

Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po

A Brief Analysis of the Reputed Passing Away of *lha bla ma Ye shes 'od* among the Gar log

Translated and Annotated by Christian Jahoda*

After sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon [879–937], the son of dPal 'khor btsan [r. 893–910] or grandson of 'Od srung [840–893]¹ of the lineage of

* The translation of this study is based on the article “lHa bla ma ye shes 'od gar log tu 'das min skor la rags tsam dpyad pa”, first published by the author in a volume of a collection of his articles (Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 74–92) that deal mainly with aspects of the history, culture, society and religious traditions of mNga' ris skor gsum, that is, the area of historical Western Tibet. Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po's study was reprinted some years ago in a volume entitled 'Tshol zhib dang mtha' dpyod: Deng rabs bod rig pa'i skor gyi rtsom gces btus—Contemporary Tibetan Studies: Selected Papers (Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2012: 130–142) [editor's note].

The annotation is intended to draw attention to additional information or sources relevant to the author's study. It is, however, not the intention to discuss the question of the Gar log *per se*, their overall appearance in Tibetan historical sources and how they were perceived and described in these sources at different times.

¹ For the dates given for 'Od srung and dPal 'khor btsan see Jahoda, “On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh”, this volume, pp. 292–293. The date given for sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon is not entirely certain and based on Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's historical account in his *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* [“Royal Genealogy of the Solar Lineage”]. According to this, sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon was born in a Pig year and died at the age of 59 in a Bird year (see Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po, “Relating the history of mNga' ris as set down in writing in Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs skye dgu'i cod paṅ nyi zla'i phreng mdzes*: The Tibetan text”, this volume, p. 95). A possible Pig year (which also fits with the chronological data of his son bKra shis mgon [born between 913 and the early 920s] and his grandson Srong nge/Ye shes 'od [947–1019 according to *Ye shes 'od rnam thar* 2011: 278, 321; see also Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, “The Extended Biography of the Royal Lama *Ye shes 'od* by Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text”, this volume, p. 149; [947–1024]; date according to Vitali 2003: 55, 61) may be 879 while the Bird year may refer to 937. According to this account, he left for mNga' ris in a Tiger year which may have been 906 and the Sheep year when he brought *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs under his control may have been 911. See also Vitali 2003: 54–55, who does not give exact dates for sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon's birth and passing away. The dates



rulers (*btsan po*) of Tibet, had sought refuge in the region of Zhang zhung, he built the palace of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs on top of the

given by him for Nyi ma mgon's leaving for Western Tibet (Horse year 910) and for the foundation of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs (Monkey year 912)—based on different sources—differ from Grags pa rgyal mtshan's account.

1. Remains of the palace of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs on top of the Elephant Hill (Glang chen ri bo) in the area of dKar dung, Upper Purang (Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po, 2004).

Elephant Hill (Glang chen ri bo) in the area of dKar dung, on the north of the Peacock river,² in a locality not far from sTag la mkhar in sPu rang, one of eighteen major castles of Zhang zhung, and made it [the palace of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs] into his principal place.³ The designation “mNga’ ris”⁴ for this country first appeared after the subjugation of these areas, which previously experienced successive rule by the royal lineage of Zhang zhung. From that time, this region in the centre of Asia—formerly called Zhang zhung, the fame of which increasingly spread—became known as “mNga’ ris”, and when his [sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon’s] three sons had come of age, this kingdom⁵ was divided into three countries⁶ and was thus brought under control. Because of this, with regard to the history of Tibet, the Land of Snow (*bod kha ba can*),⁷ the name “sTod mNga’ ris bskor

² As mentioned by Vitali (1996: 154), most sources agree on the foundation of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs by sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon with the notable exception of Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s *Nyi ma’i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*. As to its location, this was unknown in Vitali’s view, except from the inclusion of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs in the subdivision of Western Tibet called *g.yas skor ba* (“circle or territory on the right hand”) which according to Vitali (*ibid.*: 153–155) corresponded to sPu rang stod or Upper Purang. Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po carried out research in Purang since 1989 and in the same year identified the location of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs, mainly based on information from oral traditions and archaeological inspections in situ, without doubt in the area of dKar dung (see Fig. 1).

³ Principal place is here the Tibetan *lte gnas* which is often translated as capital. This does not seem to be fitting here, as we cannot assume that the palace was of a great commanding extension or a kind of urban capital. Moreover, as respective sources indicate, the king was highly active in construction and warfare activities (and must have been on the move quite often) which must have required much of his time and resources. *La dwags rgyal rabs* [“Royal Genealogy of Ladakh”] relates the building of *sku mkhar* Nyi bzungs to the foundation of one royal seat (*rgyal sa*) from where he brought the whole area of Western Tibet under his control (“*sku mkhar nyi zungs rtsig ste/ rgyal sa btab nas/ mnaga’ ris skor gsum chab ’og tu bsdus nas*”; see Francke 1992: 35).

⁴ The literal meaning of *mnaga’ ris* is “subject” (synonymous with *chab ’bangs* and *mi ser*) and “subject territory” or “territory belonging to or subject to a polity” (*mnaga’ khongs*). See *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* [“The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary”] 1986: 683. The origin of this designation (which then also became the name by which the kingdom was known) is directly related by the author to the subjugation of the whole area. See also the author’s introductory chapter to his collected articles volume (Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005a: 1).

⁵ Kingdom, which translates here the Tibetan *rgyal khams*, not only refers to the political entity *per se* but also includes a strong concept of its territorial dimension.

⁶ The word country, which is here the Tibetan *yul*, may also be understood in the sense of province, that is three provinces (*yul khag gsum*) into which this kingdom was divided. Of importance here is the implication that the overarching political unity was mNga’ ris, while the countries belonging to it or provinces constituting it were at least on an administrative level more or less autonomous and in each case under the rule of one the three sons of sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon.

⁷ Like *gangs can* ([Abode or Land] of Snow), this is a common sobriquet for Tibet.

gsum”⁸ also initially appeared. The middle son [of sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon], the ruler (*btsan*) bKra shis mgon, had two sons. The younger one’s name was Srong nge or Drang srong lde, who acted as king of Gu ge in the first part of his life and who, after having been ordained as a monk in the later part of his life, was also called the Royal Lama (*lha bla ma*)⁹ Ye shes ’od.¹⁰

From around the mid-14th century, a great appraisal is accorded to him in various historical chronicles of Tibet composed by renowned scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, with regard to the period of the Later Diffusion of Buddhism (*bstan pa phyi dar*)¹¹ in Tibet and concerning *lha bla ma* Ye shes ’od, for having highly successfully arranged the dissemination of the *Vinaya* tradition of Western Tibet (sTod) and moreover for having invited many knowledgeable Indian *paṇḍitas* to Gu ge, headed by the three *pa las* [*pālas*]¹² and Jo bo rje dPal ldan

⁸ Literally, “the three circles of the upper [western] subject territories”.

⁹ The meaning of *lha bla ma* is royal lama or literally divine (*lha*) lama (*bla ma*), which refers to the asserted divine (*lha*) descent and status of the rulers (*btsan po*) of the Tibetan Empire of the 7th–9th centuries as well as the successors of this lineage in Western Tibet from the 10th century. Based on studies by Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (1999: 214f.) of some of the earliest epigraphical and textual records making reference to Ye shes ’od, he seems to have been referred to in the time(s) subsequent to his passing away primarily as ancestor (*mes*) (in particular by those who must have known him personally—as a relative or otherwise) or as glorious divine ruler (*dpal lha btsan po*), in addition to this as spiritual master (*slob dpon*), often also as bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa’*). The shortened designation as *lha bla ma* seems to be an abbreviation which became more widespread and dominant with increasing temporal distance (and in times when not only the religious but also the societal esteem for *bla ma* was established throughout all levels of society).

¹⁰ Here the author follows the account in *mNga’ ris rgyal rabs* [“Royal Genealogies of Western Tibet”] and *Ye shes ’od rnam thar rgyas pa* [“Extended Biography of the Royal Monk Ye shes ’od”]. See Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, “The *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes ’od* by Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text”, this volume, p. 133.

¹¹ Contemporary Tibetan sources do not entirely agree on the date when this period began. For Western Tibet (sTod mNga’ ris), Vitali, who based himself on the data in *mNga’ ris rgyal rabs*, set the beginning for around the Dog year 986 (Vitali 1996: 186; Vitali 2003: 56).

¹² The “three *pālas*” refers to three disciples of *paṇḍita* Dharmapāla, who was invited by Ye shes ’od to Western Tibet and seems to have been the key figure in the religious conception and building of the mTho gling *gtsug lag khang* in the late 10th/early 11th century (see *Ye shes ’od rnam thar* 2011: 302f.; see also Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, “The *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes ’od* by Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text”, this volume, p. 142). According to *Deb ther sngon po* [“Blue Annals”], “the three Pālas [were] Sādhpūpā, who was the chief among the disciples who expounded and practised the *Vinaya*, Guṇapāla, Prajñāpāla and others. Their lineage (brgyud-pa) is called the ‘Upper *Vinaya*’ (sTod-’Dul-ba).” (Roerich 1988: 69). As stated in *Deb ther sngon po*, *stod ’dul ba* should be understood as the *Vinaya* tradition of (that is, transmitted via and disseminated from) sTod or Western Tibet. Cf. also Shakabpa 2009: 17.

