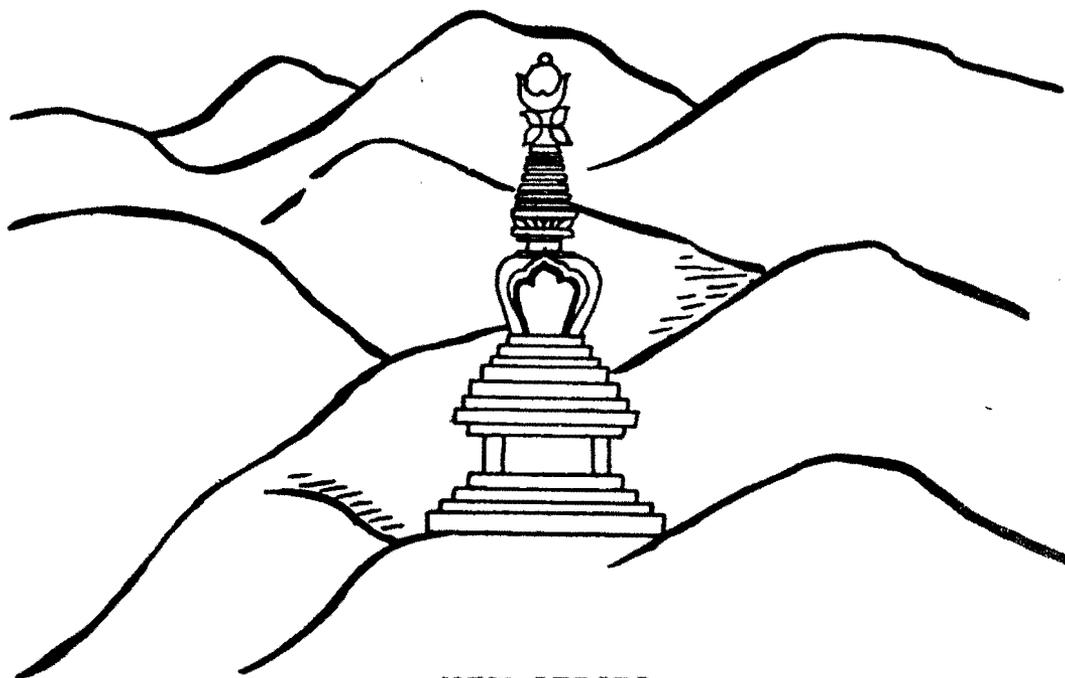


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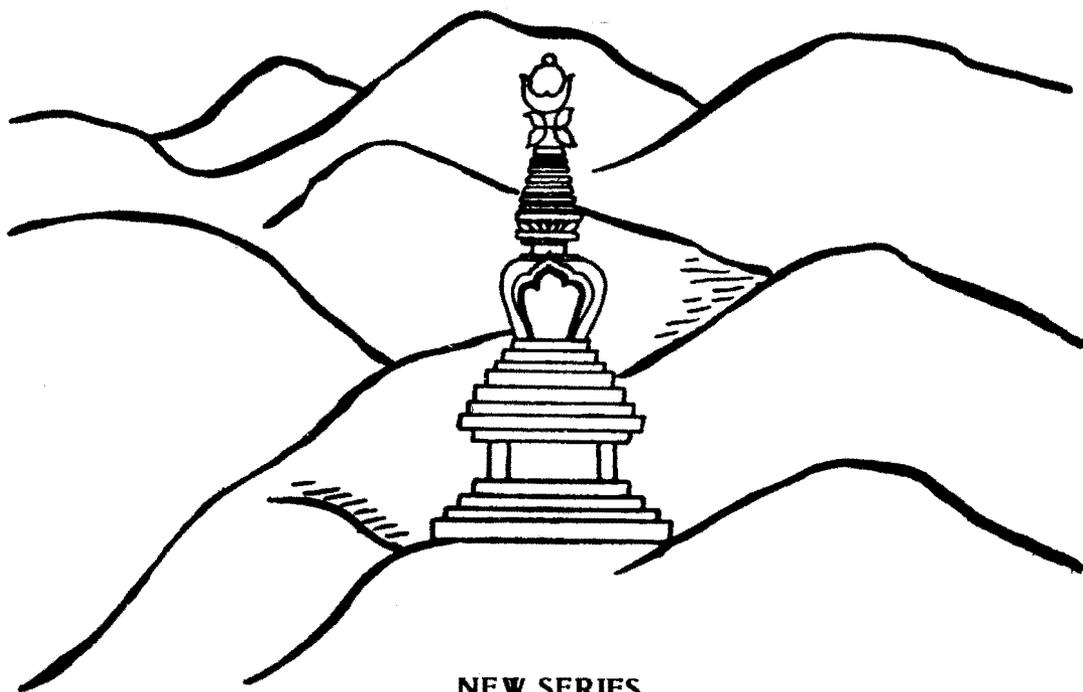
**SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, INDIA**

- The *Bulletin of Tibetology* seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field -

EDITORS

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The Origin of the Tibetan Kingdom

— HUGH RICHARDSON

In the Tunhuang Chronicle there is a list of forty-two kings down to 'U'i-dun-brtan, Glang darma, who died c. 842 A.D. Most are little more than shadows; some are clearly mythical; others legendary; some, perhaps, real persons of whom oral tradition has preserved little but their names; only of the last eleven has history anything definite to say.

The early part of the genealogy is seen by Professor Petech as representing Bon cosmology and the first seven names seem to fall into that category. The list begins with Yab-bla bdag-drug who dwelt above high heaven and had six sons, with one more, Khri'i bdun-tshigs making seven. Although those names might appear to mean Six High Father Lords and the Line of Seven Enthroned Ones, they only account for two persons in the list, and it is a point of little consequence since they are clearly denizens of the outer world. With Nyag-khri btsan-po divinity descends briefly to earth. In the poetic language of the Chronicle "he came like a shower of rain to this sheltered place, as lord of the hidden land, to become ruler of Tibet of the six divisions; after which he went to heaven". In a ninth century inscription from Rkong-po his name appears as Nya-gri and his line is said to have dwelt for seven generations at Phying-ba Stag-rtse which is identified with the ruined castle near the ancient royal burial ground at 'Phyong-rgyas. Later tradition, without any basis in early documents, changes the name to Gnya'-khri and elaborates a legend that he was carried on the necks (*gnya'*) of his new subjects.

According to the Chronicle Nyag-khri was succeeded by five Kings with the syllable *Khri* in their names, of whom it is said that when the son was old enough to ride a horse the father withdrew to heaven, suggesting a ritual - and violent - termination of these early reigns. Later tradition recounts how the kings returned to heaven on a magic rope. Although that myth is not found in surviving early *mss*, that does not necessarily imply that it was not current in the early centuries.

After the seven *Khri* kings, who had special links with heaven, comes a line headed by Dri-gum btsan-po who, although a son of the last heavenly *Khri*, was involved in earthly conflict and death. In an obscure story he challenged one Lo-ngam rta-rdzi who succeeded in neutralizing the magic powers with which Dri-gum was protected and so was able to kill him. The encounter took place at Lo-ngam's capital Myang-ro sham-po. Although there is mention of Dri-gum's protecting deity Lde-bla gung-rgyal - The mountain god 'O-lde gung-rgyal? - being driven in defeat to the snows of Gang Ti-tse it is unlikely that it was so far in the west. Later tradition sees the site as being in the valley of the Nyang - chu near Gyantse; while the pandit Nain Singh of the Indian Survey found a similar story current near the Dangra Yum-mtsho', a lake sacred to the Bon-po; but many indications point to the valley of the Rkong-po Nyang-chu. The two sons of Dri-gum who had been taken into banishment in Rkong-po eventually avenged their father by killing Lo-ngam in his palace of Myang-ro sham-po. According to the Chronicle, the younger Nya-khyi became ruler of Rkong-po while the elder Sha-khyi betook himself to Phying-ba -- that is the capital of the Tibetan Kings. The story is adumbrated in a ninth century inscription from Rkong-po with the difference that Nya-khyi is described as the elder and Sha-khyi, who became Lha-btsan-po, ruler of Tibet, as the younger. That may reflect an earlier tradition about their common ancestry which the Tibetans sought to reverse in order to claim seniority after they had reduced the rulers of Rkong-po to the position of *rgyal phran* - feudatory Princes. A hint of an earlier tradition may also be seen in the Btsun-mo bka'-thang where the mountain on which the legendary founder of the Tibetan royal line descended -- usually held to be in Yar-lung-is described as Rkong-po Lha-ri rgyang-do. That

might be identified with the sacred Lha-ri east of the Artsa lake and pass seen by the Abbes Huc and Gabet and by pandit Nain Singh. The story may be an amalgam of hazy memories from different groups or tribes of people of Tibetan stock from the east coming into conflict with other such immigrants already settled in the country.

In the Chronicle Sha-khyi, Spu-lde gung-rgyal, is succeeded by seven kings with the syllable *leg* or *legs* in their name, followed after one generation by a line of kings whose names mostly included the syllable *lde* -- regarded later as the royal patronymic -- and also *brtsan* which was part of the names of almost all the kings down to U'i-dun-brtan.

Into this seemingly coherent genealogical tree must somehow be fitted a name of prime importance which is not included there. In the inscription on the pillar at the tomb of Khri Lde-srong-brtsan and in that on the Sino-Tibetan treaty pillar at the Lhasa Jo-Khang it is 'O-lde spu-rgyal who appears as the founding ancestor who came from being a god to rule over men. He is similarly described in a document from Tunhuan recording a prayer at the foundation of a temple on the frontier in celebration of the establishment of peace. The Lhasa inscription also quotes a sort of poem, using words like those in the Chronicle about Nyag-khri, describing Tibet as the centre of high mountains, the source of great rivers, a high country, a pure land. From that it might appear that the two were one and the same, and in the Fifteenth century they were so identified by 'Gos Lo-tsa'ba in his Deb Sngon where he quotes the Lhasa treaty inscription as saying that the kings held sway since the divine 'Od-lde spu-rgyal (sic) founded the kingdom; and he goes on to comment that since Gnya-khri btsan-po 'Od-lde (sic) there were forty-two kings.

