
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL
TRADITION CONCERNING ATIŠA
(DĪPAṂKARAŚRĪJŪĀNA)

Helmut Eimer

Within this year the first millennium since the birth of Atiśa¹ will come to an end. This may be the opportunity to consider the biographical tradition about Dīpaṁkaraśrījūāna. In India proper no literary sources relating to the life of this learned monk from Bengal have survived; we have only Tibetan source material on which to depend. There are few Tibetan historiographical works not containing at least a short note on Atiśa's life.² We may mention here the comprehensive histories of the growth of Buddhism in Tibet with their passages on Dīpaṁkaraśrījūāna, e.g. the *Sba bžed*³, Bu ston Rin po che's *Bde bar gśeḡs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byuñ gnas gsuñ rab rin po che'i mdzod*⁴, the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me loñ*⁵, the *Deb ther sñon po*⁶ and the *'Phags yul rgya nag chen po bod dañ sog yul du dam pa'i chos 'byuñ dpag bsam ljon bzañ*⁷ (hereafter *Dpag bsam ljon bzañ*) by Sum pa mkhan po Ye śes dpal 'byor. It is obvious that the older of the commonly known *chos 'byuñ* or *rgyal rabs* give only the main facts of the biography⁸; from the end of the 15th century onward there appear in general historical works more detailed descriptions of Atiśa's life⁹. The two extensive biographies of Dīpaṁkaraśrījūāna are not dated, namely the *Jo bo rje dpal ldan mar me mdzad ye śes kyi rnam thar rgyas pa*¹⁰ (hereafter *Rnam thar rgyas pa*) and the *Jo bo rin po che rje dpal ldan a ti śa'i rnam thar rgyas pa yoñs grags*¹¹ (hereafter *Rnam thar yoñs grags*).

It may be asked if there was an autobiography of Dīpaṁkaraśrījūāna or a biography written by one of his direct disciples. From the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* we learn that Atiśa did not like to be praised by 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas in a hymn of praise¹². Another episode in the same biographical work tells us that some of Atiśa's pupils asked the master to write about his former and later existences and about his way to salvation—this would have become an autobiography—but on this occasion too Dīpaṁkaraśrījūāna refused to do so¹³. In the biographical tradition dealing with Atiśa there is a book that claims in its title to have been composed by 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas (1005-1064 A.D.), namely the *Jo bo rje'i rnam thar lam yig chos kyi 'byuñ gnas źes bya ba 'Brom ston pa Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas kyis mdzad pa*¹⁴ (hereafter *Rnam thar lam yig*). In the colophon to this work¹⁵ the name of the author is given as 'Brum ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas and in the body of the book we read that the *upāsaka*—i.e. one of the often used names for 'Brom ston pa¹⁶—bears the name 'Brum and not 'Brom¹⁷. We cannot solve here the problems arising from these different names, but we find proof that the book was not

written by the mentioned disciple of Atiśa in another passage of the *Rnam thar lam yig* referring to the conquest of Eastern India by Muslim armies¹⁸—an event which happened about 1200 A.D., i.e. about 140 years after the death of 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas.

Since there exists neither an autobiography nor a biography written by a direct disciple of Atiśa we may pose the question: what are the sources for the biography of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna? An answer could be deduced from a detailed episode which appears in the *Deb ther shon po*¹⁹, the *Bka' gdams rin po che'i chos 'byuñ mam thar ñin more byed pa'i 'od ston*²⁰ (hereafter *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ rnam thar*), the *Bka' gdams kyi rnam par thar pa bka' gdams chos 'byuñ gsal ba'i sgron me*²¹ (hereafter *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me*), the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*²² and the *Rnam thar yons grags*²³. We quote here, translated from the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me*, the two main parts²⁴ of the episode relating the beginning of the biographical tradition²⁵:

