (1973: 213-226); and Holzer (1991).
8 Although I do not see with Tantric cemeteries specifically here, it should be noted that sites claimed as Tantric pilhas in Tibet are often locations of important cemeteries, such as the Sampurasana cemetery at Pha-tong-kha, the 'Cemetery of the Siddhas' located on the circuit of Kailasa and Dur-khod ngam-po sogs-sgrags near Tsa-ri. On the Tibetan Shivala (bSi-lha) uthal at 'Jig-rten see Downes (1980: 116).
9 See Tucci (1940: 21) and (1939: 42-3) who demonstrates that by the 12th century Tibetan pilgrims traveling through the western Himalayas and North-west India claim to have visited all 24 vajra-khyay sites.
Tantrists played a role in this relocation process as both stood to benefit from the continued access to their pilgrimage places as a result. But while the decline of Indian Buddhism was a factor I hope it will be clear from what follows in this paper that, from the Tibetan side, the intentional relocation of these sites to their own region was most importantly a part of the process of the Buddha-isation of Tibet that was taking place at the time.

1. Sa-skya-pa Criticisms

That such a transfer of sacred geography and pilgrimage traditions was taking place and that such claims were being made in Tibet during the 12th-13th century did not go unnoticed by some of the great luminaries of the day. An important critical response to these events was produced by the Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga’ rGyal-mtshan (Sa-pa) (1182-1251), who was one of the greatest Tibetan scholars to bridge both the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Sa-pa set down his criticisms of some of the then current traditions of Tibetan sacred geography and pilgrimage in c.1232 in his Sjom gsam rab bye (DS), a controversial text that ranks as one of the most important works of indigenous Tibetan Buddhist literature. The DS, or ‘Discrimination of the Three Vows’ is, as characterized by D. Jackson “…a classic statement of the need to subject religion to rigorous examination for the sake of removing anything spurious and establishing that which is authentic.” In the section discussing topics relating to the guhyamantra vow Sa-pa gives the following treatment of Tantric pilgrimage and sacred geography:

[38b, 5]...With all the four initiations [obtained] meditate initially in your own house. After obtaining a firmness [meditate] in the cemetery, and so on. After obtaining a great firmness, practise well the signs of body and speech [i.e. madrī and mantra] and realise suchness. In order to travel through the lands and gain mastery over the countries, wander in the thirty-seven great countries, beginning with the pīṭha and upośīṭha, for the sake of the caryā of

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10 For an excellent study of this figure and his works see Jackson (1987: esp. 1-104).
12 See Jackson (1983M 13).
13 This translation covers ff. 31b, 5-34a, 1 of the DS in the SSBB, vol. 1, pp. 297. 1.1-320.45 (=NA, ff. 1a-48b, 5). I have only very occasionally resorted to what are said to be Sa-pa’s own (although controversial, see Jackson (1983: 13)) ‘annotations’ (rang-mchon) in the Sjom gsam rang mchon ‘kbrol med version ff. 54a, 1-57b, 5, to assist with my readings. The material follows my own paragraphing.
'crazy wisdom'.¹⁴ This method is propounded in the *Mahāyoga-sātras* [52a] and commentaries. Having understood practice such as this, one will become fully awakened in this very life.

Nowadays there is in Tibet one observes [practitioners] referring to the method of mantra without any knowledge of Secret Mantra. The Buddha did not teach of going to the thirty-seven great countries when one has not meditated on the two stages [of *upāptitrāma* and *samponnakrama*]. Ascetics who do not cultivate the two stages, even good ones, will not surpass those ascetics who cultivate the *pāramitās* [and thus remain at the Mahāyāna level]. There is no mention in the *sūtras* of the practice of going to those great countries. If those who have not cultivated Secret Mantra, and yet pride themselves on their understanding, go to the thirty-seven countries obstacles will arise for them. Also when visited by 'meditators on nothing whatsoever' [i.e., nihilists] there is no profit or loss whatever [for them]. Just because Odgana, Jñānadhara and Himavat (Gangs-can), Devikīśa, and so on, are full of barbarians, fools, heretics and samsāda, do they attain realisations? Those possessing an understanding of the cultivations of Secret Mantra and who have the fortune to understand the meaning of the signs, they are blessed by the dakṣīṇas who abide in those countries. Consider well the truth of this in the *Mahāyoga-sātras*. Consequently, if one does not cultivate Secret Mantra going to those great countries is useless.

The snow mountain which is mentioned in the texts of the *Abhidharmakosā* and the *Śrī-Kālacakra-sūtra* is the place where the five hundred Arhats dwell, which is encircled by the golden bird shelter, the yambī tree, and Raivas and five hundred elephants; and Himavat is not the Ti-se [in present-day Tibet], and the Anavatapta ocean is not the Mapam [lake]. Neither are the elephants found in that place, and where are the yambī tree and the golden bird shelter to be found?

The evidence for that is as follows: There are statements in the *Śrī-Kālacakra-sūtra* [to the effect that] [52b]: It is said there is a Ri-se Gangs-can to the north of the Sīlī river. The nine hundred and sixty million towns of Sambhala are near there. The excellent palace of the King, which is

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¹⁴ For *śivajī* *bri-hu-* *riyag-pa* by *gyu-n-pa*, Trtopas Rigzin, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, Dharmasala, 1986, p. 596 has *vidyā-riyag/Crazy Wisdom*, to be understood here as a *caryā* phase of the *samponnakrama* stage in Tantric practice.
known as Kallapa, is in that place. The kings who manifest there preach the Dharma for hundreds upon hundreds of years. There are various forests and many orchards in this place. In the Age of Degeneration the land of India will become filled with the doctrines of the Barbarians, then the Barbarians will lead an army by magical means to Sambhala. When that happens, after the conquest of all the Barbarians by the king known as Rudra[cakrin], a manifestation of Vajrapani, the teachings of the Buddha will be spread once again in the midst of the land of India.

As a consequence, one will not be able to go to Ri-bo Gangs-can without magical powers.

In these words also from the Abhi[darmakosa], "North from here [i.e Magadha], there is a snow mountain beyond the nine black mountains." And following that, [in the Abhidarmakosa,abhaya], its characteristics are described extensively, such as, "A lake which has a length and breadth of fifty [yojanas] on the near side of the Gandhamadana mountain (xPos[ri] Ngad-ldan)." [Also] it is said, "It is impossible to reach for those who do not possess magic powers." As for the present-663 day Ti-se, it does not have any of these qualities.

Also according to a text of the Hindus, it is explained that Himavat occupies the space which is between the oceans that are both to the east and west, [and] they say the one small piece of the snow mountain which was propelled [through the air] by Hanuman [in the Râmâyana] is Ti-se; so it is said by [the sage] Vālmīki. As a consequence, the dwelling of Mithâvâra, the place where Raivata stayed and the abode of the five hundred Arhats is not this present-day Ti-se.

Also in the Mâhamâyâ-sûtra it states that Himavat and Ti-se are different. Also in the Avatârâsaka-sûtra there are statements [to the effect that]: The dimensions of Anavatapta are fifty by fifty yojanas. Its bed is covered with jewel pebbles, [33a] and to the sides are walls of jewelled tiles. Four rivers flow from there: the Gândhâra from an elephant's mouth, flowing and bearing silver sands; the Sibh from a lion's mouth, flowing and bearing diamond sands; the Sindhu from an ox's mouth, flowing and bearing golden sands; and the Pakṣa from a horse's mouth, flowing and bearing sands of blue Beryl. The breadth of each and every one is a yojana. Having each circled clockwise seven times around Anavatapta, the four rivers are said to descend in the four cardinal directions. As for all the areas between them, they have an abundance
of various species of flowers, such as the blue and the pink louts, and various jewelled trees.

The detailed qualities such as these can be investigated in the *Avadana-katha-sastra*. As for the present-day Má-pham (lake) it does not have any of these qualities.

With regard to that some people say even the hill of Vultures Peak is nowadays not as it is [described] in the *Rainaka-Rāja*. And they say that by force of time all lands appear to have changed. This matter is analysed and explained [herein] therefore listen:

There are two types [of descriptions]; explanations of how things really are and, amplifications of virtues and defects. In accord with the style of poets, when they amplify the virtuous qualities and defects, even the hill of Vulture Peak is described as being lofty, rounded, and so forth. ‘It is a great mountain of India, as high as the great plateau of Tibet’. No fault at all is attached to the poets in this type of description.

When exaggerations and distortions arise in explanations of how things really are, scholars regard that as a fault. For example, when praising an ox [as being like] a mass of snow mountains able to move or a charmed broken off a cloud, and [with] horn tips [33h] like diamonds, and hoofs like sapphire, and a tail like in wishing-fulfilling tree, and so on; alternatively, when praising people [as having] for a face the moon or sun, for teeth a range of snow mountains, and so on; for vastness the simile of the sky, for smallness applying the simile of dust speck, and Sumeru as a simile of roundness, and for [the size of] rats the simile of ciphers; Vaiśravana [as a simile] for the rich, even for a princeling the simile of India, [and] praising as if they were the Buddha even an ordinary teacher (kaijñamānura). [All these examples] are unobjectionable for [use by] poets. [But] When explaining how things really are, or when defining their qualities, scholars could hardly be satisfied with descriptions that are not in accord with reality.