The use of similar language about different personages -- especially divine beings -- does not necessarily mean that they were identical. Both Gnya-khri btsan-po and Spu-lde gung-rgyal are described as coming like rain upon the earth; and Spu-lde gung-rgyal -- who was also Sha-khyi and Grang-mo gnam gser brtsig -- was eighth in descent from Nya-khyi and clearly not the same person. His divine powers seem, moreover, to have been compro-

mised when his father who had the power to return bodily to heaven, was defeated and killed and his body thrown into the river, while his sons were bound and exiled. But one should not look too critically into the language and doings of mystical divinity; and the Tibetan kings down to Dbu'i - dun-brtan were always referred to as sons of god.

In addition to his appearance in the two royal inscriptions and the prayer, 'O-lde spu-rgyal is mentioned in the Chronicle at the end of a passage enumerating the rival principalities by which Tibet was surrounded. Apart from other lists of principalities, some clearly mythical relating to Kingdoms of gods and demons and princesses skilled in poisons and cures, those in the Chronicle and in Pelliot Tibetan 1290 deal with real places which came to form part of the Tibetan kingdom and whose rulers have an appearance of verisimilitude. Of them it is said that by internal feuding they destroyed one another and in the end were not a match for 'O-lde spu-rgyal. This would seem to bring 'O-lde down virtually to historical times for some of the places named -- e.g. Ngas-po, Klum-ro and Skyi-ro were conquered by Gnam-ri slon btsan. While Dags-po, Nyang-po and Rkong-po were finally subjugated in the time of his son Srong-brtsan sgam-po; and Zhang-zhung not until much later. Perhaps by the ninth century a haze of legend had come to attribute the conquest of the neighbouring principalities to 'O-lde spu-rgyal as a symbol or personification of Spu-rgyal Tibet, much as John Bull stands for Britain and Uncle Sam for the U.S.A., without any exact idea of chronology.

In this context there is a lively contribution from Chinese historians who are known for their habitual and rational recording of events and for their interest in the doings of peoples beyond the frontier who might disturb their peace. In the earlier of two versions of the Tang Annals it is related that the origin of the Tibetans is uncertain but some say they are descended from T'ou-fa Li-lou-kou of the Southern Liang. He had a son, Fanni, who was quite young when his father died in 414 A.D. and, after various misfortunes, fled westward across the Huang-ho and founded an extensive state among the Ch'iang who followed him enthusiastically. He changed his name

to Sou-pou-ye and called his dynasty T'o-pa which became corrupted into T'ou-fan. The later version starts with an ancestor among the Ch'iang who was called Hou-ti pou-sou-ye. It goes on to repeat the alternative story about Fanni; and then records the names of seven successors of the first prince (Hou-ti pou-sou-ye) as follows: Kia-si-tong-mo; T'o-t'ou-tou; Kie-li-che-jo; P'ou-lomg-jo; kiu-so-jo; Louen-tsan-sou; K'i-tsong-long-tsan also called K'i-sou-nong whose clan was Fou-ye. Among these names 'O-lde spu-rgyal, Tho-dosnya-brtsan; Slon-brtsan and Srong-brtsan can be recognized; they and the others, must have been provided by a Tibetan informant about the middle of the tenth century; while the Fanni story seems to have come from Chinese sources.

There is nothing improbable in a Ch'iang tribe accepting the leadership of a dynamic prince from some other people. In the kaleidoscopic pattern of dynasties of short or long duration and of greater or less territorial extent created by the medley of peoples in north China and neighbouring central Asia during the fourth and fifth centuries there was, as Professor W. Eberhard has pointed out, no real national unity and tribes or groups of one people might readily join or be absorbed by another. The Southern Liang, whose territory was in eastern Kansu, were Hsien-pi, a basically Mongol people containing Han and Turkic elements. Before the Southern Liang there had been a powerful kingdom, described by Eberhard as Tibetan, spreading from Tunhuang to Chengtu where they were neighbours and rivals of the Hsien-pi; and it is just when the Tibetan kingdom broke up that Fanni is supposed to have created his kingdom among them. It is noticeable that the names of 'O-lde spu-rgyal's successors in the Tang Annals number only six before Srong-brtsan sgampo who was born c. 610 A.D. That would go back to Khri-thog-brtsan in the Tibetan Chronicle's list and to a possible date around 410-420, the supposed time of Fanni. If it is intended that Houti pou-sou-ye, Fanni, immediately preceded Kia-si-tong-mo that would make him the seventh predecessor of Srong-brtsan sgampo and contemporary or identical with Khri-sgra sbung-brtsan of the Chronicle.

It is noticeable also that Khri-sgra sbung-brtsan is the first king to whom is attributed a queen from a historically recorded clan; and that practice is followed regu-

larly after him. From his time the genealogical tree may have some more substance -- though tenuous -- than what has gone before. Five generations or so is no great stretch of time for oral tradition in a society without written records to preserve a reasonably consistent family memory.

Khri-thog-brtsan's successor Lha-tho-do snya-brtsan has a special place in later literature perhaps because of the syllable "Lha" in his name. It is said that the first trace of Buddhism reached Tibet in his reign when volumes of scripture fell on the roof of his palace but no one was able to read them. He is said also to have lived to the age of one hundred. Recent calculations of his date, shown on the Tibetan coinage, put his birth at the year 173 according to W.D. Shakabpa and at 254 according to Zurkhang Shappe. That is to stretch the longevity of Srong-brtsan's predecessors beyond the bounds of credulity and a more reasonable estimate would be c. 460 A.D.

Nothing in these diverse traditions clarifies the relationship between Nyag-khri btsan-po and 'O-lde spu-rgyal. It emerges only that for the Buddhist Chos-rgyal the divine first ancestor was 'O-lde spu-rgyal while Nyagri btsan-po holds that place for the rulers of Rkong-po -- of whose religious persuasion there is no certainty. A prince of Rkong-po witnessed the edict of Khri Lde-srong-brtsan to maintain the Buddhist faith but that might have been a political as much as a religious act; and in later days Rkong-po together with Dvags-po and Nyang-po had a bad reputation as "poisonous countries" which might imply some religious shortcomings. At last, with the reign of Stag-bu snya-gzigs, Lha-tho-do's great-grandson and Srong-brtsan sgam-po's grandfather, wilder speculations can be left behind and it is possible to trace some history in the legend; and the story as told in the Chronicle is so lively that it is surprising it has made virtually no impact on later histories.

The king, Stag-bu snya-gzigs, third in succession from Lha-tho-do snya-brtsan, had his capital at phying-ba stag-rtse. His neighbour at Nyen-kar rnying-pa was Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bö, prince of Ngas-po in the Skyi Chu and 'Phan-po valleys, who was an arrogant and tyrannical ruler. When one of his ministers -- leaders of great clans

or families — Mnyan 'Dzi-sung Nag-po warned him of the disastrous consequences of such behaviour, he deposed him and ignored his advice. 'Dzi-zung in disgust took refuge with another prince, Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum of 'O-yul whose capital was at Yu-sna of Sngur-ba. With his support 'Dzi-zung killed Stag-skya-bo whose territory of Klum and Yel fell to Khri-pangs-sum. As his reward 'Dzi-zung received the castle of Sngur-ba and lands in the lower part of Klum. Among the subordinate landholders or bondsmen (*bran*) in those estates who became his subjects were two leading members of the Myang clan, Nam-to-re khru-gu and his son Smon-to-re Tseng-sku, who also had formerly been ministers of the defeated Zing-po-rje of Ngas-po. Mnyan 'Dzi-zung's wife, the lady of Pa-tsab, so grievously insulted and humiliated her new subjects that they complained to Khri-pangs-sum, the overlord of Mnyan 'Dzi-zung, but he ignored their complaint. Not long after, one of Khri-pangs-sum's own ministers, Dba's Bshos-to-re Khu-gu was killed in a duel with the prince's Bon-po priest, Gshen Khri-bzher 'dron-kong. Bsho-to-re's elder brother Phangs-to-re Dbyi-tshab, appealed to the prince for blood-money but was rudely rebuffed. He got in touch with Myang Tseng-sku who was equally resentful of the ill treatment he had suffered. The two of them, with Tseng-sku taking the lead, decided to offer their allegiance to Btsan-po spu-rgyal, that is to say Stag-bu snya-gzigs, whom they described in a short allusive song as a son of man who is indeed a son of god, a true lord whom it would be good to serve. They swore an oath of enmity to Zing-po-rje and loyalty to Spu-rgyal-btsan-po. Dba's Dbyi-tshab then recruited into the conspiracy his uncle Bzang-to-re of Mnon and when the uncle died his son took his place. Myang Tseng-sku similarly took into his confidence Nag-seng of Tshes-pong, a follower of Stag-bu snya-gzigs, who became the go-between through whom Myang and Dba's Communicated their purpose to the king. Stag-bu snya-gzigs was at first hesitant to take part in the feud because his sister was married to Zing-po-rje; also his wife appears to have been a kinswoman of Zing-po-rje for her name was Stong-cung 'bro-ga of 'Ol-god ('Ol = 'O-yul?), but he agreed to go along with them.

The conspirators made their way secretly to Phying-ba to take an oath of loyalty to Stag-bu snya-gzigs in

person. Their movements aroused suspicion among the men of Yar who attempted to seize them; and before action could be taken against Zing-po-rje, Stag-bu snya-gzigs was dead. The brief mention in the Chronicle discloses none of the circumstances but Professor Geza Uray in an important article in *Acta Hungarica* 1972 cites Pelliot Tibetain 1144, an unpublished fragment, in which a few scattered words tell that the King Stag-bu was captured by 'Ol-god, Lord of Yar-'brog and was handed over to Klu-dur, king of Lho-brag, who imprisoned him. There is also a fragmentary mention of his wife.