After he (namely Roñ pa Lag sor pa²⁶) had asked seven direct pupils of the master, [namely] Dge bśes Ston pa²⁷, Rnal 'byor pa chen po²⁸, Dgon pa ba²⁹, the former Mkha' ru ba, Žaṅ btsun Yer pa [ba], Sgom pa dad pa from Yer pa rtsibs sgañ [and] Jo bo legs, and two indirect pupils, [namely] the later Mkha' ru ba and Yuñ ba pa, about the precepts for meditation and about the reports³⁰ about the master, the direct pupils agreed in their words. Since the words of the two indirect pupils disagreed, [Lag sor pa] thought; "Since the Dge bśes Lo tstsha ba³¹, who was a direct follower of the master for 19 years, is now living at Khab Guñ thañ³², it is necessary to meet him personally." [Thinking this] he went to Mañ [yul]. He met him (i.e. the Dge bśes Lo tstsha ba) residing in the temple of Yañ thog³². He asked first for extensive [instruction on] the precepts of the mantras and stayed for three years. In the last year³³ he requested to be told the stages of the way of the *pāramitās*, the [special] virtues of the greatness of the physical [existence] of this great master and the report of how [the master] had been invited to Tibet. To this the Dge bśes Lo tstsha ba answered, "I followed the master for 19 years; since I invited him to Tibet too, I know the report on the master very [well]. Except for you, nobody has come to pose these questions." After saying this he (i.e. the Dge bśes Lo tstsha ba) gave this extensive report. . .

At this [time] four religious [adepts] from the retinue of Rma tsho³⁴ went over to him (i.e. Roñ pa Lag sor pa) and became known as the four [spiritual] sons of Roñ pa [later on]. These were the four: Bya 'Dul ba 'dzin pa³⁵, Rog Mchiñ phu ba, Gnam par ba³⁶ [and] Dge bśes Žu len pa. Since Rgya ra Ston brjid was an *upāsaka*, he was not counted as [one of the spiritual] sons. Gnam par ba founded Gnam par and Ram pa lha sdiñs. He acted as an abbot of Gsañ phu for eight years too. Regarding the notes the four [spiritual] sons made of the words of Lag sor pa—it is said—Bya 'Dul ba 'dzin pa condensed the precepts and the report, Rog condensed the report but gave a great deal of the precepts, Gnam par ba, in not writing the report, wrote down the precepts only, Dge bśes Žu len pa [made] extensive [notes

of] both the precepts and the report, but he especially made the report accurate. Rgya ra Ston brjid had [notes on] the precepts for the *mantras*, but apparently no [notes] at all on the precepts for the *pāramitās*. After all these written notes had come into the hands of Zul phu ba Bya 'Dul chen po—since he himself put this extensive report on the master into letters, it filled all quarters.

This episode could be considered a later invention, since it is given in books composed at the end of the 15th century or later—if we disregard the two undated *mam thar*³⁷. But the *Hu lan deb ther*, composed by 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje in 1346 A.D., already gives the frame of the above quoted report in a very short form³⁸. By this it is proved that the report of the beginning of the biographical tradition concerning Atiśa existed already in the first half of the 14th century³⁹.

There are four main points in the quoted report of special interest for our considerations: 1. Up to the time he came to Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba⁴⁰ the student Roñ pa Lag sor pa looked in vain for a biography of Atiśa. This shows that a biographical work on Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna did not exist at that time⁴¹. 2. The teachings of Atiśa, his special virtues and the report of his life were taught to Roñ pa Lag sor pa by Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba. 3. The oral tradition on Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna extends from Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba to Dge bśes Zul phu ba Bya 'Dul chen po, and the latter prepared the first written biography. 4. The old reports on Atiśa are referred to under the title of *lo rgyus*, i.e. "report."

The dates of the lives of the persons who participated in the oral tradition on Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna are only partially known; Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba was born 1011 A.D.⁴², but the year of his death is not given. We may deduce that Roñ pa Lag sor pa, who had been a disciple of 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas, was born not much later than 1044 A.D.⁴³; he had not seen Atiśa personally, i.e. he was presumably not an adult at the time of the master's death in 1054 A.D. For Bya 'Dul ba 'dzin pa chen po, alias Zul phu ba, we have different dates, according to the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* 1100-1174 A.D.⁴⁴ and according to the *Deb ther sñon po* 1091-1166 A.D.⁴⁵ His fellow student Gnam par ba was abbot of Gsañ phu in the years 1143-1151 A.D. It seems possible that after the death of Rog Mchiñ phu ba, Gnam par ba and Dge bśes Žu len pa, their notes were given to Zul phu ba; in this case the first written biography was composed after 1150 A.D. We may exclude the possibility that this form of the biography originated much earlier than 1120 A.D., at the time when Zul phu ba reached the age of 20 years or, according to the *Deb ther sñon po*, 29 years.