A ti sha [Lord Master Śrī Atiśa]¹³ and other famous *paṇḍitas*, and later for having sacrificed his own life in the country of the Gar log,¹⁴ which was inhabited by adherents of a non-Buddhist religion (*mu stegs pa*).¹⁵ As for what is thus recorded, apart from the postulated reputation which construes his growing achievements, it is by no means in agreement with the historical truth.¹⁶

¹³ In Tibet, Dīpamkarāśrījñāna (982–1054) is more commonly known under his honorific title of A ti sha (Atiśa). In Tibetan sources he is usually referred to as Jo bo (“Lord”) or Jo bo rje (“Lord Master”). “[H]is 13-year (1042–1054 C.E.) presence [from 1042–1045 in Western Tibet, followed by a longer stay in Central Tibet; editor’s note] is nostalgically recounted in a number of Tibetan historical sources, the actual social and institutional impact that Atiśa had while in Tibet has recently been re-evaluated” (Apple 2013: 264). See also n. 44.

¹⁴ The Tibetan Gar log is a rendering of Qarluq (also Karluk, etc.). According to Golden (2013: 48), “The Qarluqs were among the most important Turkic tribal groupings that entered the central zone of Central Asia following the fall of the Türk and Uighur empires.” On the Qarluqs, see also Karev 2013: 101 and *passim*.

The identification of the Gar log of the Tibetan sources with the Qarluq goes back to Helmut Hoffmann, who discussed this question for the first time in some detail by analysing a number of relevant Tibetan and other language sources that were available to him (Hoffmann 1950). As shown more recently by Samten Karmay and Christopher Beckwith, towards the end of the 8th century the Tibetans were already in contact with the Gar log/Qarluq and around the same time the Qarluq were even allies of the Tibetans in military campaigns in the area of Khotan (Karmay 1980a: 158, Beckwith 1987: 155). See also Vitali, “Territory and trends in land control: The Byang thang ‘Heartland’ and the mNga’ ris ‘periphery’”, this volume, pp. 12–13, and Jahoda, “On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh”, this volume, n. 74, pp. 295–296.

¹⁵ The Tibetan word *mu stegs pa* which corresponds to the Sanskrit *tīrthika*, is (and historically was) used to designate non-Buddhist or “heretic” doctrines and belief systems (and by consequence those adhering to them). It should be stressed that this word clearly reflects a classification based on religious (and not on ethnic) criteria. For a discussion of this term in Tibetan doxographical writings of the 13th century see, for example, Kapstein 2000: 104, 244, n. 81.

¹⁶ The author is hereby following the example of the Tibetan historian Samten Karmay, who in 1980 had already commented critically that “the Buddhist historians of Tibet seem to have felt that it was enough just to mention this story and repeat it through the ages. However this legendary account is in conflict with an almost contemporary source, the short biography of Rin-chen bzang-po [...]” (Karmay 1980a: 150. (In the reprinted version “the Buddhist historians of Tibet” is replaced by “the Tibetan Buddhist historians”; cf. Karmay 2003: 134).

Despite this and other critical comments (for example, by Sørensen 1994: 457), entries on the Gar log in various dictionaries, such as in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, continue(d) to adhere to the legendary tradition that Ye shes 'od was killed in the 11th century by a king of the Gar log (who are named as a branch of the Turkic people in historical Kashmir): “*gar log: sngar kha che yul gyi mi rigs tu ru ka'i nang gses yan lag cig yin zhing/ dus rabs bcu gcig par de'i rgyal po zhis gis lha bla ma ye shes 'od bkrongs pa'*” (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* 1986: 352–353) or uncritically quote from just one or a few selected historiographical sources (such as *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* [“The Great Dungkar Dictionary”, which refers to *Jo bo rje rnam thar rgyas pa* [“Extended Biography of Jo bo rje”] by 'Brom ston pa; see *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* 2002: 492).

An extended version of this pious legend was reportedly told by the present

In fact, in *Deb ther dmar po* [“Red Annals”] composed by Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje in the mid-14th century, in the Fire Dog year of the sixth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1346),¹⁷ it says: “The father was called *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od. When he too travelled to India he was captured on the way by Gar log troops. After collecting gold from Tibet and despite a plan for paying ransom having been worked out, [gold] having been obtained equal to his body [weight] but not to his head, he was killed.” (*Deb ther dmar po* 1981: 42–43).¹⁸ As for what is thus recorded, in various historical chronicles which I [Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po] inspected until now [it has been stated that] *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od was captured by Gar log troops, and although this [*Deb ther dmar po*'s account] is the first report concerning the way he was killed, nothing has been written about the reason he had to travel to India was in order to invite Jo bo rje [Atiśa].

In *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* [“The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies”], composed by Sa skya bSod nams rgyal mtshan at the end of the 14th century, in the Earth Dragon year of the seventh sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1388), it says: “At the time

Dalai Lama bSod tan 'dzin rgya mtsho. According to his story, the decapitated body of Ye shes 'od was kept in salt in the Potala palace when he was a boy (see Laird 2006: 78–80).

¹⁷ Throughout the translated text corresponding years in the Western calendar (*spyi lo*), which the author adds in parentheses, are given without AD or CE.

¹⁸ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 75, with minor corrections and additions in square brackets based on the text edition cited): “*yab ni lha bla ma ye shes 'od ces bya'o'[/single shad] khong rang yang rgya gar du byon pas [] lam du gar log gi dmag gis bzung ste/ bod kyis [kyi] gser bsod nas [slu (]blu[])] bar brtsams pa na'ang/ sku lus tsam gcig rnyed pa la dbu tsam gcig ma rnyed par dkrongs [bkrongs]*”.

A slightly different version of this story is contained in the edition of *Deb ther dmar po*, which was published with the Tibetan text and in translation by Giuseppe Tucci (1971): “*lde gtsug mgon 'di sras 'khor re dang srong nge gnyis/ srong nge'i sku tshe'i stod la nā ga rā dzā dang/ de wa rā dzā sras gnyis byung smad ja rab tu byung ba lha bla ma ye shes 'od ces grags te/ mthon lding gi lha khang bzhengs pa dang/ khye'u blo rno ba nyi shu rtsa gcig rgya gar du chos slob pa la rdzong ba mdzad cing paṇḍita warmā mam gsum spyang drangs ste/ mdo sngags kyi gsung rab mang du bsgyur/ phyis jo bo spyan 'dren pa'i dus su gser 'tshol bar byon pas gar log gi rgyal pos bzung/ mnga' ris nas gser mang pos slu bar rtsams na'ang jo bo gdan 'dren la gnod dogs nas slur ma bcug par chos phyir sku srog gtang ba yin 'dug'*” (Tucci 1971: 39, f. 38a1–6). His translation reads: “De gtsug mgon had two sons: aK'or re and Sroñ ñe. In the first part of his life, the latter had as sons: Nā ga rā dsa and De va rā dsa; in the later part he was ordained and known as Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od. He founded the temple of mT'o ldiñ and sent to India, in order to learn the Law, twenty-one boys of sharp intellect, and he invited the three Paṇḍitas called Varma; many texts of sūtras and mantras were then translated. Afterwards, when Atiśa was invited, the Garlok (Qarluq) who had come in search of gold, took the king prisoner. Though mNā' ris had begun to ransom him with much gold, lest this might be an obstacle to the invitation of the Jo bo, giving up the ransom, he sacrificed his life for the sake of the Law.” (*ibid.*: 168).

of these three,¹⁹ when *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, having reflected on the teaching of the Buddha, went to India in order to invite *paṇḍitas* [to Western Tibet], he was captured on the way by non-Buddhist troops (*mu stegs pa'i dmag*). All his subtle energy channels²⁰ which generate the spiritual qualities of virtuous orientation were burned by moxibustion, which put him in a deeply clouded mental state. When rumours about this came to *lha bla ma* Byang chub 'od, he sent immeasurable riches as a ransom payment but, rather than this, gold equal to the weight [of Ye shes 'od] was claimed. Again, when all gold was loaded, at the time the weight was measured and the gold did not come up for the portion of his head he [Ye shes 'od] said: 'Now, even if you ransom me there is no merit.' (...) Jo bo rje [Atiśa] (...) was invited to Tibet." (*rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* 1981: 244).²¹ In this chronicle the main reason why Ye shes 'od went to India was for the diffusion of the teaching of the Buddha in the region of Western Tibet and that he went into a land of non-Buddhist foreigners (*phyi pa mu stegs yul*)²² in order to invite *paṇḍitas*, and that as a result he was captured by

¹⁹ The text refers to Zhi ba 'od (1016–1111), Byang chub 'od (984–1078) and 'Od Ide (983–1037) who are mentioned in the passage immediately preceding as the three sons born to King lHa lde—however, making Zhi ba 'od the eldest (see also Sørensen 1994: 457). The dates given here for Zhi ba 'od and Byang chub 'od in parentheses follow Vitali 1996: 146–147, *passim*, and Vitali 2003: 56–68. On the dates suggested for 'Od Ide, see Jahoda, "On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh", this volume, pp. 293–296.

²⁰ This translates the Tibetan *rtsa*, which is also known from beliefs adhered to by trance mediums in Nepal as well as from rituals (*rtsa sgo phyee ba*) practised by their counterparts (*lha pa*) in Western Tibet (Bellezza 2005: 156). In this context the meaning of *rtsa* (Skt. *nādi*, "channel") is not "vein, artery" but relates to the concept of "channels of the subtle body" (Berglie 1982: 152). Each "channel has at its opening a door (*rtsa sgo*)" through which trance mediums send away their consciousness (*rnam shes*) and through which possessing gods can enter the trance medium" (*ibid.*). See the bibliography in Berglie 1982 for a selection of sources pertaining to this topic. Cf. also Berglie 1976: 90.