A more detailed account of the fate of Stag-bu snya-gzigs is found in the *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi byung gnas*, showing that Bon histories often have some special acquaintance with early traditions. It is related how Stag-gu gnyanzig (sic) subdued the twelve *rgyal phran*-feudatory principalities, and then made war on Phan-ra-rje, king of Lho-brag but was defeated and imprisoned. Stag-gu gnyanzig's Bon-po priest, the Sku-gshen Khri-ne-khod rescued him by his magical powers. In gratitude the King made over the kingdom to him. This is a rather different version from that of the Chronicle. It implies that Stag-bu gnyanzig was the aggressor whereas the Chronicle says he died before action could be taken against Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum -- Phan-ra-rje in the Bon story is clearly a variant of that name. The implication of 'Ol-god of Yar-'brog suggests that the conspiracy which the men of Yar appear to have detected gave an excuse for their ruler 'Ol-god, who was a vassal of Khri-pangs-sum, to take action against Stag-bu snya-gzig on behalf of his lord. Yar and Yar-'brog do not necessarily imply the country round the Yar-'brog Mtsho but may just as well be the upland grazing lands near the Gri-gu mtsho at the head of the Yar-lung valley. There is no mention in the Chronicle of Lho-brag or Klu-dur but it appears from its brief comment that Stag-bu snya-gzigs did not survive whatever incident may have occurred.

An obscure tail-piece in the Chronicle story after referring to the death of Stag-bu-snya-gzigs seems to suggest that the conspiracy was somehow disclosed by one Spug Gyim-tang rmang-bu, a follower of Tshes-pong Nag-seng the man who acted as go-between to the king. Spug Gyim-

tang at first would not share his bed with his wife for fear of betraying the plot in his sleep; but after wandering nightly in the hills he eventually returned to sleep with her. For some reason they quarrelled and he bit out her tongue so that she died. He also died without issue before an attack was made on Zing-po-rje. Other members of the clan, however, continued to be active in Tibetan affairs and one Spug Gyim-rtsang rma-chung was sent in 653 to govern Zhang Zhung.

The conspirators evidently came out of the affair unscathed. They added three more to their number, and undeterred by the death of Stag-bu snya-gzigs, took an oath of allegiance to his two sons, Slon-mtshan and Slon-kol. This seems to have been done at the request of the princes, who had the duty of avenging their father. The words of the oath are recorded at some length in archaic language passed down, perhaps, in the family tradition of the noble ministers who swore it. A number of other members of the Myang, Tshes-pong and Dba's clans also joined in the oath.

Why, it may be asked, were they so ready to give their loyalty to Stag-bu snya-gzigs and later to his two young sons. Their domain seems to have been quite small and was threatened on the north by more powerful rulers in Ngaspo and 'O-yul and on the south from Yar-'brog. The answer must lie in the name Spu-rgyal which has an aura of special sacral and mystic qualities. It was to *btsan-po* Spu-rgyal that loyalty was pledged, not to any king or prince by name. For Myang and Dba's, Btsan-po Spu-rgyal though a man was also a son of god. One of his ancestors Tho-do snya-brtsan had the name "Lha". The Rkong-po inscription relates how one of Dri-gum btsan-po's two sons became Lha Btsan-po, the divine *btsan-po*, and went to rule at Phying-ba stag-rtse; and even when the influence of Buddhism was well established, the kings, with the title of Lha sras or Lha btsan-po, harked back in their inscriptions to their descent from 'O-lde spu-rgyal. The essence of that sacral quality is nowhere spelled out; but, if *spu-rgyal* means "hairy king" it might point to the monkey ancestor revered in the primitive beliefs of the Ch'iang people in their ancestral home on the north-west borders of China, a myth later to be adopted rather laboriously into the hagiology of Tibetan Budd-

hism. But whatever its source, it was that sanctity that held together in fealty a kingdom depending greatly on ministers from different parts of the kingdom, often rivals of one another and sometimes more powerful than the *btsan-po* himself.

After the oath-taking a plan of campaign was made and Slon-mtshan set out at the head of an army of ten thousand men while his younger brother stayed with the queen-mother. The princes were quite young and the phrase *zhabs kyis gtsuqs* describing the start of Slon-mtshan's expedition may imply that this was the first venture of his majority. Similar expressions used of a child's first steps and a young man setting up an independent household for the first time; and it is applied also later to Srong-brtsan sgam-po's first military expedition.

The campaign against Zing-po-rje, here described as Dgu-gri a title probably annexed from Dgu-gri Zing-po-rje of Ngas-po whom he had conquered, is recorded very briefly. Its climax was the capture of the castle of Yunsna by damming a river in Klum so that the defence works were flooded. Zing-po-rje was in this way destroyed. His territory as far as Bre-sna in Rkong-po (West of the Nyang-chu) was annexed by the *btsan-po* who proclaimed that the country of Ngas-po should be known as 'Phanyal. His ministers and subjects greeted him by the title of Btsan-po; he took the name Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan and he rewarded suitably all those ministers who had delivered Zing-po-rje's domains into his hands. Myang Tseng-sku received the castle of Sngur-ba which had belonged to 'Dzi-zung who had insulted him; Dba's Dbyi-tshab got those of the Gshen who had killed his brother; all received numbers of bondsmen (*bran*). Myang, Dba's, Mnon, and Tshes-pong became Councillors of the king.

The authority of the *btsan-po* and his ministers at this time was established in a comparatively small stretch of country in the valleys of the Skyi-chu and the Gtsang-po from Yar-lung and 'on to the borders of Rkong-po. But the rising star of Btsan-po Spu-rgyal soon attracted adherents from further afield.

Outstanding among these was Khyung-po Spung-sad Zutse, a vigorous, ambitious, arrogant and unscrupulous figure

who was active in Tibetan affairs for many years. He comes on the scene in the reign of Slon-mtshan, claiming to have shown his allegiance by decapitating Mar-mun, ruler of Rtsang-bod and giving twenty thousand households to the *btsan-po* who forthwith returned them to him as a reward. The location of Rtsang-bod is debatable but it might be north of the Gtsang-po around and north-west of Shangs and Shigatse. The prompt return of the subjects suggests that it was not seen at that time as suitable for direct rule.

The next show of loyalty by Zu-tse was in denouncing the minister Mong Sngon-po as guilty of treachery and encompassing his death. Mong is shown in a list of ministers in an earlier section of the Chronicle as having had some connection with the fall of Mar-mun; but he does not appear to have taken any part in the confederacy to support Stag-bu snya-gzigs or Slon-Mtshan. It's, however, claimed for Zu-tse, as another proof of loyalty, that he somehow supported the campaign against Zing-po-rje. This seems out of chronological order for the campaign took place before the supremacy of Slon-mtshan as established while, in the Mar-mun incident he is described as *btsan-po*. If there is anything in the claim it may mean only that Zu-tse approved of what had been done.

He next appears in the record when a campaign was being planned against Dags-po which is described as having rebelled — perhaps it was part of Zing-po-rje's territory which had been taken over by Slon-mtshan. When one Seng-go myi-chen volunteered to undertake the task Zu-tse insulted and humiliated him. Seng-go was, nonetheless, successful. Then Myang Zhang-s nang the son of Myang Tseng-sku was appointed to the royal service and a banquet was held at which Spung-sad Zu-tse vaunted his own achievements. He dwells on his conquest of Rtsang-bod and his suppression of Mong Sngon-po. He does not mention Zing-po-rje; but Myang Zhang-s nang, having been urged to reply, praised the great deeds of his father and Dba's Phangs-to-re in the defeat of Zing-po-rje. That throws doubt on the claim that Zu-tse was involved in that affair; and the proud reply by Zhang-s nang and his promotion to high office seems to have aroused enmity and envy on the part of Zu-tse.

In the list of ministers one Mgar Khri-sgra 'dzi-rmun is shown as succeeding Mong Sngon - po before Myang Zhang-snang was appointed Chief Minister with the title Mang-po-rje. Myang became an all-powerful figure after the death of Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan, while Srong-brtsan was too young to take effective action, and suppressed a widespread rebellion that followed Gnam-ri's death. Some time after that Spung-sad Zu-tse falsely accused him of disloyalty and brought about his dismissal and execution.

Myang Mang-po-rje Zhang-snang is said to have been succeeded by another minister of the Mgar clan who also fell under an accusation and committed suicide. Spung-sad Zu-tse then became Chief Minister, a post he had probably coveted for some time. In it he won a great reputation for wisdom and boldness; and he conquered all the northern Zgang-shung for the *btsan-po*. He was succeeded by Mgar Stong-rtsan Yul-zung. There is no information about when or why this took place; but in the end Zu-tse fell victim to the same accusations and suffered the same fate which, in that world of intrigue and rivalry, he had brought on others. In his retirement in old age he is said to have invited Khri Srong-brtsan to his palace with treacherous intent and that this was detected by Mgar Yul-zung whereupon Zu-tse committed suicide. But much was to happen before that.

According to a damaged passage at the beginning of the Annals, some time after the fall of Myang Mang-po-rje Zhang-snang the *btsan-po* set out on an expedition against the 'A-zha (Tu-yu-hun) and China. The Chronicle puts that event before the fall of Myang but it might be expected that the evidence of the Annals is the more acceptable.

Although the haphazard arrangement of the Chronicle, as we have it, leaves much to be conjectured, an incident recorded there may well be placed soon after the fall of Myang. In his old age Dba's Phangs-to-re Dbyi-tshab, who had been a partner of Myang Mang-po-rje's father in allegiance to Stag-bu snya-gzigs and in establishing Khri Slon-mtshan as *btsan-po*, besought and was granted a visit at his own house from Khri Srong-brtsan in order that he and his family could take an oath of loyalty to the

btsan-po in person. Perhaps the Dba's had been suspected of sympathising with their former colleagues the Myang, and Phangs-to-re was eager to dispel that idea by openly condemning the disloyalty of Myang Mang-po-rje Zhang-snang. The *btsan-po* himself first took an oath, praising the loyalty of the Dba's and vowing to protect them and their estates so long as they remained in fealty. He promised also to build a tomb for the Dbyi-tshab and to sacrifice a hundred horses there; and he sang one of those allusive songs which enrich and enliven the Chronicle. Dba's Dbyi-tshab replied in kind. Then he and his six sons took the oath of loyalty on a white stone which the *btsan-po* afterwards set up as the foundation of the tomb to be built for the Dbyi-tshab. The impressive words of the King's vow and that of the Dba's are recorded at length in archaic language which must have been transmitted in the Dba's family from generation to generation together with the insignia of the golden letter bestowed upon them.