Therefore to praise Vulture Peak, and so on, is in accord with the way of poets. When explaining how things really are, such as [describing] Himavat, Anavatapta, and so on, if one is mistaken with regard to that, one is hardly omniscient.[1] Due to the strong force of the Age of Degeneration it is possible to be a little bit wrong, but can it be possible to be totally mistaken [like those who describe Himavat and Anavatapta with Ti-se and Má-pham]?
The country known as Carira (Tsa-ri-ten) is situated to the south [of India] on an ocean shore; Tsa-ri Tsa-gorg [in Tibet] is not that. One other Place of Devikosa is said by some to be Tsa-ri. According to the Vajrādakā-sūtra, “Bhadra abides in Devikosa”. Furthermore, according to that same [text], “The sāhaja of Tibet lives and dwells in a same cave. The goddess who abides in that country stays at the tree of Bhadra”. [Therefore] if there is a tree of Bhadra in the direction of that country, i.e. Tibet, there is no contradicting that country [is Devikosa].

Even if Ti-se and Tsa-ri, and so on, were the great places [in the teachings of the Buddha], because the persons who go to these lands have obtained initiations and hold vows, know the [secret] signs and their responses, and firmly understand the two stages [of meditation] it is stated that they wander [there] for the sake of the caryā [phase] (34a), and persons who are not like that are forbidden to travel to those countries according to the tantras.

I have quoted this section at length as not only is it the source that provoked the sacred geography controversy which has remained topical in Tibetan commentarial literature right up to the present century, but also much of the argumentation of later texts that I will only briefly mention relates closely to these passages by Sa-pan. It seems that Sa-pan is attacking these pilgrimage traditions on two fronts: One of doctrinal concern for the way that Buddhist Tantras are interpreted and practiced; and the other aimed at demonstrating the falsehood of the specific sacred geographical claims these Tibetan holy places. Thus, I feel his conclusions are that while there is a need to be a legitimate Tantric practitioner who has reached the caryā phase to visit and benefit from bona-fide Indian phiksa sites as a Buddhist, not only do Ti-se and Tsa-ri fail to qualify as such sites, but there is nothing whatever to be gained by Buddhists performing pilgrimage to them. Of course, from a 20th century Western point of view it is very difficult to make an exact interpretation of these passages. But, however one may view them today, as we shall see below it is clear from the responses written to them by Sa-pan’s later Tibetan critics that they were interpreted in much the same way from within the tradition itself.

I will deal below with some of the details of Sa-pan’s, at times, rather biting criticisms, but here I would like to comment briefly on his general motivation and concerns in writing this passage. It has been suggested by M. Broido in relation to Sa-pan’s critique of the dirar-po chig-thub notion in the DS, which follows after the above quoted section, that his attacks may have been motivated by sectarian animosity towards certain masters of
the bkra'-brgyud-pa, such as Phag-mo Grupa and Jig-rten mGon-po. It is tempting to speculate that as the same bkra'-brgyud-pa figures were prominent in developing the traditions at Ti-se, Tsa-ti and other sites this was also the case here, however I do not think this was Sa-pan's main motivation. This is apparent from his approach in the DS as a whole, and from certain of his other works that make clear his concern to 'explain the teachings in accord with proper scripture (dgama) and reasoning (nyulnyul). Claiming a Tantric or cosmographical identity for Tibetan holy mountains and performing pilgrimage to them was for him a violation of the criterion for a genuine Buddhism according to proper scripture and reason (lung rigs rnam dag). One can also conceive of Sa-pan's concern in this section about the coming together of a specialised and esoteric type of Indian pilgrimage practice with what we assume was essentially a 'public' and popular one to the ancient cult sites of the Tibetan mountain deities such as the brTan ma bcu-gnyis, Tsho-rin cMed-tinga, and others. With regard to this 'concern' we can consider other views about Sa-pan's 'project': that he was making an effort to keep Tantric teachings restricted to the monastic context. This helps to explain his, Chag Lo-tsa-ba's and other's hostility towards systems like the Rdo chung byas rgyud and to lay religious movements in general. This did not necessarily mean that he denied the possibility for Tantric realisation outside of the monastic context, just that it was improbable and dangerous.\footnote{Dan Martin, Personal communication, 23/9/90.}

Sa-pan's DS is also important in that it tells us something about the development of this cult of Buddhist pilgrimage in Tibet by the early 13th century. He probably would have been responding to claims and practices which must have already enjoyed fairly wide currency amongst Buddhists in Tibet at the time of his writing. Of particular interest is his reference to specific passages from the Vajradaka-tantra in relation to claims about Tsa-ti, which is an issue I will discuss the significance of later in the paper.

In terms of the dynamics of Tibetan cultural history I think we can consider these claims about sacred geography and Sa-pan's reaction to them as representing two very different forces which were in operation over the period of the second diffusion of Buddhism to Tibet. The intentions of Buddha-isation to introduce and adapt Indian cult practices to existing Tibetan ones, and the concern to establish Buddhism following strict rational criteria were necessarily going to conflict with each other. If one follows through the later literature on Tibetan sacred geography, and in other areas as well, it is observed that these

\footnote{See Brodio (1987: 34 and notes). This may also be the case for Jig-rten mGonpo's successor dbon Shes-rab/Byung-gnas whom Sa-pan met, and who was active at the holy places.}
\footnote{See the translation and comments on Sa-pan's short work Lung sogs rnam dag dang mthun par 'chad dgos tkhul in Schoening and Stibrenson (1988: 35-49).}
forces continued to operate in Tibetan cultural history and that there was a lasting tension between the intentions of Buddha-isation and the concerns of scripture and reason reflected in the works, and the minds, of later Tibetan scholars up to the Ris-med period.

The DS itself was a highly controversial work which inspired many commentaries amongst the Sa-skya-pa, and also replies from other Tibetan schools. But this short section alone on sacred geography and pilgrimage generated its own literature consisting of further Sakya-pa commentaries elaborating the points initially raised by Sa-pa, and a series of critical responses from the pens of certain bk’ah-brgyud-pa masters who sought to refute Sa-pa’s statements by way of counter claims and scholarly argumentation.

The later Sa-skya-pa works included specific commentaries on the DS, such as the sDam-gsum rnam-bshad (DSN) by the influential writer Go-bo Rab-byams-pa bSod-nams Seng-ge (Go-rams-pa) (1429-1489), which sought to clarify and augment in places the original passages by Sa-pa. Other commentators addressed their writings specifically to the arguments about the locations of either Ti-se or Tsari, such as the short text by Glo-bo mKhan-ch’en bSod-nams lI Hun-grub (1456-1532) on Tsar-rin and Devikotka. While following Sa-pa’s original criticisms such authors introduce new, but often minor, points of argumentation to add force to their case. There is also a distinct tendency in them to dwell more on specific details of geography and zoography than on the doctrinal concerns about the legitimacy of proper Tantric pilgrimages originally expressed by Sa-pa. Another related, although much less polemical, work has come down to us from the ‘Great Reviser’ Zhu-ch’en Tsul-khrims Rin-ch’en (1700-1769?) who composed a short treatise on the sacred geography of the Buddhist tantric pīṭha sites. This interesting little text is certainly worthy of further scholarly attention by those concerned with the subject. Apart from these brief observations, in the present context there is little to be gained from presenting in detail the contents of any of these works here.

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19 For the relevant section of Go-rams-pa’s DSBN (written in 1463) see ff. 125a, 6-138b, 2 in SSB, vol. 14, pp. 119.1-159.3.6 (TSa, 1a-16a).
20 See Glo-bo mKhan-ch’en bSod-nams lI Hun-grub (n.d.). I am not aware of any published version of this text.
21 See Zhu-ch’en Tsul-khrims Rin-ch’en (1973), ff. 423-461. There is a work of similar content, with the title Dpal sa skhu pa’i yab chos byi nyi phrebu lha ’khor le sdod pa’i dam pa’i chos ‘byung ba’i tshul legs par bshad pa bde mchog chos kun dpli ba’i nyin byed (Dehra Dun, 1985?), composed by Ngags-chang Ngag-dbang Kuns-dga’ bSod-nams Grags-pa rGyal-mthshan (1597-1659), although I have so far been unable to obtain this.
ii. bk'as-brgyud-pa Responses

There have been various bk’as-brgyud-pa replies to the issues raised by Sa-pas and his followers, with some written as recently as this century. The earlier works, such as those by the 4th Zhwa-dmar-pa Chos-grags Ye-shes (1453-1524)²², the 4th Brug-chen Padma dKar-po (1527-1592)²³ the Bri-gung- Zhab-drung Che-skyi Grags-pa (1595-1661), Brug-pa mkhas-dbang Sangs-rgyas rDo-rje (1599-1645)²⁴ and Ngag-dbang Phrin-las (17th cent.)²⁵ need to be considered at least partly in the context of a more general bk’as-brgyud-pa scholarly response to the contents of the Dz and its later commentaries. This arose particularly in the 15th-16th centuries when the various bk’as-brgyud-pa lineages had established strong positions of temporal power in Tibet and began to seek a greater doctrinal influence and maturity. While this is so, on another level the issues at stake in this debate were very sensitive ones for the bk’as-brgyud-pa schools from both a religious and a historical-political point of view. The different branches of the tradition, such as the Bri-gung-pa and the Brug-pa had not only established their interests at the holy mountain sites at a very early stage, but continued to develop them in these areas; the case of Padma dKar-po’s activities concerning Tsas ri and adjacent sites in Bya-yul being a typical example of this sustained interest.²⁶ There was, therefore, a very real need on the part of these scholars to counter the acute criticisms of the Sa-skyas-pa which seriously called into question the ‘genuine’ identity of and legitimacy of pilgrimage to their most important holy

²² See Chos-grags Ye-shes (1979), ff. 465-538. It is notable that this work was composed at the behest of Glo-blo Chos-mtsho Chos-spal bk’as-pa (see the letter immediately following the text in the above cited work, fol. 522 ff.), a member of the royal house of Mustang, and close relative of the local Sa-skyas-pa scholar Glo-bo mKhan-chen who vigorously refused the Tsas ri/Devikata traditions of the bk’as-brgyud-pa (see n. 20 above).