²¹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 76, with minor additions in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "*di gsum gyi dus su lha bla ma ye shes 'od kyis/]sang rgyas [kyi] bstan pa la dgongs nas/]rgya gar du pa paṇḍi ta gdan 'dren par [par omitted in the quoted source] byon pas lam du mu stegs pa'i dmag gis bzung/ dge phyogs kyi yon tan skyed pa'i rtsa sgo thams cad me btsas bsregs te rmongs par byas so// de'i gdam lha bla ma byang chub 'od kyis gsan te/]nor dpag med bskur nas [(bslu) (blu)] ru btang bas/]gser dang ljid mnyam pa dgos zer ba dang/ yang gser gang yod bskur bas rgya ma la btegs dus dbu'i cha tsam cig gser gyis ma long par khong na re/ da ni khyed rnam kyis bdag [bslus] (blu)] kyang yon tan med ... jo bo rje ... bod du gdan drangs". Cf. also Sørensen 1994: 457–458 for a translation of the whole passage not quoted by Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po.*

²² In current colloquial Tibetan the word *phyi pa*, literally "outsider", is usually used to differentiate non-Buddhists from Buddhists (*nang pa*, literally "insider"). By combining *phyi pa* with the word *mu stegs (pa)*, an additional aspect of differentiation or "othering" in terms of geographic distance is expressed, which is given in the translation as "foreigners".

the foreigners etc. Although this is written very clearly it is not stated whether the country where he was captured was that of the Gar log.

Besides this, in *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* ["Chinese and Tibetan Documents"] composed by sTag tshang pa dPal 'byor bzang po in the mid-15th century, in the Wood Tiger year of the seventh sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1434), [it is stated that] "while *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od also searched for gold as a means for inviting *paṇḍitas*, he went to the Indian borderlands (*rgya gar mtha' khob*)²³ where he was taken prisoner by the king of these non-Buddhists (...) *lha bla ma* [Ye shes 'od] passed away in the borderland (*mtha' khob*)." (*rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* 1985: 24 218–219).²⁵ Although at first it is thus written that Ye shes 'od went to the non-Buddhist Indian country in search of gold for the purpose of inviting *paṇḍitas* and in the end passed away there, it is not stated whether that country in the Indian border lands was [that of] the Gar log.

Next, in *Deb ther sngon po*, composed by 'Gos lo gZhon nu dpal at the end of the 15th century, in the Fire Monkey year of the eighth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1476), [it is stated that] "*lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, though he had given up kingship (*rgyal srid gtad*),²⁶ acted as commander of the army. When fighting with the Gar

²³ Regarding the notion and location of these "Indian borderlands" or "fringe countries of India" (*rgya gar mtha' khob*), it should be noted that this notion is based on Indocentric Buddhist concepts, such as that of the Sixteen Great Countries (Mahājanapadas), with the centre lying in areas of northern or north-western India which is surrounded by a large number of fringe countries (*mtha' khob*) (already referred to and explained by Hoffmann 1950: 203, n. 2). The country of the Gar log is named as one of these, located between Tibet and Hor (Mongolia). As shown by Dan Martin (2012 [1994]), from the mid or late 12th century onward, these earlier concepts were replaced in Tibetan sources by "Tibetocentric" models. In addition to this, according to Martin, a distinction between two types of centres emerged, between a "geographic" centre (identified with Bodhgayā, the place where the Buddha is said to have obtained Enlightenment) and a "qualitative" centre (of flourishing Buddhism). In this way, countries such as that of the Gar log—as well as Tibet—continued to be understood and described geographically (from an Indocentric perspective) as lying at the margins (*mtha' khob*), while qualitatively Tibet could be described as partaking in the "essence of the centre" (*dbus kyi snying po*).

²⁴ The original publication by the author gives 1983 as the publication date of this source, which, however, only refers to the foreword by the editor Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (see *ibid.*: 2).

²⁵ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 76, with minor additions in square brackets based on the 1985 text edition cited): "*lha bla mas [<rgyal srid gcung la gtad nas>] kyang/]paṇḍi ta gdan 'dren pa'i cha rkyen gyi gser 'tshol ba la/ rgya gar mtha' khob la byon pas/]mtha' khob tu mu stegs rgyal pos btson du [...] bzung ... lha bla ma mtha' khob tu sku gshegs so [I]".*

²⁶ In this case the translation of *rgyal srid* as "kingship" is preferable to "state affairs" or "political power". It is clear that Ye shes 'od gave up kingship or secular power, but the idea that he fully gave up control of state affairs or secular power with his ordination as a Buddhist monk is dubious.

log, he was defeated and imprisoned. The Gar log told Ye shes 'od: 'If you cease taking refuge in the Three Jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*),²⁷ we will release you from prison. If not, upon receipt of gold equal to the weight of your whole body, we will let you go.'" (*Deb ther sngon po* 1984: 299–300).²⁸ It is written here at first that Ye shes 'od acts as commander of the army and it is clearly stated that he himself led the army into the Gar log country and that after fighting a battle he was finally defeated and imprisoned. It is not explicitly written that the search for gold in order to invite *paṇḍitas* was the reason for leading [his] troops against the Gar log.²⁹

Moreover, in *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* ["New Red Annals"], composed by Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa in the 1530s³⁰ or [more precisely] in the Earth Dog year of the ninth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1538), [it is stated that] "later, when [Ye shes 'od] went in search of gold in order to invite Jo bo [Atiśa], he was captured by the king of the Gar log. Although it was undertaken to pay ransom with a lot of gold from Western Tibet (mNga' ris), [he] sacrificed his life for the sake of the teaching of the Buddha, not allowing himself to be ransomed, as it might endanger the invitation of Jo bo [Atiśa]." (*Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* 1989: 37).³¹ It is very clearly stated that Ye shes 'od went to the Gar log in order to invite Jo bo [Atiśa], and also that the reason for going to the Gar log was specifically the search for gold.

In a similar fashion, in (*Chos 'byung*) *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* ["(Religious History:) A Feast for Scholars"] composed by mKhas

dbang dPa' bo gTsub lag phreng ba in the 1540s, in the Wood Snake year of the ninth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1545), [it is stated that] "this *lha bla ma* [Ye shes 'od], in order to invite Jo bo rje [Atiśa] gave up his body to the king of the Gar log and died." (*Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* 1986: 435).³² In this chronicle it is conspicuously written that the reason Ye shes 'od sacrificed his life among the Gar log was precisely for the purpose of inviting Jo bo rje [Atiśa].

Furthermore, in '*Brug pa'i chos 'byung* ["Religious History of the 'Brug pa (bKa' brgyud pa School)"] composed by 'Brug pa Padma dkar po in the 1580s,³³ in the Iron Dragon year of the tenth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1580),³⁴ [it is stated that] "at this time *lha bla ma* [Ye shes 'od], in search of gold with the intention to invite Jo bo [Atiśa], went to the borderlands (*mtha' khob tu*) with an army battalion to look for gold. After the Gar log learned of this, they sent an army. When they met and fought [and Ye shes 'od's soldiers] were defeated, the royal monk (*lha btsun*)³⁵ was captured." (*Brug pa'i chos 'byung* 1992: 264–265).³⁶ This is similar to the above-quoted *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* and [it can be stated that] the reason for him going to the Gar log and the circumstance of his passing away were written in an increasingly extended form.³⁷

³² Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 78, where the page reference is wrongly given as *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* 1986: 35): "*lha bla ma 'dis jo bo rje spyen 'dren pa'i phyir sku lus gar log gi rgyal po la btang nas 'das*".

³³ Or the decade of the eighties (*lo rabs brgyad cu*), cf. n. 30.

³⁴ See Martin 1997: 183 for various editions of this work.

³⁵ The meaning of *lha btsun* is royal monk, or literally divine (*lha*) monk (*btsun pa*). This title was used in historical Western Tibet for male members of the royal family who acted as rulers (or were at least eligible for this function) and who at some point in their life took vows and became monks (or who were monks when ascending the throne, like for example Byang chub 'od, on whom see below n. 38). In this case, it is clearly (and uncommonly) used with regard to Ye shes 'od although at the beginning of the quote he is referred to as *lha bla ma* which is the usual designation found in historiographical texts from around the 14th century.

³⁶ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 78): "*de'i dus lha bla mas gser btsal ba la jo bo spyen drangs dgongs mtha' khob tu gser 'tshol ba la dmag du ma [dum] zhig dang bcas te byon pas gar log gis shes nas dmag btang/ de dang thug 'thab pas pam nas lha btsun rang brtson [btsun] la shor*". My translation follows the sPungs thang edition (as quoted in Hoffmann 1950: 201 and Eimer 1976: 191) the variant readings of which are given in squared brackets.

³⁷ Padma dkar po's rendering of this story was discussed by Helmut Eimer in his article "Die Gar log-Episode bei Padma dkar po und ihre Quellen" (1976), where he collated and compared pertinent passages mainly from four different texts: two biographical accounts of Atiśa (*Jo bo rin po che dpal ldan a ti śa'i rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* and *Jo bo rje rnam thar lam yig chos kyi 'byung gnas*), furthermore *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, *Deb ther sngon po* and also *Deb ther*

²⁷ The expression "The Three Jewels" or "The Three Most Precious Ones" (*dkon mchog gsum*, Skt. *triratna*) stands for Buddha (the originator of the doctrine), *dharma* (*chos*, Buddhist doctrine, doctrinal scriptures) and *saṃgha* (*dge 'dun*, monastic community). These are the three "things" in which Buddhists take refuge (see Jäschke 1881: 10; Powers and Templeman 2012: 209).