Although in neither the Chronicle nor the Annals is there a clear sequence of chronology for these events, a fixed point is provided by the invaluable Chinese historians. Already in the period 581-600 of the Sui dynasty there was some knowledge of a Tibetan ruler Luntsan Solung-tsan, who must have been Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan, with an army of 100,000 men and a kingdom extending to the borders of India but it is the Tang Annals in which the first firm date is found when they record the arrival in 634 of the first mission from Tibet. The Chinese responded with a return mission in the wake of which the Tibetans sent another. They had heard that the Turks and the Tu-yu-hun had been given princesses in marriage to their rulers and they requested one for their *btsan-po*. When this was refused the *btsan-po* set out on a punitive expedition against the Tu-yu-hun ('A-zha), as recorded in the Tibetan Chronicle, whom they held responsible for the refusal. Having defeated and scattered them he besieged the Chinese border town Sung chou and renewed the demand for a princess in threatening terms. He defeated one Chinese force sent against him but when a larger army arrived he withdrew with some losses. The Chinese, nevertheless, realizing that they had underrated the Tibetans and had a new power to face, granted a princess. In 641 Mgar Stong-rtsan was sent with lavish presents to receive her

and escort her to Tibet. That momentous event is recorded also in the Tibetan Annals and forms virtually the starting point for a continuous Tibetan history.

Before that another remarkable but otherwise unknown incident is related in a damaged passage in the Annals. There was enmity between the *btsan-po*, the elder brother Srong-rtsan and the younger brother Btsan-srong. As the result of treachery by a servant Btsan-srong died by burning.

Although no precise dates are given in the Annals after the arrival of the Chinese princess until the dog year, 650 A.D. from when events are recorded annually, it is said that after three years Lig Snya-shur was destroyed and all the Zhang-zhung were brought under subjection. There may be some question whether this event c. 644 relates to Spung-sad Zu-tse's claim to have conquered all the northern Zhang-zhung. The name of the Zhang-zhung ruler said to have been conquered by Zu-tse, according to a divination document from Tunhuang-Pelliot Tibetan 1047 - is Lig Myi-rhya. And it is victory over Lig Myi-rhya that is celebrated in the Chronicle as the achievement of Khri Srong-brtsan and his minister Stong-rtsan in another of those splendid exchanges of song. The relation between Lig Myi-rhya and Lig Snya-shur is not clear. The latter appears in several of the lists of principalities and according to F.W. Thomas it figures also in Bon writing. If the conquest of Zhang-zhung in 644 was effected by Spung-sad Zu-tse it would mean that his career in Tibetan affairs extended for almost half a century.

Sadly there is nothing in the Annals about the achievements of the last six years of Srong-brtsan's life; it is said only that he lived with the Chinese princess for three years. She survived Srong-brtsan by twenty-two years. That suggests that she was very young when she came to Tibet and dispels the aura attached to her name as the founder of the Jo-khang. A little more can be gleaned from the eulogy in the Chronicle which relates in general terms that he was responsible for organising the internal administration of the state, agricultural systems, the laws etc, and for introducing texts of the religious law. Inscriptions of his successors also attribute to him the

foundation of the Jo-khang. But it is to the Tang Annals that one must turn for factual information. There it is recorded that in 646 Srong-brtsan sent Mgar Stong rtsan (Lutungtsan) to congratulate the Emperor on his victory over Korea with a flowery message and the present of a jar, in the shape of a goose, made of solid gold, seven feet high. In 648 when a Chinese envoy was plundered in India Srong brtsan sent an army to chastise the offending Indian leader; and the evidence that the two Chinese emperors with whom he was contemporary -- Tai Tsung and Kao - tsung - treated him with admiration and respect as a powerful and independent ruler and ally enhances the unquestioned greatness of Srong-brtsan Sgam-po as the real founder of a great Tibetan Kingdom.

ཧྲོ་རྒྱལ་མཚོག་གཞིས།

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**Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's
Bstod pa brgyad cu pa
in Its Extant Version**

Transliterated by
HELMUT EIMER (Bonn)

Of the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* by Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba¹ there appears to exist only one complete version contained in the *Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsung gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod*², a collection of smaller works belonging to the Bka' gdams school. If we consider the special position of this hymn of praise within the biographical tradition concerning Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (A.D. 982-1054)³, it is remarkable that most probably no other complete version is found anywhere.

The accessible blockprint of the *Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsung gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod* seems to

¹ The *Deb ther sngon po* (see G. N. ROERICH, *The Blue Annals*. Calcutta 1949-1953, I, 247,23-24) dates his birth to the year *lcags mo phag* (A.D. 1011). Most probably he lived till the end of the XIth century, see H. EIMER, *Berichte über das Leben des Atiśa* (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna). Wiesbaden 1977, pp. 291-292 (para 7.2.9.2.).

² This xylograph was in the library of the late Khri byang Rin po che, Loden Sherap Dayyab Rinpoche prepared a microfilm of it. I would like to express my sincere thanks for the permission to use this copy from the personal library of L. S. Dayyab Rinpoche. The *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* covers in this edition the leaves 15b2 to 20a5.

³ For an investigation of the role played by the early hymns of praise within the tradition concerning Atiśa see H. Eimer, *Berichte*, pp. 300-325 (paras 8. to 8.3.2.3.).

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

come from Central Tibet⁴. Its colophon does not indicate the place of issue, but it names⁵ 'Jam dbyangs Mkhjen brtse dbang po (A.D. 1820-1892) as having owned one of the manuscript copies before the book was printed. By this a *terminus post quem* is given, i.e. the xylograph cannot have been prepared before the middle of the XIXth century.

In the extant version of the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* a brief gloss is given after line 29. It says that the preceding lines, i.e. lines 1 to 29, are regarded by Bsod nams lha'i dbang po and Las chen (Kun dga' rgyal mtshan) as having been adopted from the *Jo bo'i rigs phun sum tshogs par bstod pa*⁶ composed by Sa'i sñing po, an Indian pandit who accompanied Atiśa to Tibet⁷. This gloss cannot have been inserted into the text before the beginning of the XVth century, because Bsod nams lha'i dbang po finished his *Bka' gdams rin po che'i chos 'byung rnam thar nyin mor byed pa'i 'od stong*⁸ (short title: *Bka' gdams chos 'byung rnam thar*) in A.D. 1484 and Kun dga' rgyal mtshan finalized his *Bka' gdams kyi rnam par thar pa bka' gdams chos*

⁴ The book comprises 297 folios (1b and 2a three lines, 2b and 3a five lines, other pages six lines), the marginal legend up to fol. 12a is *bang mdzod*. The actual size is not known to us. The *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* covers folios 15b1 to 20a5.

⁵ On fol. 295b6.

⁶ This title of the present hymn of praise is not recorded elsewhere, in the *Jo bo rje dpal ldan mar me mdzad ye shes kyi rnam thar rgyas pa* (fol. 22b1) the reference runs as follows: ... *pañdi ta sa'i sñing pos rang gi bla ma longs spyod phun sum tshogs pa'i sgo nas bstod pa ...*

⁷ For references within the biographical tradition concerning Atiśa see H. Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa. Materialien zu einer Biographie des Atiśa* (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna). Wiesbaden 1979, part 1, p. 359 (s.v. Pañdi ta Sa'i sñin po) and p. 407 (s.v. Sa'i sñin po).

⁸ Manuscript in the library of the late Burmiok Athing, Gangtok (Sikkim), reprinted in Gonpo TSETEN, *Two Histories of the Bka'-gdams-pa Tradition*. Gangtok 1977.

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

'byung gsal ba'i sgron me⁹ (short title: *Bka' gdams chos 'byung sgron me*) ten years later.

It could well be that the extant *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* was not copied from a full version of that hymn of praise handed down by tradition¹⁰. We may assume that it was compiled out of those lines which appear as quotations from the original version in other more recent works. Thus, for instance, more than 300 lines appearing in the extant version of the said hymn of praise have been found quoted in the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung sgron me* by Kun dga' rgyal mtshan.

The present communication is meant to make the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* as given by the *Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsung gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod* available for further¹¹ studies¹². For the sake of precise reference, in the

⁹ Xylograph comprising 417 folios in the personal library of Loden Sherap Daggyab Rinpoche; a reprinted edition was prepared by B. Jamyang NORBU, *Bka' gdams kyi rnam par thar pa Bka' gdams chos 'byun' gsal ba'i sgron me*. A detailed account of the spread of the Kadampa sect in Tibet. Reproduced from a Khampa dbu-med ms. New Delhi 1972.

¹⁰ The reasons for this assumption are given by H. EIMER, "The Hymn of praise in Eighty Verses. The Earliest Literary Source for the Life of Atiśa". in: *Jagajjyoti* Sept. 1982 to Jan. 1983, Combined Number and Special Number on Atiśa Dipankar Srijnan (= *Atiśa Dipankar Millennium Birth Commemoration Volume*), pp.1-8, especially p. 1.

¹¹ G. S. CYBIKOV, *Lam-rim čen-po (Stepeni puti k bla-ženstvy)*. Sočinenie Czochapy v mongol'skom i russkom perevodach. Vypusk II. Russkij perevod s predisloviem i primečanijami. Vladivostok 1913 (Izvestija Vostočnago Instituta, 12-j god izdanija. 1910-1911 Akademičeskij god, tom XXXVIII), pp 4-10, presents a Russian rendering of the verses from the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* quoted in the Mongol version of Tsongkhapa's *Lam rim chen mo*. Some verses have been rendered into English by G. N. ROE-RICH, *Blue Annals*, I, in the notes to pp. 241 and 243. About ninety lines have been translated into English by H. EIMER,

transliteration the single lines, not the stanzas, are numbered. The glosses and the colophon are given in italics. References to folio, page and line of the xylograph appear enclosed in parentheses. A survey of which lines are quoted in some important works going back to an early tradition is added by way of appendix.