²⁴ ‘Bri-gung Chos-skyi Grags-pa (n.d.), several cursive manuscript copies of the text by ‘Bri-gung Dhammasikiri, rGrol ngsṅ ‘jom pvi lugs bshad barch riga smra ba’i mgul rgyan exist in India and Tibet in surviving versions of his Collected Works. I am grateful to the present ‘Bri-gung Khyab-dgon Che-chen Sang-po-cho for supplying me with a copy of this work; see also Sangs-rgyas rDo-rje (1985), ff. 327-463. There may well be many more such sources still to be located.

²⁵ See Ngag-dbang Phrin-las (1983), ff. 59-202. Interestingly, according to the colophon he composed his text at Kojndak, the well known Sa-skyas-pa monastery at Sru-yang near Mt. Kailasa.

While some of the replies were of the nature of more general defences against these criticisms in the DS and its commentaries, others, like the works by Padma dKAR-po and later by the 34th 'Bri-gung gDan-rabs bTsam-dzin Chos-khyi Blo-gros (1869-1906) addressed the criticisms related to individual holy places. Both of these authors included chapters of this material in their pilgrimage guide-books to Tsi-tse, and to Ti-se and Ma-pham-mtho respectively, a fact which perhaps makes their contributions to the controversy even more important due to the popularity and wider circulation of this genre of religious literature in Tibet.28 I will now present extracts from these sources as examples of specific bKa'-brgyud-pa replies concerning each of these important holy places.

Firstly, following the order in which the sites are dealt with by Sa-pan in the DS, let us investigate the tract on Ti-se and Ma-pham-mtho forming the 3rd chapter of the 'Bri-gung gDan-rabs Ti-se gnas khrod (TSN). I quote this source in full here as it summarizes both important points from the previous Sa-skya-pa criticisms and the replies of earlier bKa'-brgyud-pa scholars: it also gives a good overview of the whole controversy with regard to Ti-se, and the style and content of bKa'-brgyud-pa argumentation.29

[9b]...Chapter Three. How this place itself was identified as Ti-se.

Enulogies are frequently uttered in the stūras, such as the Avatāravaka and Smṛtyupaditā-sūtra, that Ti-se has the shape of a five-pronged vajra mountain, with an altitude of five hundred yojanas, and so forth. [20a] And in the Aṛya-Nandimitravadana it states, "The mukhāvivara Angaja stayed at the Ti-se snow mountain together with a retinue of one thousand three hundred Arhats".

But, if one wonders, 'In what quarter of India is there a snow mountain like that?', it states in the Abhidharmakośa, "Northward from this, [there is] a snow mountain beyond the nine black mountains".29 The significance of that statement is glossed in the [Abhidharmakośa] kosabhaṣa as,

Here in the north of this Jambudvīpa itself there is a snow mountain on the far side beyond the nine black mountains. On the far side of that snow

27 See the commentaries in Huber (1991).
28 This translation is based on my own edition of ff. 19b-29b of TSN. The material has been very briefly referred to by Karmay (1972: xxix, n.2); and carelessly edited with brief English summary of contents by Fillioz (1988b: 13-24 & 70-72).
29 On this important cosmography see Macdonell (1962: 531-48); and Dietz (1988: 113-4).
mountain, (20b) and on the near side of the Gandhāranāna mountain, there is
a lake known as Anavatapta, from which flow four great rivers, the Ganga,
the Sindhu, the Siśa and the Paksu (वायकु. That (lake) has a length of fifty
yojanas, a breadth of fifty yojanas, and is filled with waters endowed with
the eight good qualities. It is difficult, to reach for those who do not possess
magic powers. By the side of that very lake there grows a tree known as the
jambu which has sweet fruit, and it is by virtue of that that this jambudvīpa
is so known.30

(22b) ... This (mountain) in Tibet has been identified with Ti-se by all
the great scholars and sages of India, such as the glorious Lord Arīsa, who, when
proceeding to the plain in front of Ti-se, on the occasion of being invited to
Gu-ge by the king of nNga-ñ1 Ha-bisun Byang-chub-'od (23a) said, "O
śāyaviras from the snows of Ti-se, make your mid-day meal when the gacgī
sounds at noon".

In adherence with that, the Master Mar-pa said to Mi-la (Ras-pa), "Because Ti-
se snow mountain is the Ri-bo Gangs-can prophesied by the Buddha, meditate
there!" And by the Master (Mi-la) it was also said,

That one we all call Gangs-dkar Ti-se,
Is known (in the scriptures) as Ri-bo Gangs-can,
The abode of the five hundred Arhats.
That one we call Ma-pham g. Yu-maho,
Is known (in the scriptures) as Lake Anavatapta.

[23a] The 'Bri-gong spyan-snga Shes-sab 'Byung-gras and the siddha Seng-
ge Ye-shes perceived this Ti-se snow mountain in the state of the clear light
as the palace of the sixty two deities of the Sam-va māyāsa complete with
gates. Also, the glorious, incomparable Lamp of the Doctrine of the Ri-bo
dGa'-idam-pas, the omniscient Pan-chen (Lama 1) Blo bzang Chos-kyi rGya-
mchung perceived this snow mountain as the palace of Cakrasaṃvara, and in
this and many other instances it has been stated unanimously with one voice
by all the competent scholars of India and Tibet that the snow mountain Ti-se
is none other than this one in Tibet. But, the Master Sāksya Pāngtīla said,
"That Himavat is not Ti-se. The Anavatapta Ocean is not Ma-pham." (23a)
This snow mountain which is identified as the Ri-bo Gangs-can by you bKa'-
bgru-stus-pas is not the great snow (mountain of the stīras), because this one
does not possess the qualities of that one explained in the stīras." And,
"Neither is this Ti-se, because this one in Tibet does not possess the qualities of the Ti-se which is mentioned in the śūtras, such as the statement that it has [a height of] five hundred yojanas." And, "Nor is Lake Ma-pham Anavatapta, because this (lake) does not possess the stated qualities of the Anavatapta mentioned in the śūtras, such as (a breadth of) fifty yojanas. And, "Neither is this Ti-se, because this one in Tibet does not possess the qualities of the Ti-se which is mentioned in the śūtras, such as the statement that it has [a height of] five hundred yojanas." "This is because the position of the mountain and lake which is asserted by you bKa'-brgyud-pa (24b) contradicts the explanations given in scriptural authorities, such as the (Abhidharma) kaśabhaṇa."

And, certain dialecticians who were followers of the Sa-skya-pa (master) said, "The (argument that this place in Tibet is the one mentioned in the scriptures) falls down because the subject, being that (river) named Gangš which flows from Lake Ma-pham, is not the real Gangš which is one of the 'four rivers', because it and the other three rivers which issue from the flowing waters of one lake cannot be seen. If the other three rivers, having become altered due to the force of time, do not flow from Ma-pham, then it follows that the Gangš too, at this time, did not flow from that lake. And there is no apprehendable trace of the supposed flow of the other three rivers from former times."

So saying, they provided a persistent refutation (of the bKa'-brgyud-pa position).

In reply to that bKa'-brgyud-pa Lamas said (25a): "The significance of the statement,

That one we call Gongs-dkar Ti-se,
Is the one known as Ri-bo Gongs-car.
Which was prophesied previously by the Blessed One.
That one we call Ma-pham g. Yon-mtho,
Is the one known as the Anavatapta ocean.

by the Great Vehicle of Our Doctrine, the Glorious, Incomparable bskad-pa rDo-rje (i.e. Mi-la RAs-pa), is that this mountain in Tibet called Ti-se became our meditation place. It is not simply designed so by ordinary people. The reason being that this is the one called Ti-se, the great snow mountain which was prophesied previously by the teacher Buddha." It is accepted as Ti-se, but it is not accepted as the one mentioned as, "Also, the Ri-bo Gongs-car which arose is this," in the preface to Jñāvakumārabhūtata's (story) in the section on robes in the Vinaya. (25b) The reason is on account
of Ti-se and Himavat being accepted as different according to the statement by
the master Mi-la (Ras-pa),

Among the list of names for regal mountains,
Enumerated in the Songs rgyas bka’ yi sogs brang gs,
There are both ‘Himavat’ and ‘Ti-se’
As for the Noble Ones who dwelt there,
There are also two Arhats who are distinct.

You (sa-skya-pas) don’t talk nonsense! Those qualities of Ti-se and
Anavatapta which are explained in the sūtras will not be refuted solely by
your denial that “This is not Ti-se and Anavatapta”, having taken as proof
that they were just not seen by your Sa-skya Pandita. The reason is, according
to the Abhidharmakośa, “A single substance gives rise to different states of
mind.” For example, it says (26a) three different ways of seeing even a single
mundane element (such as) water, arise for people who have or have not
purified their obscurations. When seen by the gods this water is something
known as ‘The River of the Elixir of Life’, having a taste like honey, and
possessing properties, such as the ability to cure illness, the ability of
reviving the dead and the ability of mending what is broken. When looked at
by human beings it is seen as just water which performs the function of
quenching thirst and washing off impurities. When looked at by hungry
ghosts it is seen as pus, matter and blood, excrement and urine and so on,
which performs the function of stinking and burning. And in a similar way,
with regard to this snow mountain Ti-se as well: To the sight of (26b) tenth
stage bodhisattvas who are purified of obscurations it exists at present in
accordance with the explanations in the sūtras i.e., it is made of precious
substances, and has a height of five hundred yojanas, and a heavenly mansion
of the gods inside it, etc. To the sight of mediocre people it appears as a
splendoured, massive mountain and the self-created body of a deity, and so
forth, and it has a covering of rainbows, etc. To the sight of inferior people
it appears as nothing but just ordinary earth and rock. Because this is the
nature of all things, consequently the (kind of) refutation which states “It does
not have those qualities” to others, having taken as its proof something not
even observed by oneself, is one in which there cannot be seen even the
slightest purpose except only to reveal clearly the ‘inside’ [i.e.,
predisposition] of the refuters themselves.