²⁸ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 77): "*lha bla ma ye shes 'od kyis rang gi rgyal srid gtad zin kyang dmag gi dpon mdzad de/ gar log dang 'thabs pas pham ste gar log gis btsun du bzung/ gar log gis ye shes 'od la khyod dkon mchog gsum la skyabs su 'dzin pa gtong na nged kyis btsun las gtong/ de lta ma yin na lus ril po dang ljid mnyam pa'i gser byung na gtong zer*".

²⁹ The literal meaning of *gar log tu dmag drangs* is "to lead [his] troops to the Gar log".

³⁰ Thirties translates the Tibetan *lo rabs sum bcu*, which should be read in this and similar cases as at one point in the decade (*lo rabs*) of the thirties (*sum bcu*), etc.

³¹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 77, where the page reference is wrongly given as *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* 1989: 435): "*phyis jo bo spyen 'dren pa'i don du gser 'tshol bar byon pas gar log gi rgyal pos bzungs/ mnga' ris nas gser mang pos blu bar brtsams na'ang jo bo gden 'dren la gnod dogs [dwogs] nas blur ma bcug par chos phyir sku srog btang ba yin 'dug*". The addition in square brackets is based on the text edition cited (*Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* 1989: 37).

In *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* ["Religious History of the bKa' gdams pa (School)"] by Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams Grags pa rgyal mtshan, [it is stated that] "at that time *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od went to search for gold and after having been captured by the king of the Gar log, his grand-nephew (*dbon po*), the royal monk (*lha btsun*) Byang chub 'od³⁸ ransomed the paternal grand-uncle (*khu bo*) [Ye shes 'od] and invited Atiśa." (*bKa' gdams chos 'byung* 1996: 54–55).³⁹ Similar to the chronicles mentioned above, the point of view of this chronicle is not exceptional either.

In *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'* ["Thu'u bkwan's Philosophical Tenets"] composed by Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma at the beginning of the 18th century, in the Iron Bird year of the thirteenth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1801), [it is stated that] "furthermore, after having thought to send an invitation [to Atiśa] and trying to obtain a lot of gold, when he [Ye shes 'od] went to obtain gold he was captured by the king of the Gar log and not released anymore.

dmar po gsar ma (that is, the version published by Tucci 1971). As a conclusion to his analysis Eimer arrived at the hypothesis that Padma dkar po composed his Gar log account on the basis of source material as represented by *Jo bo rin po che dpal ldan a ti śa'i rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags*, *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and *Deb ther sngon po* and in addition also by expanding his template(s) (Eimer 1976: 190). Eimer did not express any doubts regarding the original validity of the story as contained in *Jo bo rin po che dpal ldan a ti śa'i rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags*, and accordingly saw no need to trace the provenance of this narrative, which was considered a myth by Samten Karmay as early as 1980 and qualified as a legend by Sørensen (cf. Sørensen 1994: 457).

Nevertheless, Eimer's analysis offers valuable insight into how Padma dkar po made use of these four different textual sources and how he rearranged and wove them into an account that places new emphases on certain aspects of the story by "creative" selection and arrangement of the material at his disposal, without basically inventing new "facts" (Eimer 1976: 189).

A similar legend is contained in the *dPe chos rin chen spungs pa* ("Teachings by Example, A Heap of Gems"), a bKa' gdams pa work (going back to oral instructions given by Po to ba Rin chen dpal [1027/31–1105]; see Sørensen 1999: 178f. and Roesler 2013: 143). In this case as the example illustrating the reverence for the Three Jewels is that of the Buddhist king of Khotan, who was captured by the non-Buddhist king of the Qarluq and subsequently sacrificed his life for pious reasons (see Roesler 2011: 255–256).

³⁸ The earliest evidence for a reference to Byang chub 'od as a grand-nephew of Ye shes 'od is found in the so-called Renovation Inscription in the assembly hall (*du khang*) of the Tabo *gtsug lag khang*. There one finds the expression *dbon lha btsun ba [pa] byang chub 'od*. Ye shes 'od is mentioned as *mes byang chub sems dpa'* ("the ancestor, the Bodhisattva") (Steinkellner and Luczanits 1999: 16, 21) while in the inscription in the entry hall dating from the late 10th century it says: "... [illegible] *chen po ye shes 'od*" (great ... Ye shes 'od). See also Luczanits 1999: 105.

³⁹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 78, with minor corrections in square brackets rendering the text edition cited): "*dus der lha bla ma ye shes 'od gser 'tshol du byon pa/ gar log gi rgyal pos bzung bas/ de'i dbon [dpon] po lha btsun byang chub 'od kyiś khu bo blu [bslu] ba dang/ a ti sha spyān 'dren pa/ [/ omitted]*".

Although Byang chub 'od, the grand-nephew (*dbon po*) of Ye shes 'od, having searched for a large quantity of gold, went to ransom his paternal grand-uncle (*khu bo*), he was not able to free him. Ye shes 'od was then killed by the Gar log." (*Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'* 1985: 85).⁴⁰ Although a clear point of view is expressed, it cannot be said whether the similarity with most of the chronicles mentioned above is because of the very late period when this particular chronicle was composed.

To summarise, the essential point recorded in the group of chronicles mentioned above is that in order to invite a famous Indian *paṇḍī ta*—Jo bo rje dPal ldan A ti sha [Lord Master Śrī Atiśa]—to Gu ge, *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od himself went to the country of the Gar log in search of gold, or that [there] while leading an army he was captured and held prisoner by the king of that country, and that because of the severe legal punishment in the human realms (*mi yul du*), let alone in the end [any] means to return to his own country, he decided to sacrifice his own life. In any case, for the most part the basis for these chronicles was *Deb (ther) dmar (po)* and *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*. If one compares the chronicles written after the 14th century or from the 15th century with the group of chronicles written in the 14th century, apart from [the fact] that the content in terms of the grace, glory, and excellencies of wealth was increasingly augmented and became more comprehensive, this differentiation and distinction of the essential meaning was not there at the beginning. As for the *Deb ther dmar po*, composed in the 1340s, at that time the attachment to the *Vinaya* tradition of Western Tibet (sTod) was strong in the dBus region⁴¹ in the centre of the Land of Snow (*gangs can ljongs*).⁴² In fact, headed by the bKa' gdams pa monasteries Sol nag thang po che, gSang phu sne'u thog and Rwa sgreng, built by the three excellent "spiritual sons" (*thugs sras*)⁴³ of Jo bo rje, namely Khu ston brTson 'grus g.yung drung, rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab and 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas, the three (*khu rngog*

⁴⁰ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 79, with minor corrections in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "*da dung gser mang po btsal nas spyān 'dren par mngags dgongs nas gser 'tshol [tshol] du phebs pa gar log gi rgyal pos bzung nas ma btang/ ye shes 'od kyi dbon po byang chub 'od kyiś gser mang po btsal nas khu bo blu bar phyir [phyin] kyang gtong ma nyan/ de nas ye shes 'od gar log gis bkrongs*".

⁴¹ dBus is the area around Lhasa (lHa sa) in Central Tibet. At certain times in history it also constituted a province (see Goldstein 1991 [1968]: 10, Goldstein 1989: 66, Tsering Gyalbo, Hazod and Sørensen 2000: 51).

⁴² Like *gangs can* and *kha ba can*, *gangs can (gyi) ljongs* is another variant of the common sobriquet for Tibet.

⁴³ The literal meaning of *thugs sras* is "heart son". In the religious context where this term is used it can be translated as "spiritual son" or, from a more secular perspective, also as "chief disciple".

'*brom gsum*), the bKa' gdams pa school, or else the influence of the *Vinaya* tradition of Western Tibet (sTod) was particularly strong. Because of this, the need to speak highly about the famous Indian *paṇḍita* Atiśa was as great as before and (so) indeed praising was not only far from low for having left behind a great achievement in terms of the increase of the influence of the bKa' gdams pa school and once more the spread and expansion of the teaching of the Buddha in Tibet, the Land of Snows, undertaken by him but also because of invitations to famous *paṇḍitas* or such great scholars. And [there was also praising] of the unsurpassable achievement of the highly renowned Ye shes 'od, that is, of one who acted earlier as king of mNga' ris Gu ge and later, after having been ordained as monk, established incredible success with the dissemination of the *Vinaya* tradition of Western Tibet (sTod) and the Later Diffusion of Buddhism (*bstan pa phyi dar*). And by virtue of the desire to play the sweet sounding melody of a tambura hailing the gratitude which is difficult to measure [this] is imagined from the perspective of somewhat exaggerating the real historical developments.⁴⁴

In fact, there was no reason why *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od should have gone to the borderland country of the Gar log in search of gold. If one asks why, the region of sTod mNga' ris in Upper Tibet in the Land of Snow (*bod gangs can ljongs*) was from ancient times an important centre of gold mining. The whole landscape of this country is full of sites where gold was roasted (*khrog pa*).⁴⁵ In the past in [the field of] Buddhism many erudite *paṇḍitas* were invited

⁴⁴ The author's scepticism concerning the overwhelming influence of Ye shes 'od and Atiśa on the religious landscape of Central Tibet is to a large degree in accordance with a critical rereading of the real historical development by Ronald Davidson who states: "the initial impact of West Tibetan Buddhism on Ü-Tsang [dBus gTsang] in the eleventh century was modest" (Davidson 2005: 112). There also seems to be some agreement with regard to a critical evaluation of later accounts (from the 14th/15th century): "Both the Kadampa connection and the authority of kings like Lha-lama [*lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od] and Jangchub-Ö [Byang chub 'od] have been accorded great significance throughout later Tibetan and secondary Western literature. Why such a skewed emphasis? I believe there are at least three reasons: the Tibetan privileging of the Ösung ['Od srung] line, with a consequent historical amnesia about the activities of Yumten's [Yum brtan] descendants, the importance of the Kadampa [bKa' gdams pa school] or Kadampa-related doctrinal and teaching systems in the late eleventh century onward, and the overwhelming rewriting of history after the founding of the New Kadampa lineage [this is, the dGe ldan pa or dGe lugs pa school] by Tsongkhapa in 1409." (*ibid.*: 113).