Atiśa (Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna)
Blockprint of the *Brgyad stong pa*, Lhasa,
about A.D. 1950

"The Hymn of Praise in Eighty Verses", pp. 3-7.

¹² For analytical studies see H. EIMER, "The Hymn of Praise in Eighty Verses", pp. 1-2, and H. EIMER, *Berichte über das Leben des Atiśa* (Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna), pp. 138-145 and 305-325.

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

Jo bo rje'i bstod pa brgyad cu pa
Nag (15b2) tsho lo tsā bas mdzad pa ni l

- na mo gu ru ma nydzu gho s̄a ya l

l shar phyogs za hor yul mchog na l	001
l de na grong khyer chen po yod l	
l bi kra ma ni pu ra yin l	
l de yi dbus na rgyal po'i khab l	
l pho brang shin tu yangs pa yod l	005
l gser gyi rgyal mtshan can (3) zhes bya l	
l longs spyod mnga' thang 'byor pa ni l	
l rgya nag stong khun rgyal po 'dra l	
<i>stong khun ni rgya nag skad de shar rgyal po zer l</i>	
l khyim ni 'bum phrag nyi shu bdun l	
l yul de'i rgyal po dge ba'i dpal l	010
l btsun mo dpal mo'i 'od zer can l	
l yab yum gnyis (4) la sras gsum mnga' l	
l pa dma'i snying dang zla ba'i snying l	
l dpal gyi snying po zhes bya 'o l	
l rgyal bu pa dma'i snying po la l	015
l btsun mo lnga yod sras ni dgu l	
l sras kyī thu bo bsod nams dpal l	
l da lta'i dus na mkhas pa che l	
l dha na shri zhes bya bar grags l	
l (5) 'bring po zla ba'i snying po ni l	020
l da lta bla ma rje btsun yin l	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

l chung ba dpal gyi snying po ni l
l dge slong bi rya tsa ndra yin l
l de lta bu yi bham ga la'i l
l rgyal srid spangs nas thar par gshegs l 025
*'di yan jo bo'i rigs phun sum tshogs par bstod pa pa ṅḍi ta sa'i
snying pos mdzad (6) par bsod nams lha'i dbang po dang las
chen gnyis gsungs l*
l khyod ni yon tan kun gyi 'byung gnas te l
l yon tan rgya mtsho ltar zab thugs rje can l
l mkhas pa chen po khyod kyi yon tan las l
l don dang ldan par bdag gis bstod par bgyi l
l (16a) rig pa'i gnas lnga dag gi mkhyen pa rgyas l 030
l bdag dang gzhan gyi mnyam pa nyid du mdzad l
l yab ni bdag gzhan brje bar mdzad pa yi l
l dpal ldan mar me mdzad la phyag 'tshal lo l
l rang don yal bar (2) dor nas gzhan gyi don l
l lhur mdzad de ni bdag gi bla ma lags l 035
l dngos sam brgyud pas gzhan don rtag tu mdzad l
l bla ma snying rje can la phyag 'tshal lo l
l khyod ni nyan thos theg pa'i sgor zhugs nas l
l tshul khrims g.yag (3) rnga bzhin du bsrung mdzad pa'i l
l tshangs spyod dpal dang ldan pa'i dge slong mchog 040
l gnas brtan 'dul ba 'dzin la phyag 'tshal lo l
l khyod ni pha rol phyin pa'i sgor zhugs nas l
l lhag pa'i bsam pa rnam par dag pa yi l
l byang chub (4) sems kyis 'gro rnams ml gtong ba'i l
l blo ldan snying rje can la phyag 'tshal lo l 045
l khyod ni gsang sngags theg pa'i sgor zhugs nas l
l rang lhar gzigs shing rdo rje'i thugs dang ldan l
l rnal 'byor dbang phyug a va dhū ti pa l

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

sbas (5) pa'i brtul zhugs 'dzin la phyag 'tshal lo	
rigs kyi nang nas mchog gyur pa	050
khyod ni rgyal po'i rigs su 'khrungs	
dregs pas myos pa thams cad kyang	
zhabs kyi pa dmor spyi bos gtugs	
'khor ba'i skyon dang mtshang (6) gzigs pas	
bha ngga la yi rgyal srid de	055
mchil ma'i thal ba bzhin bor nas	
sangs rgyas bstan pa rgyas par mdzad	
o ta nta yi pu ri na	
rab byung b'ya phrag phyed dang gsum	
bi kra ma ni shi la na	060
rab byung brgya phrag ma longs (16b) tsam	
rtsa ba'i sde bzhi tshang bar zhugs	
sde pa'i khengs dregs khyod mi mdzad	
ma ga dha yi yul gyi ni	
gnas gzhi ma lus thams cad kyi	065
ston pa'i 'khor ni bzhi po yi	
kun gyi gtsug gi nor bur gyur	
khyod ni sde pa bco brgyad (2) kyi	
kun gyi spyi la bzhugs pas na	
thams cad kyis ni lung yang len	070
khyod kyis 'jig rten chos brgyad po	
thams cad khyad du bsad nas ni	
gzhan dag ji ltar mos pa yi	
sems dang bstun pa'i spyod pa mdzad	
gzhan (3) dag dad par mi 'gyur zhing	075
mi rnams sems dang 'gal gyur pa	
gshe zhing skur ba 'debs la sogs	
gzhan gyi sdig rkyen khyod mi mdzad	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

nam yang gzhan dag mi dad pa	
dug dang 'dra bar spong bar mdzad	080
slob ma ji ltar (4) 'dod pa yi	
chos kyi gdams ngag gsungs par mdzad	
'jig rten mi rnams thams cad kyis	
brnyas shing skur ba 'debs pa dang	
phrag dog rngan can byed na yang	085
gnyen po bsten nas phylr la 'gyes	
khyod kyi sku lus (5) mthong ba na	
thams cad mthun par shin tu mos	
sku mdangs 'jam zhing gsal ba dang	
dang po tha ma'i mig chags 'gyur	090
rnam par 'tsho ba spangs pa yis	
khyod kyi sku la snyun mi mnga'	
bsod nams tshogs ni bsags (6) pa yis	
zhal mthong tsam gyis dad pa byed	
khyod ni spyod lam thams cad du	095
chos dang mthun par mdzad pa yis	
'jig rten kha na ma tho ba	
grags pa ngan pas khyod mi gos	
tshul khrims rnam par dag gyur pas	
skyob pa (17a) shā kya se ngge yi	100
zab pa dang ni rgya che ba'i	
bstan pa khyod kyi thugs la gnas	
sangs rgyas bstan pa rin po che	
bskur dang 'dzin dang skyong ba yi	
'dren pa khyod ni 'das pa na	105
bstan pa rol du nub dang (2) 'dra	
mtho dang dma' dang mnyam pa la	
phrag dog rngan can 'gran mi mnga'	

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

de ltar khyod ni thams cad kyls	
gtso bo bzhin du bkur ba yin	110
lo na nyi shu rtsa gcig na	
sgyu rtsal drug cu rtsa bzhi dang	
bzo yi gnas na thams (3) cad dang	
legs par sbyar ba'i skad dang ni	
sgra yi bstan bcos thams cad dang	115
tshad ma kun la mkhas pa lags	
bla ma bzang po mang bsten pas	
khyod ni thos pa'i rgyan gyi brgyan	
theg pa gsum dang sde snod gsum	
khyod ni mkhas (4) pa chen po yin	120
khyod ni mkhas pa mang po yi	
brda la bdar ba'i skyes bu yin	
bdag dang gzhan gyi rgol ba ni	
kun kyang tshar bcad phan par mdzad	
sangs rgyas ye shes zhal snga yi	125
slob ma brgyud pa'i brgyud du 'khrungs	
khyod kyl (5) mkhan po sbyor lam pa	
yin par kun la grags pa lags	
rtag tu bsten pa'i bla ma ni	
sha nti pa dang gser gling pa	130
bha dra bo dhi dznyā na shri	
dngos grub thob pa mang po dang	
khyad par du yang klu sgrub nas	
gcig nas gcig tu brgyud pa (6) yi	
zab pa dang ni rgya che ba'i	135
gdams pa khyod la mnga' ba yin	
khyod ni sangs rgyas thams cad kyi	
byin rlabs thugs la skye ba yin	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

khyod ni bslab pa gsum ldan pas	
'chal ba'i tshul khrims bsal ba yin	140
tshul (17b) khrims dri ngad ldan pas na	
ring na gnas pa rnams kyang 'du	
kha na ma tho phra rab la 'ang	
thugs ni shin tu 'jigs par mdzad	
dran dang shes bzhin ldan pa yis	145
tshul bzhin ma yin yid mi mdzad	
bag yod dran dang g.yo sgyu (2) med	
ltung ba'i nyes pas khyod ma gos	
'di la mi sbyin 'di la sbyin	
'di la mi 'bul 'di la 'bul	150
thugs ni kun la snyoms gyur pas	
gang la'ang bye brag dbyer mi mdzad	
dkon mchog gsum dang thugs dam lha	
bla ma rnams (3) dang 'gro ba lnga	
'di drug nga yi lha dang ni	155
jo bo yin zhes rtag tu gsungs	
khyod ni stong nyid rnal 'byor pa	
rtag tu chos sku'i ngang la gnas	
gzugs sku nyid kyī thugs dam lha	
thun mtshams rnal 'byor yengs mi mdzad	160
dpal (4) ldan dgyes pa'i rdo rje dang	
dam tshig bkod pa'i rgyal po dang	
dpa' bo 'jig rten dbang phyug dang	
jo mo rje btsun sgrol ma sogs	
zhal gzigs gnang ba thob pas na	165
rmi lam na 'am mngon sum du	
zab pa dang ni rgya che ba'i	
dam (5) chos rtag tu gsan pa lags	