Before we can try to establish a connection between the facts in the passage quoted above and the extant biographical tradition we have to investigate the available texts concerning the life of Atiśa. The analytical considerations⁴⁶ begin with the two extensive biographies, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*, because it can be assumed that the

greatest amount of material for comparison can be found there. We may mention the fact that the *Rnam thar yoñs grags* is contained in the official collection of the Bka' gdams pa School, the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*⁴⁷; therefore it can be concluded that the Tibetans regarded this form of the biography as being authoritative. A comparison of the two extensive biographies shows that they are closely related. This relationship can be seen not only in the agreement of the contents, but also in extensive identical passages.⁴⁸ In view of this great similarity it is especially conspicuous that these two biographies differ in structure and in the arrangement of single episodes. This can serve as an argument for the determination of the relationship between the two works. The clear structure of the extensive Atiśa-biography in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* shows this presentation to be the more modern. A further argument for this is the well-standardized form of the language in this biography, while in the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* we find remnants of colloquial or dialect forms⁴⁹. However, the *Rnam thar yoñs grags* is not derived from the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*; both works are descended from a common ancestor.

When comparison of the other available sources for the life of Atiśa is brought into consideration, we find a great deal of agreement between the reports. These points of agreement—depending upon the completeness of the sources in question—are of different kinds. Works with a very detailed presentation show passages with identical formulations, while the shorter biographical sketches on Atiśa have descriptions of the main facts which are identical in contents only. It is certain that there is an established tradition about Atiśa's life⁵⁰. This tradition can be seen as an example of a biographical tradition in Tibet, and we could use it to investigate how the transmitted material has changed in the course of time. In Sum pa mkhan po's *Dpag bsam ljon bzai*⁵¹ we read e.g. that Atiśa in taking refuge left five wives and nine sons. The older tradition reports that Atiśa's elder brother, being the heir of his father's realm, had five wives and nine sons. Sum pa mkhan po combines the portraits of the two persons, thereby enlarging the scale of renunciation: Atiśa, like Śākyamuni, left both wife and child in order to become a monk. This changing of the materials handed down classifies the *Dpag bsam ljon bzai*: it is a source of secondary rank, in spite of its remarks regarding the reliability of some older sources⁵². An example of literary transformation is to be found in the *Chos 'byun bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i ñin byed*⁵³ (hereafter *Padma rgyas pa'i ñin byed*) by Padma dkar po: the author, in depicting the imprisonment and the death of the monk Ye šes 'od⁵⁴, the former king of Western Tibet, uses passages from four different books, namely the *Deb ther sñon po*, the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*, the *Rnam thar lam yig* and the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me loñ*⁵⁵. Padma dkar po joins fragments which have the same function in their own context from the four texts and thereby achieves an integrated treatment with a correspondingly dramatic result⁵⁶. This shows that the *Padma rgyas pa'i ñin byed* also cannot be regarded as a primary source for the life of Atiśa. We have to take into account that during the course of time the

tradition about Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's life may have changed and that the most recent biographies do not preserve all the facts of the original version unaltered.

Therefore we go back again to the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* as the more archaic of the two extensive biographies; but since the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* does not contain some passages given in the *Rnam thar yoṅs grags*⁵⁷, we may conclude that it does not comprise all the biographical material given by its sources. This is clearly shown by an example: the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* announces, but does not contain, a passage on the *guru-paramparās* of the teachings of the Kriyāyoga and on Yamāri⁵⁸; the missing passages, however, do appear in the corresponding context of the *Rnam thar yoṅs grags*⁵⁹. The extant version of the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* is to be regarded as defective; it should be used together with the *Rnam thar yoṅs grags* in order to have at hand the full amount of biographical material contained in the common ancestor of these two texts. But we have to include the chapters on the life of Atiśa as given in the *Deb ther shon po*, the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ nam thar* and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* as well; these pictures of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's life stand next in tradition to the extensive biographies⁶⁰. This is already indicated by the fact that these three books also contain the report of the beginning of the tradition about Atiśa's life.