⁴⁵ According to the author, the meaning of *khrog pa* in this case is "relics or ruins". The translation is based on the meaning of *khrog* as "to be roasted" and consequently *gser khrog pa* is understood to refer to the roasting or calcination of gold in order to effect "the elimination of the arsenic and antimony associated with gold and silver ores" (see, for example, Johnson 1898: 100) the traces of which are still visible in the form of remains or relics.

to Tibet, or else not to mention, as it may be clearly known, that at the time of sending Tibetan children zealous in the teaching of the Buddha, to India in order to ask for religious instruction, usually a great deal of gold was also taken with them. As *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od had abundant gold mines in his own country, there was no need whatsoever to go in search of gold in a country in need of other countries' gold.

Analogously, [it is written] in *Deb ther sngon po* [that] at the time of Ye shes 'od, when in Gu ge the Great Translator (*lo chen*) Rin chen bzang po, the Lesser Translator (*lo chung*) Legs pa'i shes rab and many other excellent scholars lived, "Jo bo [Atiśa] said: 'If men such as you [Rin chen bzang po] appear to live in Tibet, then there is no need for me to come to Tibet!'" (*Deb ther sngon po* 1984: 305).⁴⁶ According to these words, and in conformity with the great influence of the three Pālas who were especially invited from India, there was furthermore no urgent reason to invite the famous *paṇḍita* Jo bo rje dPal ldan A ti sha [Śrī Atiśa] to Gu ge. Moreover, at that time in Gu ge the roots of the teaching of the Buddha (*chos*) and of knowledge (*yon tan*) were profoundly implanted by the outstandingly learned translator Rin chen bzang po and his disciples and also the foundation of the textual tradition of the gSang sngags gsar ma ["Secret New Mantra"]⁴⁷ was laid out in an excellent form. In fact, at the end of the 11th century or beginning of the 12th century, in *lDe'u chos 'byung* by lDe'u Jo sras and in *mKhas pa lde'u mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* by mKhas pa lde'u [it is stated that] "also in the later part of the life of the translator (*lo tsā ba*) Rin chen bzang po, after the royal monk (*lha btsun*) Byang chub 'od had sent Nag tsho lo tsā ba⁴⁸ to India, Hi dang ka ra was invited and among many the level to put into practice both mantra and philosophy (*sngags [dang] mtshan nyid*) was established" (*lDe'u chos 'byung* 1987: 147–48)⁴⁹ and "in the later part of the life of the translator (*lo tsā ba*) Rin chen bzang po,

⁴⁶ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 81): "jo bo'i zhal nas/ e khyed lta bu bod na bzugs nas snag pas [recte: snang bas]/ kho bo bod du 'ong mi dgos par 'dug". Cf. also Roerich 1988: 249.

⁴⁷ All the Tantras that were translated after the Great Translator (*lo chen*) Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), also known as author of *sNgags log sun byin* ["Critique of False Tantras"], were conventionally called gSang sngags gsar ma, in order to distinguish them from previously translated erroneous tantric texts (see Cabezon and Lobsang Dargay 2007: 23; Raudsepp 2011: 35).

⁴⁸ Nag tsho lo tsā ba Tshul khriims rgyal ba (1011–1064). Cf. Roesler 2008: 396 and Wedemeyer 2013: 182.

⁴⁹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 81, with minor additions in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "yang lo tsā ba de'i sku tshe'i smad la lha btsun byang chub 'od kyis nag tsho lo tsā ba rgya gar du btang nas/]hi pang ka ra spyang drangs nas sngags mtshan nyid gnyis ka'i lag tu blang ba'i rim pa mang du phab/]".

after the royal monk (*lha btsun*) Byang chub 'od had sent Nag tsho lo tsā ba to India, the master Di pam ka ra was invited and the level to apply both mantra and philosophy (*sngags [dang] mtshan nyid*) in practice was established." (*mKhas pa lde'u mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* 1987: 382).⁵⁰ Then, a short period of time before these two chronicles were written, the name of Jo bo rje—Hi pang ka ra or Di pam ka ra—was also retained in Sanskrit as it is. Who precisely invited him, or that it was *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od rather than *lha btsun* Byang chub 'od, is never mentioned. There is not the slightest trace [of evidence] for the made-up history that *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od went on some military affair to the Gar log in order to invite Jo bo rje (Atiśa) and so on.

In *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud* ["A Religious History: The Sweet Essence of Flowers"], composed by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer before the 1190s, [it is stated that] "Byang chub 'od thought: 'If one excellent learned *paṇḍita* is invited, the benefit will be greater'. After rGya brTson 'grus seng ge was appointed as leader ... in the land of Za hor in eastern India ... the one known as Master (*rje*) Di pam ka ra shri dznyā na [Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna] ... was given a gift accompanying the request (upon which) he replied ... and agreed to come to Tibet ... and went to mTho ling." (*Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud* 1988: 466–467).⁵¹ In terms of the content of this particular chronicle and the description in all respects, there is also not a great difference in the degree of detail from *lDe'u chos 'byung* mentioned above, and the historical facts are for the most part comparable.

In *Bu ston chos 'byung* ["Bu ston's Religious History"], written by Bu ston Rin chen grub in the 1320s, in the Water Dog year of the fifth sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1322), [it is stated that] "Byang chub 'od bestowed gold on five men, such as Nag tsho Tshul (khrims) rgyal ba and so on and after the translator (*lo tsā ba*) rGya brTson 'grus seng ge had been elected as their leader, [he] said: 'May

⁵⁰ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 81–82 where the page reference is wrongly given as *mKhas pa lde'u mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* 1987: 38): "lo tsā ba rin chen bzang po'i sku tshes'i smad la[] lha btsun byang chub 'od kyi nag tsho lo tsā ba rgya gar du btang nas/ rje di pam ka ra spyang drangs nas sngags mtshan nyid gnyis ka [kha] lag tu len pa'i rim pa gtan la phab". Minor additions and corrections in square brackets based on the text edition cited (*mKhas pa lde'u mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* 1987: 382).

⁵¹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 82, with minor corrections in square brackets based on the 1988 text edition cited): "byang chub 'od kyi thugs dgongs la [...] paṇ ḍi ta mkhas pa [bzang ba] zhiḡ spyang drangs na phan che bar 'dug bsams pas ... rgya brtson 'grus seng ge la dpon bgyis nas/ rgya gar shar phyogs za hor gyi yul na ... rtse [rje] di pam ka ra shri [shri] dza nya [dznyā] na zhes bya bar [ba] ... zhu rten phul nas zhus pas ... bod du byon par zhal gyis bzhes nas [...] mtho [tho] ling du byon [nas]". Cf. Meisezahl 1985: 338.3.3–339.2.2.

a good *paṇḍita* be invited!' upon which Dwi bam ka ra shri dza nya na [Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna] was invited." (*Bu ston chos 'byung* 1988: 201).⁵² Although of course this chronicle was composed in the 14th century, nevertheless as regards what is said in this highly reliable reference book quoted here, its straightforward point of view is consistent with the group of chronicles composed in the 12th century.

In addition, in *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* ["Yar lung jo bo's Religious History"], composed by Yar lung jo bo Shwakya Rin chen sde thirty years after Tshal pa's [Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje's] *Deb [ther] dmar [po]*, in the 1370s of the fourteenth century, [it is stated that] "his [lHa lde's] sons 'Od lde and *pho brang*⁵³ Zhi ba 'od and *btsun*

⁵² Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 82–83 where the page reference is wrongly given as *Bu ston chos 'byung* 1988: 69–70): "byang chub 'od kyi nag tsho tshul rgyal ba la sogs pa mi lnga la gser bskur/ lo tsā ba [lotstsha ba] rgya brtson 'grus seng ge dpon du bskos nas[] paṇ ḍi ta bzang po gdan drongs la shog byas pas ... dī bam [pam] ka ra śrī dznyā na spyang drangs". Alternative readings as provided in the critical edition of this text by Szerb 1990: 86 are given in square brackets. Cf. also Obermiller 1932: 213.

⁵³ The application of the epithet *pho brang* (literally meaning [king's] palace, court palace, king's residence and also used as an honorific for king) with regard to Zhi ba 'od and in various passages in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, also with regard to his elder brother Byang chub 'od, was discussed by Vitali (1996: 296–297, n. 459). He came to the conclusion that "since there is no clear instance of its use, I am in no position to propose an interpretation" (*ibid.*). However, at least in the case of Byang chub 'od he assumes that *pho brang* was a religious title given to him upon his ordination.