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

gsang sngags theg pa'i gzhung ltar na	
bskyed pa'i rim pa brtan par nges	170
pha rol phyin pa'i gzhung ltar na	
sbyor ba'i lam pa yin par gsal	
rang lhar byin gyis briabs so zhes	
grags pa snyan (6) pas phyogs bcur khyab	
khyod ni gsang sngags rnal 'byor pa	175
dri med rdo rje thugs dang ldan	
khyod sngon so ma pu ri na	
rtog ge 'bar ba gsungs pa'i tshe	
da ni lo ni nyi shu na	
tshe yi 'du byed gtong 'gyur gsung	180
de nas lo ni (18a) lon pa na	
bod du 'byon pa'i dus su ni	
bi kra ma ia shī lar ni	
da ni lo ni bco brgyad na	
tshe yi 'du byed btang nas ni	185
lus 'di bod du 'jog go gsung	
ji skad gsungs bzhin ma 'khrul par	
byung ba de ni ngo mtshar (2) che	
khyod kyi rnam smin sku lus de	
bod kyi yul du bzhag nas su	190
smon lam gyis ni sku lus de	
byams pa'i spyang sngar dga' ldan du	
'khrungs par sgrol mas lung bstan gsungs	
nam mkha' dri med ces bya ba'i	
lha yi bur ni 'khrungs (3) par 'gyur	195
zab pa dang ni rgya che ba'i	
chos ni byams pa'i mgon las gsan	
des na khyod ni 'dzam gling gi	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

rgyar du gyur pa chen po yin	
snyan par grags shing 'gran zla med	200
mkhas pa rnams kyi bla mar 'os	
dpal ldan rdo rje sems (4) dpa' yis	
gsungs pa'i gsang sngags rgyud sde bzhi	
rim pa gnyis pa'i man ngag ni	
mkhas pa mang po'i brgyud pa mnga'	206
gsang sngags phyi nang rgyud sde dang	
mkhas pa mang pos mdzad pa'i gzhung	
zgigs dang gsan dang bshad (5) pa yis	
gzhung la shin tu goms par mdzad	
khyod kyis slob ma'i tshogs la ni	210
gdams ngag rtsa bar gsungs pa ni	
bsags pa'i yo byad thams cad ni	
'khor ba'i rgyur ni ma btang gsungs	
gzhan gyis brnyas thabs byas pa (6) dang	
glo bur nyon mongs skyes pa dang	215
gzhan dang rtsod pa byung nas yang	
gnyen pos myur du zlog cig gsungs	
sngon gyi sbyin pa'i 'bras bu yis	
gzhan gyis bsags pa khyod la 'bul	
yo byad mnga' ba thams cad kyang	220
longs (18b) spyod bsrung phyir chud mi gzon	
dge ba mdzad pa thams cad kyang	
'khor ba'i rgyu ni spang ba'i phyir	
'khor gsum yongs su dag pa dang	
stong pas ma zin gang yang med	225
dge ba'i bshes gnyen dang bral zhing	
theg chen mdo sde ma thos (2) pas	
snying rje las byung byang chub sems	

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

spangs nas gsang sngags 'ba' zhig spyod	
gnod sbyin lag na rdo rje dang	230
srin po sha za sogs par skye	
khyod kyi shes rab thugs rje yis	
shing rta chen po'i lam du btsud	
rgyud kyi dgongs (3) pa mi shes par	
sgra bzhin 'jug pa'i sngags pa kun	235
log pa'i lam du zhugs gzigs nas	
khyod kyis yang dag lam du btsud	
lta ba mi mthun sna tshogs pa	
sngon gyi slob dpon rjes 'brangs nas	
so sor mi mthun rtsod pa kun	240
(4) khyod kyis lung dang rig pas bkrol	
khyod ni sangs rgyas bstan pa yi	
kha 'byed nyi ma'i 'od zer yin	
phyin ci log gi lta 'dzin pa	
khyod kyis yang dag bstan la btsud	245
byang chub chen po'i pho brang du	
thams cad 'dus shing 'tshogs (5) pa na	
rang dang gzhan gyi sde pa yi	
grub mtha' ngan pa'i rgol ba kun	
seng ge nga ro'i sgra skad kyis	250
thams cad kyi ni klad pa 'gems	
chos kyi dbyings na rtag bzhugs pas	
ye shes tshogs ni rdzogs par mdzad	
theg chen mdo sde (6) las gsungs pa'i	
thabs kyis bsod nams tshogs bsags mdzad	255
khyad par can gyi bsod nams tshogs	
myur du rdzogs par mdzad pa'i phyir	
gsang sngags rgyud sde thabs kyis ni	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

'bad pa med par rdzogs par mdzad	
khyod (19a) ni mthong dang thos pa dang	260
reg par gyur pa thams cad kyis	
dad cing bsnyen bkur byed la brtson	
khyod 'dra 'dzam bu gling na dkon	
khyod ni sku na bgres na yang	
lhag pa'i bsam pa rnam dag pas	265
(2) gzhan don gtso bor mdzad pa'i phyir	
lo zla shul yang bgrod par mdzad	
sems can sdug bsngal can gzigs na	
thugs kyis mi bzod spyang chab byung	
snying rjes thugs ni gdungs pa khyod	270
rtag tu gzhan don 'ba' zhig mdzad	
(3) des na khyod la thams cad kyis	
bsnyen bkur chen po bya bar rigs	
gang zag dam pa khyod lta bu	
yul phyogs gang na'ang yod ma yin	275
rgyal po nai rya pha la dang	
nub phyogs ka rna'i rgyal po gnyis	
rtsod pa chen po byung ba'i tshe	
nub (4) phyogs ka rna'i rgyal po yis	
ma ga dhar ni dmag drangs pas	280
grong khyer ma thub gnas gzhir drangs	
rab byung dge bsnyen lnga yang bsad	
yo byad mang po nang du khyer	
khyed la zhe sdang mi mnga' bas	
ko long ma mdzad snying rje 'khrungs	285
(5) g.yul log tshe na dmag mi'i skyabs	
byas nas bla mas bsdum mdzad de	
'tsho ba'i yo byad ma gtogs pa	

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

yo byad lhag ma med par btang	
lus dang srog la ma gzigs par	290
chu bo chen po yang yang brgal	
de gnyis bsdums (6) nas mdza' bor mdzad	
snying rje sems can mi gtong bas	
thub pa'i brtul zhugs khyod kyis bsrungs	
khyod la bdag dang gzhan med pas	295
dgra zun pham la khengs dregs med	
kun gyi pha ma khyod lta bu	
deng sang dus na ngo (19b) mtshar che	
rgyu 'bras 'brel ba chud gzon pa'i	
gzhan dag sdig pa byed gzigs na	300
'di ni 'gro ba cir 'gyur zhes	
thugs kyis mi bzod spyen chab 'byung	
yon tan bsnags pa mtha' yas pas	
phyogs bcur grags (2) pa snyan pas khyab	
bdag gi gdung ba sel ba'i phyir	305
bla ma rje btsun la bstod pa	
bdag gis bstod par ma zad kyi	
gang zag gzhan rnam khyod la bstod	
bstod pa dang ni smad pa yis	
khyod la dges dang mi dges med	310
yon (3) tan rgya mtsho khyod bstod pas	
bdag gi yid ni shin tu chim	
khyod mthong nas ni dad gyur nas	
kun kyang bsnyen bkur byed la brtson	
khyod ni gzhan la phan pa dang	315
bde mdzad thugs ni chung gyur pas	
gzhan gyis ji lta zhus pa (4) bzhin	
mi gnang bar ni khyod mi mdzad	

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba's

bla ma bod du ma byon na	
thams cad long ba bzhin du 'gyur	320
mkhyen pa rgyas pa khyod byon pas	
bod du ye shes nyi ma shar	
bod du byon pas 'brom ston dang	
khu ston rngog ston la sogs pa	
(5) khyod la dad cing 'dun pa yi	325
slob ma'i tshogs ni ma lus pa	
thams cad ji ltar 'dod pa bzhin	
kun gyi yid ni chim par mdzad	
khyod la chos 'brel slob na ni	
chud ni za bar mi 'gyur te	330
skyes bu chen po'i chos lugs slob	
(6) shing rta chen po'i lam du 'dzud	
bla ma dge ba'i bshes gnyen dam pa khyod	
lo ni bcu dgur bsten cing 'grogs na yang	
khyod kyi sku gsung thugs la 'khrul pa yi	335
nyes pa'i dri ma byung ba mthong re skan	
ma ga dha yi bdag po ni	
rgyal po (20a) nai rya phā la yin	
longs spyod 'byor pa mnga' thang sogs	
'di tsam zhes ni brjod par dka'	340
dmag dpung 'bum phrag mang por ldan	
rab brtan sa srungs bu lta bur	
dregs pas rngams shing 'gying ba yang	
khyod kyi zhabs (2) gnyis spyi bor len	
gzi brjid ldan pa'i lha rnams dang	345
mthu dang rdzu 'phrul stobs ldan pa'i	
gnod sbyin tshogs rnams ma lus pa	
bsrung zhing bsnyen bkur byed la brtson	

Bstod pa brgyad cu pa

| khyod kyi yon tan dran pas na |
| mchi ma dkru zhing ba spu ldang | 350
| bla ma (3) rje btsun khyod dang ni |
| dga' ldan gnas su 'grogs par shog
| nag tsho dge slong tshul khirms rgyal ba yis |
| rang gi bla ma rje btsun bstod pa yis |
| rang gi bu la byams pa'i 'gro ba lnga | 355
| thams cad dga' ldan gnas su 'grogs par (4) shog
| tshigs bca'd brgyad cu thams pa yis |
| bla ma rje btsun bstod pa yis |
| slob ma gnyis slob gsum slob sogs |
| khyod la bstod cing 'dun pa rnams | 360
| shin tu dad pa'i yid kyi ni |
| rtag tu bstod pa bgyis shig ces |
| tshul khirms (5) rgyal bas gsol ba 'debs ||

*ces khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po dpal ldan mar me mdzad ye
shes la bstod pa'i rab tu byed pa tshigs bca'd brgyad cu pa 'di ||
nag tsho lo tstsha ba tshul rgyal bas sbyar ba rdzogs so ||*



Atiśa (Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna)
Blockprint of the *Lam yig*

Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba

Appendix

In the *Lam rim chen mo*, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung rnam thar* and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung sgron me* are quoted:

Lines 1-8; 10-19; 22-23; 20-21; 129-136

In the *Lam rim chen mo*, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung sgron me* are quoted:

Lines 34-37; 38-41; 42-45; 46-49; 58-67; 68-70;
111-112; 161-168; 246-251

In the *Lam rim chen mo* and the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* are quoted:

Lines 111-114; line 116; lines 127-128; 145-148

In the *Lam rim chen mo* are quoted:

Lines 169 and 172

In the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* are quoted:

Lines 24-25; 87 and 90; 153-156; 177-186; 248-251; 260-263; 268-271; 276-292; 334 and 336

In the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung sgron me* are quoted:

Lines 50-53; 54-57; 71-74; 75-80; 81-82; 83-86; 87-90; 91-94; 95-98; 99-102; 103-106; 115-116; 117-120; 121-124; 137-138; 139-142; 143-148; 149-152; 157-158; 159-160; 169-174; 175-176; 177-188; 189-197; 198-201; 202-209; 210-217; 218-219; 220-221; 222-225; 226-231; 232-233; 234-237; 238-245; 252-253; 254-255; 264-267; 268-275; 295-302; 309-310; 315-318; 319-322; 323-324; 326-328; 329-330; 331-332; 333-336; 337-344; 345-348; 349-352; 361-363.