The remnants of the spoken language as contained in the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*⁶¹ can be regarded as a first link connecting the report of the beginning of the biographical tradition concerning Atiśa's life and the extant biographies. We see the second one in the fact that in the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* there appears, in at least five places,⁶² the word *lo rgyus* to denote a passage or a chapter, as we have found it in the Tibetan text of the episode quoted above in translation. Since the colloquial forms of language and the word *lo rgyus* in its special meaning are only met with in exceptionally few cases in the *Rnam thar yoṅs grags*⁶³, the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ nam thar*, these texts rank in the tradition about Atiśa below the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, but far above all the other works composed in more recent times. In view of these old biographical pictures of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's life belonging to an established tradition, one could try to reconstruct the original version; this could be done with the aim of recovering the text written by Zul phu ba. But this experiment would not be successful, because we do not know to what extent the original text used the colloquial forms of language. The second reason lies in the arrangement of the material handed down; especially the description of Atiśa's special virtues, which could have had fully another structure than that in the versions now at hand⁶⁴. The goal to be reached with the available old forms of the biography is to discern the picture of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna as it was seen in an early time; some aspects could be those of Zul phu ba as well. The basis for such investigations would be given by a synoptic edition of the archaic texts of this established tradition⁶⁵.

Besides the tradition as given in the biographies and the common histories there are a few hymns of praise to Atiśa containing some facts about his life. In the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*, the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ rnam thar* and especially in the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* there are verses quoted from two such hymns, namely the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* by Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba and the *bstod pa* written by Pandit Sa'i sñiñ po⁶⁶. The full edition of the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* as given in the *Legs par bsad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsuñ gi gces pas nor bu'i bañ mdzod*⁶⁷ is based upon a version which had been made after 1496, since the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* is quoted in a gloss there. The *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* in its available version contains in its beginning 25 lines which the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ rnam thar* and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* attribute to Pandit Sa'i sñiñ po. Tsoñ kha pa Blo bzañ grags pa, in quoting verses from the two hymns of praise⁶⁸, does not distinguish between Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba and Sa'i sñiñ po; he refers to the *lo tstsha ba* only. This could be regarded as a hint that the 25 lines became an integral part of the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* very early⁶⁹. The *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ rnam thar* and the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* contain just a few lines from a *stotra* composed by Rin chen bzañ po, but these verses do not give historical data at all⁷⁰. In the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* there appear the earliest known quotations from the *Bstod pa sum cu pa* attributed to 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas; but since it mentions Po to ba (1031-1105 A.D.), Spyān sñā ba (1038-1103 A.D.) and Phu chuñ ba (1031-1106 A.D.), the extant version cannot have been composed before the end of the 11th century—i.e. after the death of 'Brom ston pa—and we suppose that it is far more recent.

The *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and to some extent the *Rnam thar yoñs grags* as well, present, together with the quotations from the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* and from Sa'i sñiñ po's *bstod pa*, a prose version of the verses quoted using the same expressions and formulations. The prose text is somewhat longer and contains more information than the verses⁷¹. This fact shows us the close relation between the tradition in verse and that in prose; both traditions come to us through Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba, who used the formulations of the verses in teaching the master's biography to Roñ pa Lag sor pa. The *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa*—according to the tradition as preserved in the two extensive biographies⁷²—was composed by Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba after Atiśa's death—i.e. in 1054 A.D. or in the following year—in preparing a picture of the master and of the main events of his life; the eighty verses of praise were written on the back of the scroll⁷².