It seems that a clarification of this title or designation can be achieved by briefly reviewing the religio-political transformation that was initiated by Ye shes 'od. In 986 he issued a *bka' shog chen mo*, "a document in which the population was called upon to follow the Buddhist doctrine. This summons was followed two years later (988) by a 'religious edict' (*chos gtsigs*) containing a code of conduct for all social groups (royal family, monks, the laity) with clear-cut legal regulations both for the religious and the secular sphere (*chos khrims* and *rgyal khrims* respectively)." (Jahoda and Kalantari 2016: 84). This edict also regulated the succession in the royal line by taking into account these religious endeavours: "If there are many (king's) sons, [all] have to become monks except the heir apparent (rgyal.tshab). If the btsan.po is ordained (rab.tu.byung.ba), he has to protect the sangha [or more precisely, as added in a footnote by Vitali, the "Vinaya realm" (*dul zhing*), that is the "realm of ordained monks"]. If the line (gdung) of lay rulers (btsan.po skya.bo) is interrupted, it is to be restored from the monks' side [of the royal family]." (Vitali 1996: 110). The title *pho brang* was therefore clearly reserved (as is made fully clear in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*) for (male) members of the royal family who, after their ordination, had the duty to protect this realm as members of the palace or from the palace (*pho brang*). The phrase used for this is to protect the *Vinaya* realm (*dul zhing srung ba*) or to protect the teachings (*bstan pa skyong ba*). This function was fulfilled first (from 989–996) by Ye shes 'od himself, who set the example, and then by his sons De ba ra dza (Devarāja) (996–1023 [1027 according to the *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od*]) and Na ga ra dza (Nāgarāja) (1023–1026 [1027–1030 according to the *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od*]), both following a direct order (*bka' lung*) by Ye shes 'od. In 1026 bKra shis 'od was ordained and became known as *pho brang* Byang chub 'od. He seems to have implemented this function (according to *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*

*pa*⁵⁴ Byang chub 'od, the three, bestowed great amounts of gold on five men, such as Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba and so on and that,

predestinated by Ye shes 'od in 1023) until his death in 1078 (at the same time also holding between 1037 and 1057) upon which he was succeeded by this younger brother Zhi ba 'od (1078–1111). See Jahoda, "On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh", this volume, p. 296, for the references to Ye shes 'od *rnam thar rgyas pa*.

As mentioned by Vitali, the word *brang chung* also occurs in another source. This may have been used for a younger brother of somebody with a (senior) *pho brang* status. This designation must therefore have been a formal one based on the original "constitution" proclaimed by Ye shes 'od. This explains also its self-referential use by Zhi ba 'od in his *bka' shog* (see Karmay 1980b: 18 whose translation of "pu hrangs kyi pho brang zhi ba 'od"—"Zhi ba 'od of the palace of sPu-hrangs"—makes his socio-political and religious status fully clear). Some of those falling within the *pho brang* category received additional titles and designations (such as *lha bla ma*, *lha btsun pa*, *lha rje bla ma*, *byang chub sems dpa'*), which were therefore more commonly used for them, at least in later periods. Obviously, it was not felt necessary to name all those, like De ba ra dza (Devarāja) or Na ga ra dza (Nāgarāja), who belonged to this category (and were deemed mature enough) explicitly as *pho brang* or to even mention their personal names. Even in contemporary historical inscriptions (for example those in the *sgo khang* of the Tabo *gtsug lag khang* dating from the end of the 10th century), Na ga ra dza as a younger (male) member of the royal lineage is referred to as *lha sras na ga ra dza* (Luczanits 1999: 105), combining his lay title *lha sras* (prince) with his name as *dge bsnen* (ordained lay practitioner, Skt. *upāsaka*, following the example set by king Aśoka; cf. Gombrich 1994, Thapar 1994). Similarly, those belonging to the lay aristocracy or nobility are also designated as *lha sras* (prince or nobleman's son) or *lha lcam* (princess, nobleman's wife) to which their personal (lay) name is added (*ibid.*: 112). While the usage of the designation *lha sras*, etc. in this case occurs clearly within a Buddhist context, it cannot be understood in the same way as an acquired Buddhist title (such as *btsun pa*, *dge slong*). It rather designates "a descendant whose behavior is worthy of his 'noble ancestral spirits'" and *lha* can be understood as "a collective term for the nobility" (Walter 2009: 118). In this case *lha sras* is determined predominantly by socio-political concepts and is used to express an inherited social position, while religious status based on Buddhist concepts is expressed by distinct Buddhist designations and names. The differing usage corresponds to the spatial differentiation of the two communities depicted in the *sgo khang* on opposing walls, on the south wall the assembly of religious figures (including those of royal descent) and on the north wall the assembly of lay figures headed by the nobility.

⁵⁴ The word *btsun pa* means monk. For the usage of this word with regard to members of the royal lineage, see also n. 35 and 53. In this case a clear differentiation was observed with regard to the functions and titles of the three brothers: 'Od lde, who succeeded his father lHa lde as king, is only mentioned as his son. Zhi ba 'od is named as *pho brang*, obviously his most important title and a function which he seems to have carried out between 1078 and 1111. Despite the fact that he seems to have fulfilled the function of *pho brang* for a long period (and presumably until the end of his life), Byang chub 'od is named as *btsun pa* (monk), which most probably stands for *lha btsun pa* (royal monk). The reason may be that between 1037 and 1057 he also held secular power, so that his function (and qualification) as *pho brang* may have been constrained somewhat (not allowing him to act as a translator of texts like Zhi ba 'od). The designation as (royal) monk seems to have been used as a compromise which also allowed for a plausible differentiation (as the functions of *pho brang* or king could only be fulfilled by one person at a time).

after the Translator (*lo tsā ba*) rGya brTson ['grus] seng ge had been elected as their leader, [they] said: "'May a good *paṇḍita* be invited!', upon which *paṇḍi ta* Di pam ka ra shri dza nya na [Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna] was invited." (*Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1987: 69–70),⁵⁵ and that, quoting another passage from this chronicle, "in the chapter on the nephew(s) of *lha bla ma* [Ye shes 'od], it was written in accordance with the *Chos 'byung* of *lo tsā ba* Bu ston (*Bu ston chos 'byung*)." (*ibid.*: 70).⁵⁶ Being thus clearly stated, there is no need to mention that its point of view is the same as that of *Bu ston chos 'byung*.

Further, as regards Ka thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, in consequence of the fact that he stayed in those countries (*yul*)⁵⁷ for a long time and enjoyed the experience of going on pilgrimage to many places in the area of sTod mNga' ris [Western Tibet], as he was blessed to see many reliable reference materials about the history etc. of this region, he came to write in the *Bod rje lha btsan po'i gdung rabs* ["Genealogy of the Divine Emperors of Tibet"],⁵⁸ which deals with the arising of the precious doctrine of the Buddha in the north, [that] "on account of Byang chub 'od's invitation of Jo bo rje to Tibet and so on, extremely great gratitude was expressed for the teaching of the Buddha" (*Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga* 1990: 74).⁵⁹ What is written (here by him) is to a large degree in accordance with historical reality and he is unhindered by the bias of a Buddhist school.

In *Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* ["Annals of Tibet: The Melody of the Spring Queen"]⁶⁰ composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the 1640s, in the Water Sheep year of the eleventh

⁵⁵ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 83, with minor variant readings in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "*de'i sras 'od lde dang/] pho brang zhi ba 'od dang/ btsun pa byang chub 'od gsum gyis nag tsho tshul khriims rgyal ba la sogs pa'i mi lnga la gser mang po bskur/ rgya brtson [grub] seng ge dpon du bskos nas paṇḍi ta bzang po spyang drongs la shog byas pas/ ...] paṇḍi ta di pam ka ra shri dza nya [dznya] na spyang drangs/*".

⁵⁶ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 83, with minor variant readings in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "*lha bla ma khu dbon gyi skabs 'dir lo tsā [tsatsha] ba bu ston gyi chos 'byung ltar bris pa yin [gyi]*".

⁵⁷ "Those countries" should be understood to refer here mainly to sPu rang, Gu ge and La dwags, which constituted the three main divisions or countries of mNga' ris skor gsum or historical Western Tibet.

⁵⁸ The full title of this work is *rGyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che byang phyogs su 'byung ba'i rtsa lag bod rje lha btsan po'i gdung rabs tshig nyung don gsal yid kyi me long* (*Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga* 1990: 57–87).

⁵⁹ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 83, with a minor addition in square brackets based on the text edition cited): "*byang chub 'od [yin smras la/] des jo bo rje bod du spyang drangs pa sogs bstan pa la bka' drin shin tu che/*".

⁶⁰ Spring Queen is a metonym for the cuckoo. Another possible translation of the title is therefore "The Song of the Cuckoo".

sixty-year cycle in the Tibetan calendar (1643), [it is stated that] “as for the report⁶¹ that *lha bla ma* Ye shes ’od went to search for gold and was taken prisoner by the Gar log: that is, an ordinary person, appearing like one asking for riches, would be of weak intellect. But as this particular one [*lha bla ma* Ye shes ’od] was a great king of Western Tibet (mNga’ ris), it is faulty on account of the fact that the circumstances were not thoroughly examined.” (*Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs* 1980: 81).⁶² Although this chronicle was written in a late period, given that in this historical problem it is the view written initially which is to be refuted and taking [this] as [his] point of doubt, his unusual opinion is also frankly expressed. It is not possible, however, to give a clear reason why [he] went into the crucial point or [why he did this] without materials to be analysed. As it was not possible even to bring some clarity to the foundation of the reference materials, from the 14th century, the famous scholars in the history [of Tibet] were never able to correct and clarify the mistaken view adhered to with regard to this problem.