SRID-PAHI-HKHORLO
(Wheel of Life)

Srid-Pa'i 'Khor-lo

— J.K. RECHUNG

The Wheel of Life which is called "Srid-pa'i 'khorlo' in Tibetan and "Bhava Chakra" in Sanskrit should be painted as fresco on the entrance wall of the Vihara (Gtsug-lag-khang) as mentioned in the Vinaya-vibhanga (lung-rnam-b'yed). This is also mentioned in the Mula Commentary written by the great Pandita Gunaprabha in his Vinaya Sutra (Mdo-rtsa-wa). The reason for having the fresco on the entrance wall of the Vihara is for the purpose of meditation on the Four Noble Truths (Tib. Bden-pa-bshi, Skt. Catvari Satyani) i.e. (i) the truth of suffering (Tib. Sdug-bsngal bden-pa, Skt. Dukhasatya), (ii) the truth of origin of suffering (Tib. Kung-'byung-bden-pa, Skt. Samudayasatya), (iii) the truth of cessation of suffering (Tib. 'gog-pa'i bden-pa, Skt. Nirodhasatya) and (iv) the truth of path which leads to cessation of suffering (Tib. Lam-gyi bden-pa, Skt. Margasatya). The truth of suffering is depicted in a human bondage symbolised by the non-substantive belly of the Lord of Death (Tib. Gshin-rje, Skt. Yama) on which stands the impermanent nature of transmigratory existence. The truth of origin of suffering is depicted through the central navel point of Gshin-rje where lies lust symbolised by a dove, envy symbolised by a snake, and their tails swallowed by ignorance symbolised by a pig. The truth of cessation of suffering, Nirvana, is depicted by a radiant white circle above Gshin-rje which is pointed out by Buddha. The truth of path which leads to cessation of suffering is depicted through two slokas :

Brtsam-par-bya-shing-dbyung-bar-bya/
Sangs-rgyas-bsten-la-'jug-par-bya/
'dam-buhi-kyem-la-glang-chen-bshin/
'chi-bdag-sde-ni-gshom-par-bya/

Gang-shig-rab-tu-vag-yod-par/
Chos-'bul-'di-la-spyod-'gyur-ba/
Skye-bahi-'khor-ba-rab-spang-ne/
Sdug-bsngal-tha-mar-byed-par-'gyur/

It means that "once human life is attained, every effort must be made to enter into the Doctrine of Buddha and lead a virtuous life after knowing the misery and misfortune of worldly existence. In order to be released from the vicious circle one must practice the Four Noble Truths so that one can overcome all temptations connected with death, just as elephant in a swamp tramples reeds and creepers."

It mainly dwells on how one had entered samsara and how one can be released from it and obtain Nirvana. It is mentioned in the Jataka (Mzad-brgya-dpag-bsam-khri-shing) that during the time of Buddha there was a famous Buddhist King Gsugs-can-snying-po (Bimbisara, 582-554 B.C.) of Rgyal-pohi-khab (Rajagiri) in Magadha and another King named U-tra-ya-na (6th century B.C.) of Sgra-Sgrogs (Vatsa). Both their kingdoms were very rich and powerful. During this period, however, when one kingdom was prospering the other one was going through a lean period. It was customary for these two kings to exchange the choicest gifts which were sent through their respective traders. One day King U-tra-ya-na presented King Bimbisara a very rare armour studded with jewels having the power to ward off the effects of weapons, poison, fire etc. King Bimbisara was so delighted with the gift that he could not find words to express his happiness at receiving such a gift. The King ordered his ministers to evaluate the gift and was told that it was priceless and was the rarest armour in the world. King Bimbisara could not find a suitable gift to reciprocate King U-tra-ya-na's gift and was very depressed. He called his ministers and discussed as to what gift should be sent. Then his Prime Minister Dbyar-Tshul (Varshakara) suggested that since Lord Buddha was residing in his kingdom and since he was the most precious jewel in the three worlds, it would be a fitting present if a painting of Lord Buddha was presented to King U-tra-ya-na. This present would also bring good fortune to the Kingdom

of Vatsa and accumulate merits for its people. King Bimbisara was impressed at this suggestion and went at once to meet Lord Buddha. He then explained everything to the Lord and the Lord told the King that he should present the painting as it would have a very beneficial effect on King U-tra-ya-na. Therefore, as advised by Lord Buddha, the painting of the Wheel of Life was commissioned. From that time the tradition of Thangka-painting was started.

Below the painting are inscribed Skyabs-'gro prayers (Sharanagamana) of taking refuge in Buddha Sangs-rgyas-dkon-mchog, Dharma/Chos-dkon-mchog and Sangha Dge-'dun-dkon-mchog; Bslab-pahi gshi (basis of the percepts); Rten-'brel bcu-gnyis (twelve links of causation) and Lugs-byung lugs-ldog (forward and reverse meaning of twelve links of causation).

In the intermediate circle of the Wheel of Life, the five worlds are drawn as advised by Lord Buddha. In the innermost circle of the Wheel of Life are drawn a pig, a dove and a snake. The pig symbolises ignorance, the dove, lust, and the snake, envy. The Snake's tail is drawn as in the mouth of the dove (in Bkha-gdams-glegs-bam, a cock is depicted instead of a dove. Most paintings on the twelve dependent origination also depicts a cock which follows Bkha-gdams-glegs-bam tradition) and the dove's tail in the mouth of the pig. The meaning of this is that envy is caused by lust and lust is caused by ignorance. The rim between the intermediate world and the innermost circle of ignorance, lust and envy, is drawn in half white and half black. White symbolises good deeds and black symbolises sinful deeds. People are shown going upwards in the white portion, who represent people who have performed good deeds in their life time and are now going to take rebirth in a world of gods (Tib. Lha, Skt. Deva) and human beings (Tib. Mi, Skt. Manusha). People shown going down in the black portion represent people who have sinned and are therefore going to take rebirth in the world of animals (Tib. Dud-'gro, Skt. Tiryak), hungry ghosts (Tib. Yi-dvags, Skt. Preta) and hell (Tib. Dmyal-ba, Skt. Naraka).

In the intermediate circle there are five parts,

out of which the two upper parts symbolise virtuous life of the inhabitants of heavenly and human worlds. The remaining three worlds in the lower part symbolise sinful deeds leading to a world of animals, ghosts and hell.

Outermost circle shows twelve different phases of life (Tib. Rten-'brel bchu-gnyis, Skt. Pratityasamutpada) from ignorance to death. *Ignorance* (Tib. Ma-rig-pa, Skt. Avidya) is depicted as an old and blind woman which means that one cannot see one's surroundings and, therefore, cannot know the true meaning of all that exist due to ignorance. *Karmic formation* (Tib. Hdu-byed, Skt. Samskara) is depicted as making a clay pot. As a clay pot can be made into any shapes and sizes, similarly, one's life is shaped by its former actions. Hence some live in happiness and some live in misery, some are rich and some are poor, and some are high and some are of low status. *Consciousness* (Tib. Rnam-ses, Skt. Vijnana) is depicted in the form of a monkey, because a monkey never stays in one place and similarly the mind wanders about. *Name and form* (Tib. Ming-gsugs, Skt. Nama-rupa) is depicted by a man and woman in a boat crossing a river. This shows the mind and body is taking the next stage of development without losing continuity. *Formation of senses* (Tib. Skye-mched, Skt. Ayatana), is depicted by an open house which means one can enter and stay. Similarly, six minds (Rnam-ses-tshog-drug), which have their base in the six sense organs, are to remain in them. *Contact* (Tib. Reg-pa, Skt. Sparsa) is depicted by an embracing couple drawn to each other by lust. This symbolises contact between objects and six sense organs leading to more desires. *Feeling* (Tib. Tshor-ba, Skt. Vedana) is depicted by a man struck by an arrow in the eye which symbolises various feelings of happiness, sorrow and indifference. *Craving* (Tib. Sred-pa, Skt. Trisna) is depicted by a man drinking wine which symbolises the limitless desires arising out of six sensual pleasures. *Grasping* (Tib. Len-pa, Skt. Upadana) is depicted by a monkey plucking fruit from a tree. This symbolises that this action enforces the seed of rebirth, as the seeds of fallen fruits help to grow other fruits. *Becoming* (Tib. Srid-pa, Skt. Bhava) is depicted by

a pregnant woman symbolising the fruit of accumulated Karma leading to a new life. *Birth* (Tib. Skye-ba, Skt. Jati) is depicted by a woman giving birth which symbolises the act of taking rebirth. *Old age and death* (Tib. Rga-shi, Skt. Jaramarana) is depicted by a person carrying a dead body symbolising the aging process leading to death.