The tradition concerning the biography of Atiśa originates from Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba and—to a lesser extent⁷³—from Pandit Sa'i sñiñ po. The extant verses of the two hymns of praise are the oldest testimony for Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's life. The extensive tradition would have come to an end if Roñ pa Lag sor pa had not searched for the biography of the

master and had not obtained it by asking Nag tsho Lo tstsha ba. About a century after Atiśa's death the oral reports were gathered by Zul phu ba and put into the first written version. This literary biography was to become the main source for all the following descriptions of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's life. There are a few events from the master's life handed down outside this tradition; we can mention here one attested case: in the description of Atiśa's studies with Avadhūtipa the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*⁷⁴ distinguish between the information as given by Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba and two other sources⁷⁵. Probably some material handed down by other traditions was included in the literary biographies in an early stage as well. The sketch of the life of Atiśa as presented by Tsoñ kha pa Blo bzañ grags pa contains a more archaic structure in the arrangement of some points, but it does not mention Sa'i sñiñ po as the author of some of the verses quoted; the former fact being a hint that very old sources were used, the latter point indicating a great distance from the original tradition. The most archaic of the extensive biographies at hand, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, together with its modern version, the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*, seems to comprise almost all the material about Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna handed down in the first centuries after the death of the master, including some facts not reported by Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba but gathered from other sources. All the portraits of Atiśa as drawn by later authors— i.e. after 1500 A.D.—are based on the same tradition, although perhaps somewhat changed or combined with reports not known to the old biographies.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This name is not to be understood as being composed of *ati* and *iśa*; this is shown by *Vārttika* to II.2.18, see Śrīśa Chandra Vasu, *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*. Edited and translated. . . (Reprint) Delhi, Varanasi, Patna 1962, I, 264: "The word *ati* etc. when the thing denoted has the sense of 'gone beyond' or the like, combine with what ends with the second case affix . . ." Therefore we have to etymologize the name Atiśa with *atiśaya* "eminent, superior" (the Tibetan equivalent to this is *phul (du) byun (ba)!*) taking into account that the change from *-aya* to *-a* is not easily explained, see H. Eimer, *Berichte über das Leben des Atiśa* (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna). Eine Untersuchung der Quellen [Reports on the Life of Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna). An investigation of the Sources.]. Wiesbaden 1977. (Asiatische Forschungen. 51.), 21-22.
 2. At present we know of more than 40 books with remarks on Atiśa's life, see Eimer, *Berichte*, 41-154.
 3. See R. A. Stein, *Une chronique ancienne de bSam-yas: sBa-bžed*. [An ancient chronicle of bSam-yas: sBa-bžed.]. Paris 1961. (Publications de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises. Textes et Documents. I.), 89,11-91,7.
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4. Composed 1322 A.D.; blockprint of the *gsun 'bum* from Žol (near Lhasa), volume *ya* (24), fol. 137a6-b4.
 5. See B. I. Kuznetsov, *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (The Clear Mirror of Royal Genealogies). Tibetan Text in Transliteration, with an introduction in English. Leiden 1966. (*Scripta Tibetana*. I.), 198,9-199,8.
 6. Composed 1476-1478 A.D.; blockprint prepared in Kun bde gliñ at Lhasa, fascicle *ca* (5), fol. 1b1-10a3.
 7. See Sarat Chandra Das, *Pag Sam Jon Zang*. Part I: History of the Rise, Progress and Downfall of Buddhism in India. Part II: History of Tibet from Early Times to 1746 A.D., by Sumpa Khan-po Yece Pal Jor. Calcutta 1908, 118,22-120,22 and 183,13-186,31.
 8. See *Hu lan deb ther* by 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (*Deb ther dmar po*. *The Red Annals*. Part One (Tibetan Text). Gangtok, Sikkim 1961), fol. 20a2-3 (page 39) and fol. 25b7-8 (page 50).
 9. E.g. the *Deb ther snon po*.