In fact, in the group of historical chronicles written around the beginning of the 12th century by mKhas pa lde’u and lDe’u Jo sras, and in the 1320s by the Lord of Scholars (*mkhas pa’i dbang po*) Bu ston Rin chen grub, it says: the one who invited *paṇḍita* Di pam ka ra shri dza nya na [Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna] to mTho lding monastery of Gu ge was the Royal Monk (*lha btsun*) Byang chub ’od. There is no mention of *lha bla ma* Ye shes ’od going to the Gar log in search of gold, inviting an Indian *paṇḍita* or Jo bo rje [Atiśa], then sacrificing his life, or that in conformity with his final words his nephew Byang chub ’od made a great and continuous effort to invite Jo bo rje. On the one hand, at that time the *Vinaya* tradition of Western Tibet (sTod) was not particularly widespread in the dBus region and the influence of the bKa’ gdams pa (school), which started with Jo bo rje dPal ldan A ti sha [Lord Master Śrī Atiśa] or because of him, was not that great. On the other hand, at that time the partiality of the perspective of

⁶¹ It should be mentioned that immediately prior to this passage, one Las chen Kun rgyal ba is named as author of the report referred to. Contrary to Ahmad (2008: 193, n. 592, basing himself on Petech 1995: 293, who identified Las chen Kun rgyal ba as Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan), it must be assumed that this refers to Las chen Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, known as the author of *bKa’ gdams kyi rnam thar pa bka’ gdams chos ’byung gsal ba’i sgron me* composed in 1494 (see Eimer 1989: 22–23, Martin 1997: 91, Roesler 2008: 396).

⁶² Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 84, with a minor correction in square brackets based on the text edition cited): “*lha bla ma ye shes ’od gser ’tshol du byon pa/ gar log gis btson du bzung par [bar] bshad pa ni/ skye bo phal pa nor slong ba lta bu’i rnam pa shar ba blo gros dman pa ste/ di nyid mnga’ ris kyi btsad po chen po yin pas/ rgyu mtshan zhib tu ma dpyad pa’i skyon no//*”. Cf. also the edition of this text published by Kalsang Lhundup (1967: 107) and the translation by Ahmad 2008: 62.

a Buddhist school among those competent in the history was not very strong and there was no necessity as it were to make such a great evaluation and praise the great achievement of *lha bla ma* Ye shes ’od on account of the invitation of a famous *paṇḍita* from India or Jo bo rje (Atiśa) respectively. Though generally there is no problem concerning what happened in history, [considered] from the viewpoint of the degree of conformity with facts, [it can therefore be stated that] there were a few deliberate efforts at exaggeration in what was said. After that, apart from the *Yar lung [jo bo’i] chos ’byung*, in the group of religious chronicles written after the 1340s, conditioned by the partiality of Buddhist schools, one can evidently discover a distortion of the truth of historical reality.

Then, the facts of this historical problem are very clearly recorded in *mNga’ ris rgyal rabs*: at the end of his life when he resided at mTho gling and Mang nang in Gu ge, about the way he lived his life or concerning the activities he carried out, it is stated that “even at the time when he was of a very senior age he performed many ritual circumambulations (*bskor ba*) in his personal sanctuary, holding his walking-staff, and besides this encouraged all kinds of worship, acting [for the benefit of] himself and others, all. At this time, with the exception of one attendant, he did not encounter anybody when he pronounced: ‘Until the termination of my life within three years I will perform spiritual practice’. After departing from his meditative retreat, he showed his face to those to be trained, [acting] like a subject for a while. In order to give his final instructions on religious regulations (*chos rtsigs*),⁶³ he went to Mang rgyud.⁶⁴ Furthermore, until he reached the end of his life he resided at mTho gling and acted for the welfare of the teaching of the Buddha and that of sentient beings.” (*mNga’ ris rgyal rabs* 1996: 58–59).⁶⁵ Based on what

⁶³ The word *chos rtsigs* occurs several times in *mNga’ ris rgyal rabs*. As stated by Vitali, it seems to be a variant spelling of *chos gtsigs*, which was used in inscriptions of the Yar lung dynasty to refer to edicts engraved on stone pillars (Vitali 1996: 193). In this he follows Richardson’s translation and explanation of *chos gtsigs* in the lCang bu inscription as “edicts concerning religion” (Richardson 1985: 94–95). In this case, its meaning is similar to the word *gtsigs yig*, denoting in particular letters carved on stone pillars.

Notwithstanding the literal meaning of *chos rtsigs*, which is always rendered by Vitali in parentheses and between inverted commas as “religious edict” (Vitali 1996: 108, 186, 190, 193), a more appropriate translation of this word that also includes the late-10th-century context and (signified) concept—clearly related to the idea of defining a general framework and foundation for the whole kingdom—seems to be religious regulation(s), religious or religion-based constitution, or even code of law(s) (see *ibid.*: 209f.).

⁶⁴ The location or (if not a place name) meaning of *mang rgyud* which was translated by Vitali (1996: 113) as “place of public assembly” remains unclear.

⁶⁵ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 85–86, with minor corrections in square brackets based on the text edition cited in Vitali 1996:

is thus recorded, it can be clearly understood that it is devoid of any substance that *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od went to the Gar log in search of gold and sacrificed his life in order to invite the famous Indian *paṇḍita* Jo bo rje (Atiśa).

In addition, in historical reality 'Od lde, the grandson of 'Khor re and son of lHa lde, of a fierce and haughty character, led his army against the king of Mar yul La dwags,⁶⁶ one of [the countries of] sTod mNga' ris bskor gsum and finally he waged war even on Gru sha ('Bru sha),⁶⁷ a territory belonging to Bal ti,⁶⁸ with the result that he was taken prisoner by the king of this country [that is, 'Bru sha] and faced a severe sentence. Although his younger brothers⁶⁹ Byang chub 'od and Zhi ba 'od brought a lot of gold and [wanted to] ransom [him] and that, because gold equal to the weight of his body was not received immediately, on that occasion, he died, is recorded as follows in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*: "The eldest (son) 'Od lde btsan, possessing extraordinary bodily strength from a young age, was endowed by birth with egocentric pride. When once running

58–59): "sku na [nas] shin tu bgres pa'i dus su yang nyid kyi thugs dam gling la phyag 'khar bsname nas bskor ba mang du mdzad cing/ gzhan yang mchod pa thams cad la skul zhing/ rang gzhan kun gyis mdzad pa yin no//[] de yi tshes yang nye gnas gcig ma gtogs pa su yang mi mjal bar bka' stsal nas/ lo gsum gyi bar du sku mtshams bcad nas thugs dam mdzad cing mtshams las thon pa dang/ re zhig 'bangs kyi tshul gyis gdul bya rname la zhal bstan pa dang/] chos rtsigs kyi bka' lung mtha' [tha] ma stsal ba'i phyir du/] mang rgyud du gshegs [... 16 lines left out ...]/ slar yang sku tshes mtha' phyin pa'i bar du mtho gling du bzhugs shing bstan pa dang sems can gyi don mdzad pa yin no//".

⁶⁶ *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* and *Ye shes 'od rnam thar* (from which it draws) and other sources, like the middle-length biography of *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po, use the word Mar yul for the third "circle" or territory (*skor*) constituting 11th-century mNga' ris skor gsum. Neither La dwags nor Mar yul La dwags, which is used here by the author in order to refer to Mar yul, occurs in these sources. See Vitali 1996: 135, *Byang chub sems dpa' lo tsā ba rin chen bzang po'i 'khrungs rabs dka' spyad sgron ma rnam thar shel phreng lu gu rgyud ces bya ba bzhugs so* 1996 and *Ye shes 'od rnam thar* 2011: 299, passim; see also Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, "The Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od by Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text", this volume, p. 137. See also Jahoda, "Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's chapter on the history of mNga' ris in his *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*: Notes on the author and the content", this volume, p. 82.

⁶⁷ Gru sha or 'Bru sha—also the variant spellings Bru sha, Bru zha and 'Bru shal occur (see *La-dvags-rgyal-rabs* 1992: 33)—is the Tibetan name of Little Balūr/Bolor, an area in the Gilgit valley (Beckwith 1987: 116).

⁶⁸ Bal ti is the Tibetan word for Baltistan. The equation of Great Balūr/Bolor with Baltistan which is suggested by Chinese and other sources (see, for example, Vitali 1996: 325 and Scherrer-Schaub 2002: 274) was recently critically discussed by Zeisler (2010: 381ff.).

⁶⁹ The author follows *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (1996: 61), where 'Od lde is named as the eldest brother and Byang chub 'od and Zhi ba 'od as the younger brothers.

up in a fight ('*khrug pa la 'jam thengs gcig*)⁷⁰ he went to Mar yul,⁷¹ he built the *gtsug lag khang* of dPe thub.⁷² [...] Afterwards when he made war on the country of Bru sha,⁷³ he was arrested (*dbu 'jam so*)⁷⁴ there. As his two younger brothers [wanted to] ransom [him] they were told that gold equal to his weight was required. As this was not obtained he remained in this condition for a while. After liberating himself from iron chains (*lcags drang*),⁷⁵ he ran away and owing to his former karma he suffered iron poisoning and it was said that he died at Shul dkar. At last [Byang chub 'od] went down to the established gold mines in dBus to gather gold in order to ransom his elder brother. He obtained⁷⁶ a lot of gold." (*ibid.*: 61–63).⁷⁷ Thus, based on this, in historical reality 'Od lde died in Gru sha. One can clearly conclude that *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od was not killed in the Gar log country of the non-Buddhist Indian borderlands,⁷⁸ that all the gold gathered by *lha btsun* Byang chub 'od and so on was brought from his own country, so that, although he went to ransom his elder [brother] he had already died, and that because of this, after those [quantities] of gold to be paid as price for ransom were sent to rGya brTson ['grus] seng ge etc., Jo bo Dhi pam ka ra shri dza nya na [Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna] was invited. Regarding this, too, it is very clearly

⁷⁰ The translation of '*jam thengs gcig*' is based on an explanation given by the author (personal communication, January 2014).