All these twelve links of causation come under four major premises (Tib. Rten-'brel-yan-lag-bshi, Skt. Catvarianga-pratitya-samutpada): (i) Projecting causes ('phen-byed-kyi-yan-lag), (ii) Projected effects ('phangs-pahi-yan-lag), (iii) Materializing causes ('grub-byed-kyi-yan-lag) and (iv) Materialized effects ('grub-pahi-yan-lag).

Projecting causes are ignorance, Karmic formations, and consciousness. Projected effects are name and form, six sense organs, contact and feelings. Materializing causes are thirst, attachment and becoming. Materialized effects are birth, old age and death.

The Wheel of Life is drawn in the lap of Gshin-rje symbolising that after taking birth, caused by one's Karma and attachment, one cannot escape from the jaws of the Lord of Death. [In Thup-pai-dgongs-rgyen (Skt. Munimatalamkara), page 119 of Pandita 'jigs-med 'byung-gnes sbas-pa (Skt. Ambayakara, 11th century A.D.), which forms the Tangyur Vol. Ah, it is mentioned that Gshin-rje is also the King of Yi-dvag (Preta).] On top of the outermost circle of twelve links of causation, a full moon is drawn to illustrate the realization of Nirvana at the end. Depiction of the raised hand of Buddha towards the full moon beside the Wheel of Life symbolises the Buddha showing the path to Nirvana.

The Wheel of Life can be discerned through Four Noble Truths and twelve links of causation. Here it is explained from twelve links of causation. Again these twelve links of causation revolve in two different spheres of life - three lower worlds and three upper worlds.

How does twelve links of causation work in three lower worlds (Ngan-'gro)? By the force of ignorance of one's action, a Karma is accumulated which results

in the formation of consciousness having a distinctive mark of various Karmic inclination (vag-chags). This consciousness frequently cultivated by thirst and clinging, leads to three lower worlds of beasts, hungry ghosts and hell. This suffering will last till the exhaustion of Karma accumulated in previous lives. Till the complete ending of various Karma caused by mental delusion, one is subjected to rebirth in another world. Here also one must endure another round of suffering as a water mill to endure the hardship of turning the water for irrigation.

How does twelve links of causation work in three upper worlds (Bde-hgro)? Notwithstanding mental obscuration, caused by the sensual world that prevents one from seeing the true nature of internal and external world, one can still be reborn in upper worlds by the force of virtuous acts of charity (Tib. Sbyin-ba, Skt. Dana), moral conduct (Tib. Tshul-khrim, Skt. Sila), contemplation (Tib. Tin-nge-'zin, Skt. Samadhi) and whatever acts that prevent the mind from vacillation. For example, in the realm of human beings, despite lack of penetration into the real nature, one, however, divert ones mind towards the accumulation of other virtuous acts.

The sum result of these virtuous acts is transferred to a formation of distinct consciousness. This consciousness, cultivated and developed by attachment (Tib. Sred-pa, Skt. Trisna) and grasping (Tib. Len-pa, Skt. Upadana), enters into a mother's womb and then appears in the shape of body and mind. When body and mind gradually develop along with other sense organs (Tib. Skye-mched, Skt. Sadayatana), these sense organs (Tib. Reg-pa, Skt. Sparsa) come into contact with the physical world and experience the sensations (Tib. Tshor-ba, Skt. Vedana) of happiness, sorrow and indifference. The consciousness from its embryonic stage in the mother's womb gradually takes the shape of six sense organs and at the completion of ten months, would appear in the external world. Then it is subjected to yet another vicious circle of suffering. When the body grows it is drawn towards lust (Tib. 'dod-chags, Skt. Raga), anger (Tib. She-sdang, Skt. Dvesa) caused by mental

obscuration (Tib. Gti-mug, Skt. Moha), and as a result he will be overwhelmed by mental and physical affliction. Then he will go again for fresh accumulation of virtuous and sinful Karma. After the completion of previous Karma, his present life will come to an end. However, by the force of various moral and immoral acts cultivated in innumerable past and present lives, his life will be confined within the six realms and go through endless suffering from time to time.

These twelve links of dependent origination are further divided under three heads: (1) Karmic formation (Tib. Las, Skt. Karma), (2) mental defilement (Tib. Nyon-mongs, Skt. Klesa) and (3) suffering (Tib. Sdug-bsnal, Skt. Dukkha). (1) Physical and mental elements (Tib. 'du-byed, Skt. Samskara) and becoming (Tib. Srid-pa, Skt. Bhava) are Karmic formation. (2) Ignorance (Tib. Ma-rig-pa, Skt. Avidya), Attachment (Tib. Sred-pa, Skt. Trisna) and grasping (Tib. Len-pa, Skt. Upadana) are mental defilement. (3) Causative and resulting phase of consciousness (Rgyu-dus dang 'bras-dus-kyi-rnam-ses), name and form (Tib. Skye-mched, Skt. Sadayatana), contact (Tib. Reg-pa, Skt. Sparsa), sensation (Tib. Tshor-ba, Skt. Vedana), Birth (Tib. Skye-ba, Skt. Jati), and old age and death (Tib. Rga-si, Skt. Jaramarana) are suffering.

Emancipation (Tib. Tharpa, Skt. Moksha) means breaking the cord that binds us to transmigratory existence due to ignorance and its Karmic accumulation. By these two factors of ignorance and its consequent Karmic formation, we are bound to the three states of the sensual world (Khams-gsum): 'dod-pa'i Khams, Skt. Kamaloka (the phenomenal world), Gsugs-kyi khams, Skt. Rupaloka (the world of astral forms), Gsugs-med-kyi khams, Skt. Arupaloka (the spiritual world) i.e. the world of formless spirits; five or six worlds: gods and titans, human beings, hungry ghosts, beasts and hell; and four states of earthly existence: born of the womb or viviparous (Mngal-skyes), born out of an egg or oviparous (Sgong-skyes), born out of heat and humidity or moisture sprung (Gdrod-ser-skyes), and born in a supernatural way or apparitional (Rzus-skyes). They have a binding nature and escaping from their cord is called emancipation. Ignorance and its

resulting activities force us to go through this circle of birth and rebirth which is full of suffering. Knowing and contemplating on the Wheel of Life from the standpoint of twelve dependent origination, clearing the fallacies that the six sense organs arise out of nothing (Rgyu-med-pa) or that they are a chaotic creation with no agreement between cause and effect (Mi-mthun-pa'i-rgyu), will attain emancipation. A person who has thought on these in his previous life and continues his endeavour to understand this by virtue of his former inclination will reach the sublime state ('phags-pa'i-go-'phang). This is an excellent method of emancipation from the circle of existence.

On receipt of the painting, King U-tra-ya-na perceived the truth (Tib. Bden-pa mthong-ba, Skt. Satyadaršana).

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3. Kadam Phacho Vol. III page 61 Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim 12 February 1981.
4. Lam-rim-chen-po by Tsong-kha-pa page 151, Shol Edition
5. The Collected Work of 'Jam-dbyang-bzad-pa'-rdorje Vol. VI Cha, page 944, New Delhi 1973.
6. 'dul-ba-rin-chen-phreng-ba by Dge-'dun-grub, First Dalai Lama Vol. Gha page 461, Shol Edition.
7. Abhidharmakosakarika by Vasubandhu/Tangyur Vol. Ku page 7, Derge Edition.
8. Pratityasamutpadahridaya vyakarana by Nagarjuna/Vol. rtsa page 146-147, Derge Edition.

Notes & Topics

The article entitled "More Early Inscriptions From Tibet" by Hugh Edward Richardson was published in the Bulletin No. 2 of 18 July, 1988. The author has now written to us regarding an erroneous reference in respect of a date in that article.

Relevant portion of the letter from Mr. Richardson is reproduced below :

"May I make correction to my article "More Early Inscriptions from Tibet" in the Bulletin for 1988 No. 2? On p. 6 in the first para I wrote that the monkey year in which the inscription was made "can only be 804 A.D." I had assumed that Khri Lde-srong-brtsan died in 815 — a year before the monkey year 816; that date is given also in Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa's "Tibet". But Sa-skya Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan in his Bod-gyi rgyal-rab states that Khri Lde-srong-brtsan died in a bird year; and in the Tang Annals his death is stated to have been reported in China in 817. That was a Tibetan bird year. It is most likely that the monkey year of the inscription is 816 by which time negotiations for a treaty had been going on since 810 when the Chinese Emperor sent a letter on the subject to the great monk-minister Bran-ka Dpal-gyi yon-tan (See Pelliot, *Histoire Ancienne du Tibet*, p 125; and Demieville, *Le Concile de Lhasa* p. 224)"

Summary of the Wheel of Life

We know that the Karmic formation and ignorance whose intrinsic nature is misery, produce the afflicted mental and physical aggregates (Phung-po). Here the reason for contemplating on the Wheel of Life from the standpoint of twelve causal factors is to know that all the declining elements have their root in ignorance. This ignorance, which is like an obdurate darkness, has to be conquered.

How does one conquer this obdurate darkness? First by clearing the erroneous view that all the internal and external elements have no cause or that they arise out of different causes as fire out of water. Having absorbed, contemplated and developed the Buddha's rich treasure of knowledge, it generates awareness to the path of emancipation after being disgusted with the transient life. One who has endeavoured on this in his past lives is gifted with inborn inclination to progress towards the exalted state.

In Arya-Subahu-pariprccha-nama-tantra(Tib.'phags-pa dpung-bzang rgyud), it is mentioned that in order to overcome ignorance, one has to contemplate on the twelve dependent origination. Having fully perceived the twelve causal factors, according to Arya-Salistambha-nama-mahayanasutra (Tib. 'phags-pa Sa-lu-ljang-pahimdo), one will be freed from the retribution of his Karma and can foresee the end of his future rebirth. Moreover, he will not hold on the fallacious views and by virtue of this, no heretical views can arise within him. According to Nagarjuna, the meaning of the twelve dependent origination is the essence of all the teachings of the Buddha. For him the victorious were those who have understood the essence of the doctrine of relative existence and those who have diligently studied its subtle meaning.

- J.K. Rechung