Furthermore, (27a) it is a laughable assertion of you (Sa-skya-pas) that,
excluding the Ganga, not even the beds of the other three rivers which flow
out from lake Ma-pham can be seen. Therefore, their proof of this is that the eastward flowing river Gangā originally was a spring named 'mThong-ba Rangrol which flowed out of a valley that lay in an easterly direction from the lake itself. And later, it flowed westward from a mountain called sDpal-chu, which resembles the mouth of an elephant, in the upper Gu-ge region in the west, after cutting through the middle of the lake itself. This is the Glang-ches Kha-babs, universally known as the Indian river Gangā. And as for the southward flowing river Sindhu, it flowed to the south from the north of the lake itself [276]. As a result it originates from the mouth of the Peacock or 'Khyu-snechog' mountain in the upper part of Lang-ka Po-rang. Therefore it is known as the rMa-byas Kha-babs or Sindhu river that flows to the land of Sindhu (i.e. Pakistan), after cutting through towards western India, and some minor districts of Nepal. And as for the westward flowing river Pakṣa, it flowed to the east from the west of the lake itself. As a result it originates from the mouth of the horse mountain at gTsang Bye ma g.Yung-drung. Therefore it is known (variously) as the rTa-mchog Kha-babs, the Lobha river, or the upper waters of the gTsang-po, or the Pakṣa river that flows to the region of Kamarupa in eastern India after cutting through the middle of Tibet including [the districts of] gTsang, dBus and Kong-po. As for the northward flowing river Sitā, it flows to the north from the south of the lake itself. As a result it originates from a mountain which resembles the mouth of a lion behind Ti-se. Therefore it is known as the river of Seng-ge Kha-bab or the Sitā river which flows into the northern ocean after crossing the region of Hor (i.e. Turkistan) to the north and both La-đwags and Bhāl-ti (stan).

In accordance with the existence of this established proof which is obvious to all the world, you (Sa-skya-pa) monks must be talking nonsense in saying, "The former riverbeds cannot even be seen at all" or, in general, also the sense of the word 'flowing' (kha-babs) is that they flow from mountains resembling four wild beasts to the east, south, west and north of the lake, and therefore it is not saying they flow (exactly) from the lake's own edge. But if they flowed from the lake's own edge, it is apparent there would be no necessity at all to explain [280] the character of the wild beasts, such as the elephant and horse.

And in general, although you (Sa-skya-pa) have made refutations from many positions, after boasting of being endowed with a vision of knowledge which is not to be compared to anyone else at all, at present not only just Tibetans, but all Buddhists from China in the east up to Indian Mōr in the south talk incessantly of "Going to visit the snow mountain Ti-se". And keeping this
continuously in mind, as a result they travel for many months with immense difficulty, and their assembly is innumerable like the geese on a lake of lotuses. It is like this, and consequently you little children who hope to catch hold of the sun in the sky have replied to them, [29a] saying such things as "You should abandon that manner of behaving which (only) brings fatigue to yourselves."

And in summary, explanations have been made in reply to the refutations of Sa-skya Pan-chen and his followers on this subject. They have been elucidated in the informative texts: the mkhas pa'i rnam rgyan by the omniscient 4th Zhiwa-dmar (Chos-grags Ye-shes), the rGrol rgyen jam pa'i legs brtse lung rigs sne ba'i ngul rgyan by the 'Bri-gung, Zhaba-brong, Chos-kyi Grags-pa and the sNas gsum gsal by legs brtse nor bu'i me lsong by the glorious Brug-pa Ngag-dbang Sangs-rgyas rdo-rje. Therefore, those of you who have acquired perplexing and false views due to the grace of the glorious Sa-skya-pa [29b] read these elegant sayings and become cleansed totally of falsehoods.

To the non-Tibetan reader some of the arguments found in the TNS seem rather attenuated when compared with the more decisive criticisms of the Sa-skya-pa. However, in the Tibetan tradition arguments such as those found here defending the claim of Ti-se and Lake Ma-pham's cosmographical qualities by invoking the ability of highly realised Buddhist practitioners to perceive an 'underlying' splendour, divine reality were generally accepted in relation to the specific debate about these sites. Here we can compare similar material on Ti-se and Ma-pham in the well-known Dzaam gling rgyas brtse of the bTsan-pho, Nom-urags31 reminding us of the relationship between karmic purity and the perception of cosmographical reality which Tibetan pilgrimage guides often refer to in relation to this type of holy place.32

What is also evident in the TNS is the general bkA'-brgyud-pa 'bias' one finds towards dealing only with the geographical and cosmographical details33 and claims, thus avoiding the important doctrinal concerns of Sa-pa about who should, and could, legitimately pilgrimage to and benefit from a site claimed to be a Sarvajna pha. However, Poma dKAR-pho was one bkA'-brgyud-pa critic who addressed this important issue using a

31 See Wylie (1962: 56-9).
33 While these details are interesting they have been commented upon many times by other writers and they need not detain us here. For further material and references see Allen (1982), J.Snellings (1983), and Swami Pranavananda (1983), amongst others. For a recent Tibetan compilation on the area see Bed Jongs sang bstan vol. I, 1990.
rather different style of refutation of Sa-pa's in his Pad dkar legs thobod (PK), a guide-book to the holy mountain of Ta-si in Southern Tibet.\(^{34}\)

Some [i.e., Sa-skya Pa-rgilas] say, "Even if [Ti-se and Ta-si, and so on], were the great places [in the teachings of the Buddha], because the persons who go to those lands have obtained initiations and hold vows, know the [secret] signs and their responses, and firmly understand the two stages [of meditation] it is stated that they wander [there] for the sake of the caryia [phase] [34-a], and persons who are not like that are forbidden to travel to those countries according to the tantras. And, "If those who have not cultivated Secret Ma-ntra, and yet pose themselves on their understanding, go to those countries obstacles will arise for them. Also when visited by 'meditators on nothing whatsoever' [i.e., cultivators there is no profit or loss whatever [for them]." But, these claims are self contradictory in that they are a direct violation or an approximation of the Sagata’s words, as how can one possibly say that ‘Others can go there without profit or loss' if the tantras forbid access to persons who are other than those ready for the caryia [phase]?

Also, his saying "They are forbidden according to the tantras..." is confusing, in that the Phags-pa sphyom-ras-gzigs kyi dri-med’od states, "In this way the dual union of dPal-bi-saṅsāra-vaśtra is described in terms of mundane geography for the sake of liberating uninitiated persons.\(^{35}\) And, "Commonly, the phya, such as Thar-thang, are named in order that ordinary persons may wander to the [twenty-four] countries.\(^{35}\) And it also mentions wanter is the Nyi-ro gsal-sa, a "Generally, the phya, such as Thang-thang, are named in order that ordinary persons can perform circumambulation [at them]."

We have already briefly mentioned some of Sa-pa’s possible motives for discouraging ordinary Buddhist pilgrims from visiting tanrix phya sites, but why did Padma dKan-po here, and elsewhere in his PK, support the practice as being acceptable? Having noted that this bKa’-bgyud-pa be-rimrak and his school had established interests at sites like Ti-se and Ta-si (see n.30), we must consider that requirements for sponsorship and pilgrimage revenue may have played some part in sanctioning and maintaining non-

\(^{34}\) See PK, ff. 31A, 1-31b, 1.

\(^{35}\) On this same sentence in a more negative context see Snellgrove (1959: 69, n. 2).
Tantric Buddhist pilgrimage to these sites. However, regarding this issue it is perhaps
more to the point to consider the distinctions made between Tantric and non-Tantric visits
to *pltha* sites by Buddhists and what this meant in the Indian, and later the Tibetan contexts.
In the texts visits to *pltha* by Tantric yogins who have 'entered into the caryā (sbyod-pa la
gshags-pa) phase of practice are described as 'wandering' (rgyu-ba) there to perform
meditation, whereas non-Tantric visits are described in terms of circumambulation
(skor-ba) which is a common form of worship as Pilgrimage. In commenting on the *pltha*
tradition on the basis of what he takes to be legitimate Indian Buddhism Sa-pan does not
even mention circumambulatory visits. Padma Dkar-po openly admits such visits, but his
textual citations aside, I think his doing so reflects in part a collapsing together of the
categories of Tantric 'wandering' and non-Tantric circumambulation in the Tibetan *pltha*
tradition.

If we analyse the narratives describing the 'opening' of these holy places by the
archetypal Tibetan yogins, such as Mi-la Ras-pa and gTsang-pa rGya-ras, we find that
while 'wandering' there during their own caryā phase they opened them up systematically in
the form of circumambulation itineraries (if indeed they were not already in this form in the
pre-Buddhist traditions, i.e. was there circumambulation in Tibet before Buddhism?). The
individual 'power places' at which they performed their Tantric meditations and magical
conquests are generally arranged around these circuits, which form the basis for the
itineraries of visits by all later Tantric meditators and non-Tantric Pilgrims alike. In some
instances, e.g. Mi-la Ras-pa at La-phyl, these 'opening' scenarios are also explicitly
related to allowing access for ordinary folk to these sites. This is how the texts presented
these sites to Tibetans, and how they in fact were approached. In later times these narratives
themselves served to popularise the sites widely among all sections of Tibetan Buddhists.