 10. Blockprint (108 fol.), prepared in Dga' ldan phun tshogs gliñ, not dated, probably beginning of the 18th century.
 11. Contained in the *Pha chos*, the first part of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* (blockprint from the new Žol printing house, after 1940 A.D.), fascicle *kha* (2), fol. 1b1-95a5. In the colophon Mchims Thams cad mkhyen pa is mentioned as author; if we follow this information the book could be dated circa 1250-1280 A.D. or 1340-1375 A.D. This seems improbable since the table of contents of the Mchims chen mo—the Atiśa-biography written by the great abbot Mchims—as given in the *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* (fol. 27b5-6) does not correspond to the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*.
 12. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 84b5-85a3.
 13. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 21a5-b3.
 14. The second part of the fascicle *kha* (fol. 95a5-125a4) in the *Pha chos*, the first part of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*, see note 11 above.
 15. *Rnam thar lam yig* fol. 125a3-4.
 16. See e.g. Eimer, *Berichte*, 4-5 note 17.
 17. *Rnam thar lam yig* fol. 104a6-b1: 'brom min 'brum yin u pa si ka de yin.
 18. *Rnam thar lam yig* fol. 106b6-107a1.
 19. *Deb ther snon po*, *ca*, fol. 35b7-36a7.
 20. Composed 1484 by Bsod nams lha'i dbañ po; from a microfilm copy (manuscript in the library of Mr. T.D. Densapa)—the episode is found on fol. 81b6-83a7.
 21. Composed 1494-1496 by Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan; blockprint (419 fol.) prepared at 'Bras spuñs.
 22. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 106b4-108a4.
 23. *Rnam thar yoñs grags* fol. 94a2-95a1.
 24. *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* fol. 336a6-337a1 and 337b1-5 (the gloss fol. 336b2-5 is not given here).
 25. A comparative text of the different versions of this episode is given by Eimer, *Berichte*, 280-290.
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26. Alias Lag sor pa or Roñ pa Phyag sor pa; the dates for his life are not known.
 27. Often-used name for 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byuñ gnas.
 28. 1015-1078 A.D., see G. N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*. Part 1.2. Calcutta 1949-1953. (Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Monograph Series. VII.), I, 265.
 29. 1016-1082 A.D., see Roerich, *Blue Annals*, I, 266.
 30. *Lo rgyus*.
 31. Often-used title for Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba, one of the principal *lo tstsha bas* working together with Atiśa.
 32. Place in Mañ yul.
 33. The translation here follows the text of the *Deb ther shon po*.
 34. Rma tsho Byañ chub rdo rje is mentioned by Roerich, *Blue Annals*, I, 79-80.
 35. Also known as Zul phu ba Bya 'Dul ba 'dzin pa chen po; for the dates of his life see below.
 36. Abbot of Gsañ phu 1143-1151 A.D.; see Roerich, *Blue Annals*, I, 328-329.
 37. Namely the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and the *Rnam thar yoñs grags*.
 38. See *The Red Annals*, Gangtok 1961, fol. 27b5-7 (page 54), and Eimer, *Berichte*, 280 note 1 and 286-287.
 39. That this report is far older is shown by some facts given below in this paper.
 40. The date of this meeting is not given. Presumably it took place in the last decade of the 11th century.
 41. There could have been other reports on Atiśa hidden in non-biographical traditions.
 42. See Roerich, *Blue Annals*, I, 247.
 43. 'Brom ston pa died 1064 A.D.
 44. *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* fol. 337b5 and 338a5.
 45. See Roerich, *Blue Annals*, I, 80.
 46. For the methodical basis of these considerations see E. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode und der Geschichtsphilosophie*. [Manual of Historical Methods and of the Philosophy of History.]. 6th edition 1914, Reprint New York (1970), and Kr. Erslev, *Historische Technik*. [Technique of Historical (investigations).]. München and Berlin 1928.
 47. See above note 11.
 48. See Bernheim, *Lehrbuch*, 415.
 49. Cf. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch*, 424.
 50. This central tradition is studied in detail by Eimer, *Berichte*, 256-272.
 51. Sarat Chandra Das, *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, 183,19-21.
 52. Sarat Chandra Das, *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, 186,28-31.
 53. Composed 1575-1580, blockprint of the *gsuñ 'bum* (prepared in Se ba Byañ chub gliñ between 1920 and 1928), volume *ka* (1), part *cha* (6), the life of Atiśa is given fol. 140b1-142a3 and 177b2-187b2.
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54. *Padma rgyas pa'i nin byed* fol. 178b2-181a5.