⁷¹ See n. 66.

⁷² dPe thub, located in historical Mar yul, corresponds to present-day Spituk in Ladakh. On dPe thub see also Vitali 1996: 301f. and Gu ge Tshes ring rgyal po, "Relating the history of mNga' ris as set down in writing in Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs skye dgu'i cod paṇ nyi zla'i phreng mdzes*: The Tibetan text", this volume, p. 111.

⁷³ See n. 67.

⁷⁴ The translation of *dbu 'jam so* is based on an explanation given by the author (personal communication, January 2014).

⁷⁵ The translation of *lcags drang* is based on an explanation given by the author (personal communication, January 2014).

⁷⁶ Also the translation "he bought a lot of gold" is possible according to the author (personal communication, January 2014).

⁷⁷ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshes ring rgyal po 2005b: 86–87, with minor corrections in square brackets based on the text edition cited in Vitali 1996: 61–63): "*gcen 'od lde btsan sku shed shin tu che bas sku na [nas] gzhon nu nas thugs rgyal can du 'khrungs pa/ 'khrug pa la 'jam thengs gcig mar yul du gshegs pa'i dus su dpe thub kyi gtsug lag khang bzhengs [... 1 line left out ...] mjug tu bru sha'i yul du dmag mdzad pas/] der dbu 'jam so/ gcung gnyis kyis sku blus pas/ khong nyid dang skar ba'i gser dgos zer nas/ ma khugs te re shig de nyid du bzhugs so lcags drang grol nas bros pas sngon las kyi rkyen gyis lcags dug byung nas/ bshul dkar grong so zer mjug tu gcen blu'i ba'i gser bsdud du dbus kyi na sra gser kha tshun du phebs/ gser mang po gzigs so//".*

⁷⁸ Translation of *rgya gar mtha' khob mu stegs pa'i yul gar log*. See also n. 15 and 23.

recorded in *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*: "After he heard about the death of his elder (brother),⁷⁹ an aspiration arose in him. On account of the death of his elder (brother), by inviting a masterly *paṇḍita* from India to Tibet, he intended to spread the teaching of the Buddha in Tibet even more widely than before (and) dispatched Nag tsho lo tsā ba Tshul khriims rgyal ba as the leader together with four attendants and bestowed rGya brTson ['grus] seng ge with a wooden measure able to hold eleven measures of gold and an assistant (*thig po shing srang bcu gcig 'khor ba gcig*)⁸⁰ and with great amounts of gold dust. Following the invitation of Jo bo Dhi pam ka ra shri dza nya na [Lord Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna], on his arrival, *pho brang btsun pa*⁸¹ himself travelled half a day on foot to welcome him." (*ibid.*: 63–64).⁸² This quote expresses exactly according to historical reality how in the end the younger [brother] *pho brang lha btsun pa* Byang chub 'od used those [quantities] of gold [intended] to ransom the body of his elder [brother] 'Od lde to invite of Jo bo rje [Atiśa] to Gu ge and how he personally welcomed Jo bo rje in the form of coming into the presence of a person of high(er) status. In addition, in the middle-length biography of *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po it is also said that finally at the end of his life *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od suffered from a severe illness and died and that the Great Translator (*lo chen*) Rin chen bzang po personally performed the ceremony for the remains of the deceased: "when *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od lived in a state of

⁷⁹ See n. 69.

⁸⁰ The translation of *thig po shing srang bcu gcig 'khor ba gcig* is based on an explanation given by the author (personal communication, January 2014). Vitali's translation of this passage—"a piece of gold weighing eleven shing. srang" (Vitali 1996: 117) is incomplete.

⁸¹ Obviously, the person referred to here by the title *pho brang btsun pa* is Byang chub 'od. As discussed above (see nn. 35, 53 and 54), these titles designate him as (royal) monk, (*lha*) *btsun pa*—a designation that must have been appropriate since Pig year 1023, when "he was ordained to the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow" (Vitali 2003: 61) and received the monk's name Byang chub 'od—and at the same time as *pho brang* (a function he assumed in Tiger year 1026; see *ibid.*: 62 where the related title is however wrongly given as *lha btsun*). One can conclude from this that at the time (in 1042) when this episode happened he was referred to by both titles and that *pho brang*, given in the first place, was formally the more important title.

⁸² Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 87 where the page reference is wrongly given as *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* 1996: 63–65; minor corrections in square brackets are based on the text edition cited in Vitali 1996: 63–64): "gcen grongs pa gsan nas/ der thugs dgongs brdzangs [rdzangs] pas/ gcen ni grongs khong gi don du rgya gar nas paṇḍi ta mkhas pa gcig gdan drangs nas bod du sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa sngar bas kyang dar bar mdzad dgongs nas/ nag tsho lo tsā [tsa] ba tshul khriims rgyal ba dpon g.yog lnga/ rgya brtson seng ge [ge omitted] la thig po shing srang bcu gcig 'khor [ba] gcig [cig] dang/ gser gyi phye ma mang po bskur nas brdzangs [rdzangs] pas/ jo bo dhi pam ka ra shri dza nya [rdznya] na gdan drangs nas phebs pa na/ pho brang btsun pa nyid kyis nyi ma phyed zhabs thang du byon nas bsu ba mdzad".

illness the Great Translator (*lo chen*) Rin chen bzang po immediately came to meet him. As he was afflicted by a severe illness he did not meet him. The rituals for his remains, *Durgatipariśodhana* and so on,⁸³ were performed by the *lo tsā ba* himself." (*Byang chub sems dpa' lo tsā ba rin chen bzang po'i 'khrungs rabs dka' spyad sgron ma rnam thar shel phreng lu gu rgyud ces bya ba bzhugs so* 1996: 24).⁸⁴ Whether the middle-length biography of *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po written by the great scholar Gu ge Khyi thang pa dza nya na shri, a native of this country (Gu ge), corresponds to a high degree with historical reality cannot be said.

To summarise, in the historical reality of sTod mNga' ris Gu ge of that time, the one who abandoned his life in a foreign country in order to return to his own country was 'Od lde⁸⁵ rather than *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od. Later, from around the middle of the 14th century, scholars of the history of Tibetan Buddhism made use of this historical incident. The reason it was necessary to exaggerate by pretending that it was Ye shes 'od [is as follows]: it was the rekindling of the remainder of the old tradition of Buddhism from Western Tibet (sTod) and the beginning of the transformation of the "New Mantra Traditions" (gSang sngags gsar ma), [and] the spreading and expansion of the Western Tibetan (sTod) *Vinaya* tradition or of the branch communities of the preceptor lineages [for monk's vows]. Moreover, along with the invitation to Tibet of the creator of the bKa' gdams pa (school), Jo bo rje dPal ldan A ti sha [Lord Master Śrī Atiśa], it is understood that this was postulated as a great achievement by *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od. Only the fact that he was praised deliberately is historical truth: in the end the passing away of *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, who lived to a very great age, definitely took place at mTho gling in Gu ge.

⁸³ See also Heller 2010: 68, n. 35, who presents evidence which suggests that the rituals and offerings referred to in this passage relate to a ruined *mchod rten* in Tholing that was excavated some years ago by Chinese archaeologists. In her view, "the term *gdung mchod* used in this passage implies that, after the initial funerary rites, offerings were made for the *sku gdung*, the *mchod rten* housing a corpse, which constitutes a funerary *mchod rten*" (in this case the funerary *mchod rten* of Ye shes 'od). Heller's interpretation of this passage seems to be supported by the medium-length biography of *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po from Pooh in Upper Kinnaur, which reads *gdung mchod dang ngan song sbyong ba la sogs pa*, thus indicating a differentiation between *gdung mchod* and *ngan song sbyong ba* etc. (see Gu ge'i Khyi dang ba dPal ye shes, *Lo tsha tsa ba rin chen bzang po'i rnam thar*, f. 34a1-2).

⁸⁴ Quoted Tibetan text (as in Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po 2005b: 88, with minor corrections in square brackets based on the original text edition cited): "*lha bla ma ye shes 'od snyung bar gnas nas/ myur du zhal mjal du byon pas la snyung gzhi drag po gcig gis zin nas zhal ma mjal lo/[V] gdung mchod ngan song sbyong ba la sogs pa ni/ lo tsā ba khong rang gis mdzad do/[V]*".

⁸⁵ Both the 2005 and 2012 versions of Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po's Tibetan text have lHa lde although certainly his son 'Od lde is meant and referred to.

Although in this case I tried my best to correct this historical problem, as for myself, besides [my] very limited perspective and humble level of knowledge of history, being as it were polluted by the taint of a wealth of flaws and errors of misinterpretation and foolish ignorance, I bear in the very heart the hope that suggestions and advice will be abundantly bestowed [upon me] by scholars and learned readers.

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