There is no doubt that Tantric and non-Tantric visits to these sites have always been made
for distinctly different purposes, but as yogins and uninitiated pilgrims came to share the
same sites their different types of practice became interrelated in ways for which there appear
to be no precedents in the Indian Buddhist *pltha* traditions. Ordinary Tibetans
('circumambulators') visit the spots, caves and so forth, where yogins performed their
meditations in order to benefit from the sanctification (*byin-brlabs*) accumulated at those
places by the activities of these elite Tantra practitioners ('wanderers'). They also support the

36 In the case of the Bhutanese 'Brug-pa at Kailāsa, who controlled most of the religious estates
and shrines in the area, Kawaguchi (1909: 168) gives us some more recent evidence indicating
the importance of pilgrimage revenue at such a site. All this is not to say that the Sa-skye-pas did
not also have mundane motive that need to be considered.

37 Stein (1988: 38-43) has recently made some interesting references to aspects of the practice
of Tantric meditation at Tsas-ri using the PK and other Tibetan sources.

yogins and their communities through making offerings, another form of worship. The extent to which such interrelations between Tantric and non-Tantric visits to the Tibetan *phthe had developed by Sa-pa'i's time cannot be known, but they must certainly be counted as a factor influencing later Tibetan sources or the tradition.

In the 2nd chapter of his *PK, Padma dKar-po had this to say about the issue of sacred geography:

[6b] Consequently, with regard to the statement of others [i.e. Sa-skya Panjita],

That [country] which is called Chitrira,
Is situated to the south on the shore of the ocean;
Tsa-ri rTsa-gong is not that.

There is no fault in merely stating "It is situated to the south", because Kāśći, which is like the Suvarṇadvīpa renowned as the country of Dharmakīrtī to the south of India, and the best of the [places] near-by the city, with regard to that characteristic also it is said to be Tsa-ri. Therefore one knows there is no reason whatsoever in [Sa-pa'i] saying "It is situated on the shore of the ocean". And [concerning the statement],

The sahaj of the country of Tibet
Lives and dwells in a stone cave.
The goddess who abides in that country [7a]
Stays at the tree of Bhadra.

The kṣetrapāla goddess dwelling in the rock cave and the one dwelling at the tree of Bhadra have different countries. It mentions Tibet as the first and Devīkota as the second in all [three texts of, the Vajraśīla, Dākṣiṇāvā and Mahākāla-siddhihāvā (tantras). Therefore there is a contradiction with those. And because [Sa-pa'i] explains the location of Bhadra's tree as Devīkota with the words,

If there is a tree of Bhadra in the direction of that [country],
There is no contradicting that country [is Devīkota].

39 See *PK, ff. 6b, l-7b, 1.
[then] the statement "There is no contradicting that country [is Devīkṣa]" is confusing, and that tree needs to be designated by itself [with no other referent]. And consequently, because it is accepted as Devīkṣa, and if that tree is not in this [place] his own proof is not established. Therefore he has fallen to a position of defeat.

If one thinks that we do not say it is Devīkṣa, since we take the first line [of the following verse of Sa-paṇṭi] as our own position,

One other place of Devīkṣa,
Is said by some to be Tsa-ri.
According to the Vajraśākā-tantra,
"Bhadra abides in Devīkṣa."

one should consider what there is in the remainder of the verse to refute that [place] is Tsa-ri. However, having [previously] taken the position which describes it as Kāñcā if we say "This is not that Tsa-ri", we have understood a little ourselves [i.e. it is reasonable]. But refuting that it is Tsa-ri after speaking of it as Devīkṣa [as Sa-paṇṭi has] [7b] is itself a gesture of insanity.

In that way, if we follow [the issue] through the logic of argument, in this position the attack of [Sa-paṇṭi]’s dispute is quickly mitigated. Therefore the tongue-punishment⁴⁰ of dialectics, called Čārta, has been applied.

Curiously, in these passages Padma dKar-po, while quoting the DS to make his point, never refers to either that work or Sa-paṇṭi⁴¹. Padma dKar-po is very careful not to undercut his own position that Čārta and Devīkṣa are both associated, and both located in Southern Tibet. His formal, and at times, rather opaque refutation restricts itself for the most part to seeking internal contradictions and inadequacies in Sa-paṇṭi’s brief remarks on Tsa-ri. When considered in isolation, this material is indeed difficult to decipher. However, I hope that the substance of Padma dKar-po’s refutation will be somewhat clarified below in an investigation of the details of the actual claims and counter-claims made. The role of

⁴⁰ Ice-chad > Ice-chod = the old traditional practice of cutting out an offender’s tongue, see Zhang Yisun, et al (eds.), Bod rgya tshig mtod chen mo, (Zang-Han Dacidian) vol. 1, Beijing, 1985, p. 768.
⁴¹ This appears to have been a hallmark of his deliveries against the Sa-skya-pa master, c.f. Brodò (1987:37).
such claims about Tsar-ri, Caritra and Devikọta was of fundamental importance to the process of development of a Tibetan Tantric geography.

The Caritra/Devikọta Complex and the Further Development of a Tibetan Tantric Geography

In the ancient geography of India the sites of Caritra, a southern port city on the Orissan (Udra) coast, and Devikọta, a place in the Dinajpur district of North Bengal were real places which contained Tantric pitha sites patronised by Buddhist Siddhas, and most probably various sects of Hindu Tantrikas as well. Tibetan Buddhist scholars, at least since Sa-pa's time, have certainly been aware of the actual Indian locations of these places. Their significance as points on the internal yogic and external geographic vajra-kāya was also well known to Tibetans from the list of these sites found in the Tantras themselves.

However, despite this knowledge of the traditional Indian locations and significances of these sites, certain sections of the Tibetan Buddhist clergy were determined that they be relocated on Tibetan soil. As a result of this determination to 'Buddha-ise' the Tibetan landscape since the phyi-dar two major Tibetan holy places were established as Caritas and

43 See Barlak (1962: 163) and Das Gupta (1976: 12) on it as a Buddhist temple site; and Sūvar (1975: 83) on it as an important kākṣa pitha location.
44 For instance see the many references of visits there by the Indian Siddha Kṛṣṇākṛṣya and his disciples in Templeman (1989: 21, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 40, 46).
45 For example see the above quoted lines in the DS referring to Tsar-ri; Triṃkha's writings on Khaka (note above); an interesting entry in Zhu-ch'en Tshul-khrims Rin-ch'en (1973), f. 447, 1: "Devikọta is the citadel or fortress of the goddess. That is, due south of the reddish-gray (gro-mo) region of Nalenda in the east (of India) there is found a temple of Devikọta in a place which is four calls distance outside of the town known as Varaćaka (7). And in the country, it is said that great place exists there;", and also in the TNS, f. 8b, 4, apparently quoting an earlier source on the submission of Mahēśvara, "The place known as Devikọta, which is the country of Varindra in Eastern India, was seized by the gndharva Vajraprabha." On Varindra/Varendra being an ancient kingdom situated in present-day Bangladesh, see Templeman (1989: n. 110).
46 For a convenient collection of this material from the Hevajra, Saṃhvarodaya and Vajraśāka cycles see Tsuda (1978: 215-226).
four major sites were claimed as Deviokoas in Tibet. There may also be other minor, local Tibetan Cariiras and Deviokoas for which we do not yet have textual evidence. 47

We are fortunate to have enough surviving literary sources to be able to discern the outline of the rather complicated process of assimilations which lead to the proliferation of these sites in Tibet and hence, the resultant development of a pilgrimage network dedicated to Samvam Tantrism. This is what I will now try to piece together by considering each of the major sites in the probable sequence of their historical development.

i. The Cariira and Devioka at Tsar-ri

It is clear from the DS that already by Sa-pa's time claims were being made for assimilating both Cariira and Devioka to the holy mountain sanctuary of Tsar-ri (Tsar-ri Tsha-gong) in Southern Tibet, and that in the case of Devioka some passages from the text of the Vajradaka-tantra (VDT) were being invoked in order to justify this. Go-rams-pa's DSN commentary on this passage in the DS clarifies things somewhat. 48

As for Cariira, a division of plawa site [in the Hevajra-tantra], because it is mentioned as "situated to the south on the shores of the ocean" [by Sa-pan], the Tsar-ri Tsha-gong of Kongyul [in Tibet] is not that. As for the statement by someone that, "For Devioka, a division of kjetra site [in the Hevajra-tantra] there exist two, of which the principal exists in India to the south, and another minor one is the Tsar-ri of Kong-yul", if the tree of Bhadra is found in the direction of that country, there is no fault in this country being Devioka [according to Sa-pa's statement]. [As for the verses] beginning with "According to the Vajradaka-tantra", furthermore, in the tanira it states [etc]..." At this point Go-rams-pa, in order to show what Sa-pa was referring to somewhat obscurely (for the uninitiated reader) in his criticisms, quotes in full two short verse sections.