55. The passages used from these sources can be seen in H. Eimer, "Die Gar log-Episode bei Padma dkar po und ihre Quellen". [The Gar log Episode (as depicted) by Padma dkar po and its sources.]. *Orientalia Suecana*, XXIII-XXIV (1974-1975), Uppsala 1976, 190-199.
56. See Eimer, "Gar log-Episode", 182-189.
57. See Eimer, *Berichte*, 210-211.
58. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 4a2-4.
59. *Rnam thar yoñs grags* fol. 15b4-5.
60. There is some younger material contained in these works as well, see e.g. *Bka' gdams chos 'byuñ sgron me* fol. 53a4: Atiśa travelling in Gtśaṅ made the prophecy that at Sa skya there would appear seven incarnations of Mañjuḥṣa. Since the last of these incarnations was 'Gro mgon 'Phags pa (1235-1280 A.D.), this passage cannot have existed before the end of the 13th century.
61. See Eimer, *Berichte*, 196-201.
62. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 28b2, 38b2, 43b3, 43b5. 57b1.
63. *Rnam thar yoñs grags* fol. 47b5 e.g. corresponds to *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 57b1.
64. From the biographical sketch presented by Tsoñ kha pa Blo bzañ grags pa in his *Rim pa thams cad tshañ bar ston pa'i byañ chub lam gyi rim pa* we see that at about 1400 A.D. there existed a classification of the different *guru-paramparās* which is not as elaborate as that in the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*—the same applies to the arrangement of the subjects studied by Atiśa. Tsoñ kha pa had access to a form of tradition which seems to stand nearer to the first written biography. But since the biographical sketch by Blo bzañ grags pa contains only a few details, it is not of much help in discerning the original source.
65. Such a synoptic edition of the texts concerned is under preparation.
66. An Indian pandit in the retinue of Atiśa.
67. Microfilm copy taken from the blockprint in the possession of H.H. Yongdzin Trijang Rinpoche.
68. In the sketch of Atiśa's life as given in the *Rim pa thams cad tshañ bar ston pa'i byañ chub lam gyi rim pa*.
69. Probably Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba incorporated these lines into his *bstod pa*.
70. There are preserved fragments from other old *bstod pas*, namely of those composed by Gro luñ pa Blo gros 'byuñ gnas, Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje rgyal po (1110-1170) and Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa'i dpal (1173-1225); see Eimer, *Berichte*, 146-150.
71. Line 282 of the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* runs:
 rab byuñ dge bsñen lña yañ bsad
 "Even of the monks [and] the *upāsakas* [he] killed five."
 The corresponding sentence in the *Rnam thar yoñs grags* (fol. 32b1) gives a further detail: four monks and one *upāsaka* were killed—altogether five persons.
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72. See *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 103a4-6 and *Rnam thar yoins grags* fol. 91a2-6; this is given as well in *Bka' gdams chos 'byun sgron me* fol. 67b6-68a2.
73. Limited to the report on the family and the home of Atiśa.
74. *Rnam thar rgyas pa* fol. 24b3-4 and *Rnam thar yoins grags* fol. 4b5.
75. One of them is the *Be'u bum shon po*; see Eimer, *Berichte*, 269-270.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

The present paper was prepared in 1977 within the research programme of the Sonderforschungsbereich 12 "Zentralasien" at the University, Bonn; it was given out for publication in an *Atiśa Commemoration Volume* planned by the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok. Since 1977 two books concerning Atiśa's works and biography have come out: H. Eimer, *Bodhipathapradīpa. Ein Lehrgedicht des Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna) in der tibetischen Überlieferung*. Wiesbaden 1978. (Asiatische Forschungen. 59.), and H. Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa. Materialien zu einer Biographie des Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna)*. 1. Teil: Einführung, Inhaltsübersicht, Namensglossar. 2. Teil: Textmaterialien. Wiesbaden 1979. (Asiatische Forschungen. 67.).

The second of these two books gives a synoptic edition of the biographical texts as announced above in note 65.

After the paper given above was handed over to the printers, a short article dealing with the *Bstod pa brgyad cu pa* was published under the title: Helmut Eimer, "The Hymn of Praise in Eighty Verses. The Earliest Literary Source for the Life of Atiśa". *Atiśa Dipankar Millennium Birth Commemoration Volume*. (*Jagajyoti*: Sept. 1982 to Jan. 83, Combined Number and Special Number on Atiśa Dipankar Srijñan). Calcutta 1983, 1-8.