47 In the present context we might note that some literary references to other Cariiras and Deviokoas appear to be hyperbolic, such as the title of a manuscript guide to the shrine of Tag-thang in Sh-pa, Tsar-ri-tra gnas-pa gnas-chen stseg-thang stgi gnas-yig ngo-mi商标 phral-gyi zgo brgyud-pa, see Aria (1979: 278). See also the comments on Chu-mo-phug (Chumphu) at Sh-pa-gro and Brag-gtar sPel-ril-zong in Amdo in Stein (1968: 13 & 29).
48 See DSN, f. 138a-b.
relating to aspects of the *plja* cult from the VDT\(^9\). The first of these verses describes a violent (drag-chen-mo) karmapala goddess called 'na-mo-cho' who dwells at Bhadra's tree\(^60\) in Devikota. The second describes another karmapala, known as 'na-cham', as a sahaja (innate woman)\(^31\) in Tibet (bod-yul)\(^52\) who dwells in a rock house or rock cave in that country. Some Tibetan commentators take these two karmapala goddesses to be one and the same. What the argument of Sar-pa and Go-rams-pa is leading to is that although Tibet is mentioned in the Taatra it is only Devikota which has the tree of Bhadra as a dwelling, whereas Tibet has only a rock house or cave as the dwelling. Therefore the two places cannot be equated on the basis of what is stated in the scripture.

We have already seen how Padma Kkar-po has rejected this argument as being self contradictory and invalid in his PK. Elsewhere is that same work he uses the second of these passages, and other short sections from the VDT, to claim how Tibet and the main holy mountains of Dag-pa Shel-ri at Tsa-ri are the sites mentioned in this Taatra. And furthermore, on the basis of these quotes he make a more important equation of these deities and their abodes from the *plja* cult with those ones that are central to the aatohchonic cult at Tsa-ri. For example he states\(^33\).

From amongst the twenty-four countries of Jambudvipa this *spachandoha* Himilayaa, called Kha-ba-can or Gangs-can in Tibetan, is that Tibet mentioned

\(^{49}\) Because of their importance in all the subsequent guide-book literature on this subject I have provided the full texts here: For the first passage see Śrī-vajra-dhāka-thā-mahābhaktarāja (Derge: 370), f. 49a, 1-2: igyen da 'bar skra-chas lha ba'i kaa tra pāla stign pa che ii de b'i kaa jar na mo che ii stobs po che yi skye gnas byung ii lha mo lag na sdo dang can te ii rend byor dbring phyag kun gya nhog ii gnyat der lha mo drang chen mo ii bha dral'i shing la brten te gnas i; and the second, f. 50a, 7: 'bod yul da ni lhan skyes te ii tseg byung gi ni skye gnas byung ii ču sri rgyal mtshan lag na thogs ii zhiishing gsal ba'i gnus can te ii yul der gnas pa'i lha mo te ii tseg gi khyim la brag gi khyim la brten te gnas i.

\(^{50}\) For the story of Bhadra’s tree in Devikota see Templeman (1983: 44), and (1986: 30 & 46).

\(^{51}\) Tib. = lhan-cig phyag-ma. The 'innate women' are the fākiinis or yoginis who reside at each of the 24 Tantric plja and who are involved in the yoga performed at these places, see Tsuda’s Saññorodaya-Tantra, (1974: 9:12) in terms of the internal plja they represent an internal psychic force at points in the yogin’s meditational body, see Das Gupta (1976: 99-109).

\(^{52}\) It would be interesting to know what the original Indian mss. of the VDT read where ‘bod-yu’ is found in the Tibetan translations. What appears to be a Bengali or Nepali mss. of VDT is in the Tokyo University Library collection, cat. no. 343. The relevant section occurs on ff. 42b-43a.

\(^{53}\) See PK, ff. 4b, 5-5b, 1.
in the Vajradaka-tantra as, "The land of Tibet, and such like, Mālava and Pulhī[ramāyaṇa], etc., are the twenty-four countries."

Furthermore, it is called Gangs-can if we take as primary [the mountains] Dag-pa Shed-rī, [5a] and it is called Tibet if we take as primary the place of abode of the kṣetrapāla. Therefore there are different names referring to one meaning. The kṣetrapāla in that (Vajradaka-; tantra) mentioned as, "[She] is the sāhāja in the country of Tibet,' is the sāhāja holding the name g-Yul-gtron-ma. She is visualized as, "Holding a makara banner in hand, and possessing a body which is calm and lucid." [And it further states:] "That goddess who abides in that country, lives and dwells in a rock house: ["...

According to some translations [this last line reads], "[She] lives and dwells in a rock cave," therefore her abodes or receptacles are the rDo'-s-Nying-phug of upper Cig-car and the Myung-ri Myung-khang [both of which are at Tsa-rī]."

...It states that the male ('father') kṣetrapāla, "The mahāvīra known as Longs-spyod is the kṣetrapāla Thub-dka'." This is Longs-spyod Thub-dka. And it is the place where Sengge gDong-pa-can lives also because it mentions [5b] "A dwelling in the heaped-up rock mountains" in that tantra, it is dPal-rī Zlam-can in upper Cig-car, and thus is this [place] located on the great face of the Dag-pa Shed-rī [massif at Tsa-rī].

The goddess equated with the Tantric sāhāja, g.Yu-gtron-ma (Turquoise Lamp Lady), is one of the leading bThun-ma (or bStunma) bcu-gnyis deities associated with important mountains and lakes in Tibet. She has the titles 'Bod-skryong bstan-ma'i gso-bo g.Yu-yi-gtron' and 'Zhang-skryong dbang-mo rDo-rje g.Yu-gtron-ma' and is obviously a protective deity of national significance for Tibetans. Also, the male deity from the Tantric cult is equated with Seng-ge'i gDong-can, a member of the retinue of the leading goddess of the cult of Tibetan protective deities dpal-ldan Hla-mo. Not only are passages such as these of fundamental importance to our understanding of the pilgrimage cult at Tsa-rī, but they are also excellent examples of Budhha-iation in action in the traditions of the Tibetan holy places.

54 This verse, VDT, f. 50b, l: ilong spyod theg bya'i dpa'bo che ii khr tra pala thub dka' ba'i, follows immediately on from the second of the 2 above quoted passages in the Tantra (see n. 49 above).
55 On this goddess see the numerous refs. in Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956: esp. 190-93).
From amongst the impressive collection of materials Padma dKar-po brings together in the 2nd chapter of his 8K to demonstrate that Tsal-ri is Cintara, mention must be made of one other citation from the Tantra57.

In this [[a]rajya(dakini)-sutra], that which is mentioned as, "The place of the karatja, Cintara"58 is Kālci which formerly was coiled in the twenty-four countries of the vajra-kāya.

This equation allows us to better understand Padma dKar-po's mention of Kālci in his refutation of Sa-pan quoted previously. But, more importantly, by relating Kālci to Cintara and Tsal-ri he makes it possible for Tibetans to postulate a correspondence between Tsalri/Cintara and Devikaō59 by way of the logic of the vajra-kāya doctrine, and this is a relationship they certainly have made as we shall see below in the case of Tsal-ri's Rin-chen-brag. According to the theory of the internal pitha (adyānya-pitha) of the vajra-kāya certain places correspond to certain parts of the body which are connected by a network of internal psychic channels or veins (nidī). The Sahārodaya-sutra lists, "A vein existing in Devikaō (that is,) the eyes flows through the live,"60 and "in Kālci, the abode of the heart."61 Some Tibetan commentators considered that a nādi connected the eyes and the heart in the vajra-kāya during meditation, thus joining the external Kālci/Cintara with Devikaō as I will detail later.

ii. The Ha-mo mKhor-chen Devikaō at mKhar-chu

The later Tibetan writers on sacred geography made use of the aspects of the internal pitha theory explained above in order to justify claims for, and relate together, the Tantric pitha they were establishing in Tibet. Padma dKar-po appears to have been an exponent of these Tantric geographical theories, as can be seen from his short guide-book entitled Bod yal Iha de 'vi ko 'tsi gnar byed. As we have already noted, by the 15th century we find the Sa-skya-pa scholar Go-rins-pa criticizing a Tibetan tradition that there are two kestre sites of Devikaō, one in India and one at Tsal-ri in Tibet. In his little text Padma dKar-po uses

57 See 8K, f. Sh. 2.
58 Note that VDF, f. 49, 7 has read: lha-ris 'rgyal gli sil i chen po rin-chen brag thos bya ba lha.
59 See Roerich (1979: 729, s.2): 'Present day Tibetan nādi-rasās maintain that Tsal-ri in SE Tibet is the ancient Devikaō.'
60 See Tsudû (1974: 267), noting the confusion here between the Skt. 'buddha' for 'heart', and the Tib. 'nöchö-pa' for 'liver'.
the Tantric theory of pileha correspondences to advance a claim that the site known as lHa-mo mkhar-chu (Sk.t. Mahakāla) at mkhar-chu in the lhö-brag district of Southern Tibet was one of these two Devikotas. For example he stated62:

According to reality, and in the infinite, incomparable Tantric texts, such as the Vajradāka and the Dākāravāsa, the explanations state, "The eyes [of the Vajrakītya] are Devikota." Because there are two internal eyes, there are two [external] places of Devikota, of which that one connected with the right [eye] exists in that country of the dharmarāja Asoka called Pāphaliputra in Eastern India, and that place which is connected with the left [eye] is this one [in southern Tibet].

Whether Padma dKar-po was the first to claim this site as a Devikota in Tibet is uncertain63 although whatever the exact history of the claims the mkhar-chu Devikota retained its fame as a Sahyana site for many centuries in Tibet64.

iii. The 'Second Devikota' at Pha-bong-kha

Considering all the Tibetan claims we have cited so far it might appear that the bKa'-brgyud-pa schools were the only major lineage tradition to engage in relocating and duplicating the pileha sites in Tibet. While this perhaps reflects the situation up to the time of Padma dKarpo, from then on the dGe-lugs-pa school, and later the Rigs-med movement, were instrumental in establishing other Devikotas and Āḍīrās in Tibet.

Right from the beginning of its formation the 'reformed' dGe-lugs-pa order and its members took up the study and practice of the cult of Sahyana Tantrism with zeal. Great practitioners of that school, such as Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419) himself and the 1st Pan-chen Blo bzang Chos-kyi rGyal-mtshan (1567-1662) performed pilgrimages to Tsa-ri and Ti-

63 In this context we should note the propensity of 'Brug-pa Lamas of the period for such activities. A disciple of Padma dKar-po's, a certain 'Bla-ma bKa'-shi-dbang', was responsible for 'opening' the Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage to the 'false' Kusinagara at the hajo temple near Guhasth in Assam to the south of Tsa-ri, see Aris (1986: 71-3, 77); Aris (1979: 112-14). This site was later assimilated to the Devikota at Pha-bongkha, on which see n. 73 below.
64 See mKhyen-brtses dbang-po's comments in Ferrari (1958: 57).
In their devotion to the performance of Samvara tantrism certain dGe-legs-pa Lamas established the so-called 'Second Devikota' (de-dPal-pa gnyis-pa)\(^67\) at the site of the ancient holy place of Psa-bong-kha near Se-ra monastery on the outskirts of Lhasa city. The earliest reference to Psa-bong-kha being claimed as Devikota is found in the 5th Dalai Lama's Bod skyes grub ther, written in 1643.\(^68\) The guide-book for the 'Second Devikota', probably written sometime during the 19th century\(^69\) was composed by a little-known dGe-legs-pa scholar associated with the rGyud-stod college in Lhasa and with Se-ra-smad. In setting out his claims this author uses what seems to have developed into a 'formula' for establishing Tibetan sites as Tantric atisha. Firstly he invokes exactly the same passages from the VDT as used previously by Padma dKar-po to demonstrate that Tibet, and more specifically Psa-bong-kha, are the places of the visnu-khye mentioned in the Tantras.\(^70\) As well as giving a brief account of the narrative of the submission of Rudra/Maheshvara, he employs citations from Tsong-khapa and Jam-dbyangs bZhad-pa (1648-1721) amongst others, all of which are intended to demonstrate that,\(^71\)

This very Psa-bong-kha is the Devikota from amongst the four (Tantric) atisha because it was unanimously accepted [as such] by all those accomplished in wisdom who went there previously. Because it is established [as such] by way of those proofs above it is established as a place possessing empowerments.

In much the same way as the 'Bri-gung gDan-ra' claims about Ti-se use the 'scriptural authority' of the statements of great past masters of the bKa'-brgyud-pa, so too does this author place great emphasis throughout his text on the statements of the saints and

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\(^{65}\) On Tsong-kha-pa at Tse-si see Kaschvansky (1971: 131); and on the 1st Panchen at Tse-si see Pesch (1976: 322).
\(^{67}\) See for example Ferrari (1958: 42).
\(^{68}\) See Roerich (1979: 75, n.2).
\(^{69}\) See dByings-can dGyes-pa' zhi-brug (nd). This approximate dating is likely since the author cites the Rwa-ba brgya tshogs-pa'i rdo-rgyal ye-shes bzhi-rNyis-pa Rab-gyas on f. 32a. Also, we find an author by this name who was the biographer of dByings-can gNub-pa'i rDo-rje (1809-1887), the nephew of dNgul-chen Dhammadhara (1772-1851).
\(^{70}\) See dByings-can dGyes-pa' zhi-brug (nd.), ff. 9a, 4-10a, 1, noting that there is some confusion about the arrangement and attribution of the verses here.
\(^{71}\) Ibid, 7, 11a, 4.
scholars of his own sect to establish the validity of his claims. By the 18th-19th century the pīṭha traditions had already gained enough 'momentum' in dGe-legs circles for appropriate spiritual authority regarding them to have been generated. What seems important here is not just whether this is the ‘true’ location, but that it is possible to attain the proper benefits of pilgrimage and practice at Tibetan Sāvāra sites as other Worthy Ones have claimed to have done in the past. Later in the work, in a further claim the author’s words reveal an aspect of the relocating of Indian meditation sites that practitioners of his day were conscious of, that is, that famous sites like Devikotā did exist in India, but this fact did not diminish the sanctity and the potency as places of practice of those claimed to exist in Tibet72.

[With regard to this [place] which is established as the pīṭha of the two eyes when we relate it internally to the nādi (‘spokes’) of the body cakra of the Sāvāra [mandala], even though there clearly exists a mahāpīṭha known as such in India as well, that does not mean that this [place] is not a place for practice, or is unfit to be Devikotā. [And] not only that, it need hardly be said that as regards Tibet itself it is certainly the case that this place has been repeatedly established through teachings by the many Wise Ones who performed meditation at that mahāpīṭha.

The Pha-bong-kha Devikotā has remained a well-known Cakrasāvāra pīṭha for Tibetans up to the present day.73 It is perhaps because of its already established sanctity as an ‘equivalent’ East Indian holy place that it also became one of the sites in Tibet to which the ‘false’ Kūnāgara in Assam was assimilated by Tibetans.74

iv. The 'Third Devikotā' at Thā-k‘dra Rin-chen-brag

The Rin-med movement, that most important of developments in 19th century Tibet, was a testimony to the great vitality and creativity inherent in Tibetan religious culture. The

72 Ibid, f. 33a, 6-33b. 1.
73 When I visited S-c-da Pha-bong-kha in July 1987 the Devikotā identity of the site was well known to local Tibetans: see also Bölocher (1982: 498); and the comments of a Western Buddhist who made a pilgrimage to be site with an exiled Tibetan Lama, “Rinpoche said this region has the eight auspicious signs and is one of the 24 places of Chakrasambhava (sic). He told us that the mountains of Chakrasambhava (sic.) are similar in shape.”, see Ani Thubten Dayton (1988: 8).
74 On this matter see Wachhöl (1934: 307-14, esp. 310); and my n63 above, Ferruci (1958: 102, n. 87) also discusses this matter, identifying the site of Devikotā with Klamo, another important sākta pīṭha, in order to account for this double assimilation. See also Stein (1988: 18, n. 46).
most recent development of the Tantric *pīṭha* cult in Tibet was born out of this movement sometime during the 1850's and 1860's with the establishment of the so-called 'third Devikota' at the site of Tsh’dra Rin-chen-brag/Vajrakīśi. This place was the location of the retreat centre of Kun-bzang De-chen Od-gsal-gling, connected with the dPal-spungs monastery in sDe-tsip, and founded by the leading figure of Rin-po-se scholarship at the time, Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtShay-ya (1813-1899) himself. Between 1842 and 1859 Kong-sprul composed a comprehensive and interesting guide-book for this place in which he claimed that it was not only the *pīṭha* site of Devikota but of Chirita as well.

The time of his writing this guide-book coincided with the early years of what was to be one of the most fertile intellectual and spiritual relationships of the era. It was then that he worked together with both the gTer-stan mChog-'gyur Gling-pa (1829-1870), whom he first met in 1855, and the great Ris-med master 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse-dbang-po. In the claims about Tsh’dra Rin-chen-brag being Devikota and Chirita the influences on Kong-sprul's formulations of both these other scholars is apparent,75 and the whole 'third Devikota' tradition has to be seen as part of a larger synthesizing and revitalizing effort that these three great minds applied at the time to the sacred geography of Khams and Amdo,16 amongst a host of other subjects.

The following passages selected from this long guide of Kong-sprul's to the 'third Devikota' represent not only one further claim for the location of an Indian Tantric *pīṭha* in Tibet, but also reveal a developing sophistication in the manner in which the sacred geography and inter-relationships of these Sādhāraṇa sites were presented by Tibetan authors:77

[7b]...Firstly, if we consider what the nature of this place is: From among the fields of the ri-kāya it is part of the field of nirūpā-kāya... From among

75 In 1859 or 1860 mChog-'gyur Gling-pa 'revealed' his own short guide-book for the site as Kong-sprul, who acted as the recorder of the *gter-ma* while they were both residing at Tsh’dra Rin-chen-brag. mChog-'gyur Gling-pa (1977c), ff. 109-116; see mkhyen-brtse ’dngom-po (1977), esp. ff. 103-6, who himself followed Pada gnas-po's line or Chirita and Devikota.
76 Concerning this see the important collection of guide-books in the gSang-'bum of mChog-'gyur Gling-pa, vol. 30 (E), the 'revelation' of many of which were recorded by both Kong-sprul and mkhyen-brtse. The pilgrimage traditions and sacred geography of Eastern Tibet in these texts is an important research priority for Tibetologists.
77 My transliteration covers ff. 7b, 2-9b, 3 of his text, found in Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtShay-ya (1975), ff. 490-494. This text was originally part of the Thun mong ma ‘byed pa’i mchod, the 5th of the monumental 'Five Treasures' (mDrod-lings) which comprise the Collected Works of Kong-sprul.
the twenty-four places Vajracitakoti is a division of Devikoti, an Upadipta, the essence of which is the eye channel (nikshi) in the yogin’s psychic body. From among the thirty-two countries Tab-dra Rin-chen-brag is a branch of Chitra, the essence of which is the [central] Vajradhāra channel. From among the three cakras of the pure triple-world [of the manjusīra] it belongs to the cīna-cakra [which is the sphere of] dka-ris. From among both great Places and minor places it is the supreme place of good quality mind among the twenty-five great places of mDo-kham78. Because it is a division of the great places and countries its essence was perfected from the beginning. And because it is the great place of Gangs-can (Himavat) which was empowered by the primal forms of all the Jinas, beginning with that which is endowed with a garland of vajra skulls, its qualities have arisen accordingly. It is the palace of great liberation (śā). It is a great, divine mansion of all the Buddhas.

Secondly, if we consider the etymology of its names: It is stated that it is an upadipta because, internally, the white part occasionally abides in the sgyam-par-mo channel which descends to the region of the liver, and externally also, because dka-ris occasionally abide there. Because one drinks the sahajānanda which arises through the mixing of the red and white dbring in the Vajradhāra channel, and because all obstructions are cut off, externally also it is called a phlam (‘thung-gcod) though having a function which is like that. And Devikoti is a citadel of the goddess, thus is, there are many citadels which are [shaped] like a heart, and adgji shaped [i.e. like female genitalia] yoni in the rock mountains. Consequently in inspire existences one is shown [these] magical deceptions by the hvaśā ‘drel of the Mother Tāman and one’s defined attachments increase, but when one is at the path [stage], [seeing] the ‘drel having activated the four mudrās the cognition of blissful means and emptiness wisdom is generated, and during the fruition [stage] it is ensured that one establishes the emptiness which is endowed with the best of all modes as the foundation of all dharma.

According to the Gnas-yig gter-byos rtsa-bo, “The one called Vajracitakoti is the citadel of vajra mind, a division of Devikoti, that is, it has become the palace which accommodates in particular the Blessed One whose mind is the essence of vajra. Vajragarbha, in beneficent and wrathful [manifestations], and the Vajra lineage of Herukas with their retinues, beginning with Śrī-Cakrasāra. [30] Because the one called Ts’i-dra Rin-chen-brag is included in

78 On this scheme see mChog-’gyur Gling-pa (1977b), ff. 41-67.
the entire collection of Chātris is a branch of Śāś-Cārīra which is internally the central channel and externally the great southern place. Therefore it has an arrangement which is the same as that place...

...That Devī-kōli and Taś-dra (Rin-chen-bra) are two is not contradicted. This is, because it is the central (Avadāṇa) channel which penetrates the twenty-four channels (of the Psychic body), Carītra penetrates all the plitha as well. And because both of them are the pure ones whose channel is between the eye and the heart, consequently the heart and the eye also have a conjunction. Also that the Devī-kōli which exists at mkhar-chu in lho-bra is a branch of Čātrā is in accord with the former explanations of those with wisdom insight.

The statement by the Jam-ngug bla-ma mKhyen-brtse dbang-po that 'This place is the essence of the middle eye of cognition' is also from the origination of insight. That is, the middle eye is the purity of the wisdom of emptiness which is [a spot] above the nose in the head. And therefore that very [spot] becomes a door which radiates the wisdom from the centre of the heart. [All this] agrees completely with the true instruction of mChog-'gyur Gling-pa which states, "Devī-kōli is Taś-dra Rin-chen-bra." [9a]

[9a]... Fourthly, also the marks of credibility that it exists in this way: In a previous era it was seized by Rudra and Kaśi [who] were subjugated by Heruka, and thus, as for its having all the marks of means and wisdom which were empowered into those plitha which are the most excellent, they are like the generally known marks which are the particular characteristics of the twenty-four great places. As for possessing the symbols of the self-manifest līnga and yoni,[9b] and the Secret Cave like the heart-shaped, self-manifest citadel of stone (lit."dharma-dāva) which supports the Tibetan protector [goddess], the ashāja which is mentioned in the (Vajradākā)-tantra as, "The goddess who abides in that country lives and dwells in a rock house." These are the symbols which establish it as the place of Devī-kōli. And as for the persons in Čātrā and the mighty mkhar-chu valley, and the persons in the centre of the trunokside of Bhadra's tece which is exactly equal in colour and shape (to the one at Devī-kōli), they are clear evidence of it being Čātrā. And the sacred marks of body, speech and mind visible in the sphere of activity of

79 See mChog-'gyur Gling-pa (1977a), f. 14b, 6.
the Mighty One, such as hand and foot imprints, are proof of its manifest perfection.

In this remarkable example of sacred geographical literature we find the Tantric theory of the internal-psychic and external-physical geography of the vajra-kjya employed to establish a set of correspondences which are intended to validate the claims of identity and sanctity made for the site. But, rather than claim this site as the 'one-and-only' Devikota and Chitrà in Tibet, or even as the specific ones mentioned in the Tantras as earlier Tibetan authors did, Kongsprül is careful to make it clear that while Ts'dra Rin-chen-brag/Vajnatici is entirely equivalent in all details to these great pthas of the Tantras it has a type of derivative status by being a 'branch' (yan-lag) or 'division' (bye-brag) of them. In this we find an expression of the modus operandi of the Ris-med itself, that is, in establishing a 'second generation' of assimilated pthas site in Tibet while not directly violating the original Indian geographical schema, and also harmonizing its existence with those already founded elsewhere by earlier generations of Tibetan clerks.

While Ts'dra Rin-chen-brag was a site of great importance to the Ris-med and the meditators of dpal-spungs,10 we do not yet know whether it ever became a popular place of pilgrimage in the way that other Tanric pthas sites of Sanvarya did in Tibet.

Concluding Remarks

By the late 19th to early 20th century the sacred geography controversy appears to have come to a sort of ironic conclusion in the hands of the Ris-med. One can only be impressed by the 'impartial' and synthesizing forces at work in a movement in which, not long after they had established the third Devakot, a leading sprul-skla of mKhyen-brjie-dbang-po himself can openly state that 'The Sa-skya Pandita who was the crown ornament of the world, is the only man renowned for having refuted the arguments of heretics in Tibet.'81

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80 Aside from the Tibetan sources there are few references to this site near Ledge. A brief description is found in the life story of the late Kaju Ringpoche who acted as retreat director for the hermitages there before his exile, see MacLeod (1985: 40). However, one only has to scan through the colophons of the works of Kongsprül, mKhyen-brjie, and other Ris-med masters to see just how much of the movement's prodigious literary output was composed in the caves and hermitages of this holy place.

81 See Aris (1977:217).
If there was ever any contest between the influences of scripture and reason and Buddha-isation in the history of Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage traditions it would appear that the former was bound to loose out in the long run. Despite the continued duplication of Indian Tantric *pilka* sites on Tibetan soil, Sa-sky-a's original criticisms and concerns did not go completely unheeded in Tibet. While tens of thousands of pious Tibetan, both Tantric yogins and lay people alike, traveled far and wide to visit their Sarwhara sites the followers of the Sa-sky-a-pa, especially the educated elite, would have nothing to do with such pilgrimages to Ti-se, *Tsas-rI, and so on*.\(^\text{82}\)

In the present context it is appropriate to recall a recent observation by anthropologist G. Bowman that, "An historical investigation of the evolution of pilgrimage networks would show that popular pilgrimages now closely integrated with the social practices of their cultural environments were not spontaneously generated out of those milieus but were imposed upon local populations through the agency of 'universal religions'."\(^\text{83}\) What is of interest about this process as it has occurred in Tibet and the Himalayas with the Sarwhara cult is the very long period of its on-going development, and the extent of its pervasion into local traditions, such as sacred geography.\(^\text{84}\) It seems to me that the more one hears descriptions of local Tibetan environments while in the field, the more one encounters references to other 'minor' Sarwhara sites couchded in the phraseology, and replete with the cliches now familiar to us from the Tibetan Buddhist guides to Ti-se, *Tsas-rI, La-phyi, and other 'major' sites."

Textual and historical studies can inform us much about Pilgrimage and cult networks developed by way of the forces of 'universal religions'. However, it is now the further task of careful field investigations to elucidate the dynamics of the accommodations which have operated in this development process between the indigenous Tibetan and the Buddhist elements at individual locations.

82 The Sa-sky-a-pa did of course go on pilgrimages, esp. to places connected with the founders of their tradition, and other great saints. I am indebted to David Jackson for this information on Sa-sky-a-pa pilgrimage trends. My informant, the former 'Drug-pa meditation master at Tsas-rI, Cig-car dBi-ma-stad She-rab stShya-srdo, states, 'Sa-pa never experienced it [i.e. Tsas-rI] for himself; he just read about it. In my day, ordinary Sa-sky-a-pa lay people, they only came to Tsas-rI on pilgrimage occasionally, but never the lineage holders and scholars. The only famous student of the Sa-sky-a lineage who visited Tsas-rI was Blo-bzang Grags-pa, Tsong-kha-pa, and look what happened to him (referring to a well known Tibetan anecdote about his visit, see PK, fol. 10a.)'  
83 See Bowman (185: 67).  
84 For some published examples see Tsera-wa (1983: 45) on Ysphu; Ari (1975: 78) on Manaslu and Kailash; and Snelgrove (1979: 107) on Muktinath.
Abbreviations

DNS  Go-rams-pa b-Sod-nams Seng-gs, Sdom pa gsun gyi rab tu dbye ba'i nam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba.

DS  Sa-skya Pa-rla Kusi-gga' rGyal-rtsas, Sdom pa gsun gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos.

PK  Padma dKar-po, Gnaz chen tsa ri tra'i ngo mishar snang pad dkar legs bshad.


TNS  bsTan-'dein Chos-kyi Blo-gres, Gangs ri chen po 'u se dang nsho chen ma dros pa bcos kyi sgo ngon byung gi lo rgyas mdo bsdus su brjod pa'i rab byed shel dkar me long.

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