

Bonpo Studies

The A Khrid System of Meditation

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present work is to provide a basis for a more detailed study of the nature and history of the system of meditation and spiritual realization peculiar to the Bonpo lamaist tradition, called *A khrid*, i.e. "The teachings (*khrid*) concerning the Unconditioned (*a*)".

I have made use of two texts, both published in the volume entitled "A-TRI THUN-TSHAM CHO-NA DAN CHA-LAK CHE SHUK-SO"¹ (Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, Delhi 1967, 224 p.):

- A. *rTogs ldan ñams brgyud kyi rnam thar rin čhen phriñ ba* (p. 5-64).
- B. *Man ñag khrid kyi rim pa lag len thun mchams dan bčas pa* (p. 64-117).

The English foreword to the "A-TRI THUN-TSHAM" gives a few basic facts concerning the history of the *A khrid* system:

"The *A khrid* collection is one of the most important compendia of the "Great Perfection" (*Rdzogs chen*) teachings of Bon. The *Rdzogs chen* doctrine, shared by the Rnying-ma-pa and the Bon-po, is the basis of a profound system of meditative philosophy.

The original teachings of the *A khrid* are attributed to the great Dgongs-mjad Ri-khrod-chen-po (b. 1038), who extracted them from the *Khro rgyud* and added to them from his own *dgongs gter* (teachings concealed in the superconscious mental state of a great religious teacher for rediscovery at a future time). These teachings were later arranged into a religious system by Bru-chen Rgyal-ba-gyung-drung (b. 1242)."

Text A gives the biographies of 21 lamas, from *-rMe'u dGoñs mjod ri*

*khrod chen po*² (1038-1096)³ to 'Gru *Ñi ma 'od zer* (1562-1637). The text thus deals with a considerable stretch of time, almost exactly six hundred years. However, it has been thought most fruitful to concentrate on the period between *dGoñs mjod* and *Bru chen rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ* (1242-1290), for two reasons:

(a) It is this period which is formative as regards the *A khrid* system, *Bru chen* being responsible for its final codification, contained in text B.

(b) It seems evident, judging from its structure, that text A originally concluded with the biography of *Bru chen*; the following biographies (which are referred to as *lo rgyus*, the preceding ones being referred to as *rnam thar*) are simply added one by one without any attempt at integration with the structure of the first part of the text. This is clearly shown by the table of contents preceding the translation.

Accordingly, I have given a translation *in extenso* of the biographies of *dGoñs mjod*, his disciple and successor *sGom chen 'bar ba*, and of *Bru chen*. The position of *Bru chen*, however, is complex. According to the colophon of text B he is the author of this text and thus responsible for the codification of the *A khrid* system. The colophon runs as follows⁴:

“Thus this (text, bearing the title) “*Man ñag khrid kyi lag len go rim thun mchams dañ bčas pa*”⁵—(which contains) the practice⁶ of the Venerable Hermit and the disciples of his lineage—has been composed in order to obtain the Example and Meaning⁷ in accordance with scripture (*luñ*) and oral instruction and elucidated by personal experience (*nams myon*), at the monastery of *mKhar sna*, (which is similar to) a heap of jewels, in accordance with the instruction and practice of the peerless 'Dul ba rin po che⁸ who is the spiritual essence of 'Gro mgon *g-Yor me* and the illustrious *bLo gros rin po che*⁹, the worthless *Bru sgom rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ* having been exhorted by 'Dru sgom *sByin pa 'od zer* whose spiritual effort is without distraction.”

However, the Bonpo tradition also includes a second system of *rJogs chen*, called *Žañ žuñ śñan (b)rgyud*. A comparison between the *A khrid* and the *sñan brgyud* remains to be undertaken, but as a first step in this direction I have given (Part II, App. 1) an analysis of the contents of the first 80 fol. of a text entitled “*sñan brgyud kyi śñon 'gro'i rim pa rnams*” (Bonpo Foundation,

New Delhi 1964, 119 fol.)¹⁰. The first 80 folios constitute a complete work, concluded by a colophon in which it is stated that the work has been composed by *Bru'i bcun pa rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ* at the repeated request of the (*kalyana-*)*mitra* (*bšes gnen*) *bKra šis rin čhen* at the monastery of *g-Yas ru dBen sa kha*¹¹. Thus *Bru čhen* is connected with the *sÑan brgyud* as well as *A khrid*. However, in fact he belongs to the very lineage of *sÑan brgyud*, as well as to that of *A khrid*. The “*rJogs pa čhen po Žañ žuñ sñan rgyud kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma rnam thar*”¹², a collection of biographies of the lamas of the spiritual lineage of *sÑan brgyud*, includes that of *Bru čhen* (fol. 49b-52b).

A comparison between the latter text and text A is instructive¹³. The first section, which deals with the background, childhood and youth of *Bru čhen*, is, with a few occasional and insignificant exceptions, identical in both texts. The “*sÑan rgyud*” then has a long passage of almost two and a half pages which deals with how he was instructed in the doctrines of *sÑan brgyud*. This passage is entirely omitted in text A, which merely states that he studied, among other works, texts concerning “*rJogs pa čhen po sÑan rgyud*”. The remainder of both texts have approximately the same length, and are, to a large extent, identical. Text A, however, devotes several lines to the composition of the “*A khrid*” (=text B), while the “*sÑan rgyud*” simply gives the title in an enumeration of the various texts he composed¹⁴.

We can therefore conclude that there must have existed a biography of *Bru čhen* previous to the composition of either text and made use of by both authors; for it is not likely, in view of the considerable differences wherever the texts do not coincide, that the author of the one has copied from the other; for the same reason, it is clear that the two traditions of *A khrid* and *sÑan brgyud* were considered as quite distinct, despite the fact that *Bru čhen* belonged to both lineages.

The biographies of the *A khrid* lamas in text A are, on the whole, rather disappointing. We learn nothing of possible contacts with other lamaist sects, and next to nothing regarding their social and religious background. However, a few facts can be gleaned, in particular concerning the geographical location of the system. The *A khrid* is traditionally connected with the *Bru ža* family (*Bru chañ*) in spite of the fact that *dGoñs mjod* belonged to *rMe'u chañ*¹⁵. However, *Bru čhen*'s predecessor '*Dul ba rgyal mchan* (= '*Dul ba rin po čhe*) belonged to *Bru chañ*, as did, of course, *Bru čhen* himself; succeeding the latter, the next four lamas all belonged to *Bru chañ*. The fifth, however,

*Rin chen blo gros*¹⁶, was connected with *Bru chañ* only through his mother, *Bru ža za rGyad mo*. He was succeeded by his pupil *Šes rab rgyal mchan* (1356-1415), who was a native of *rGyal mo ron*¹⁷. *Šes rab rgyal mchan* was the founder (1405) of the monastery of *sMan ri* in *gCañ* and thereafter the spiritual lineage of *A khrid* was passed on through the abbots of *sMan ri*; the last abbot who belonged to the *A khrid* lineage was *sGa Kun bzañ rgyal mchan* (abbot 1464). The line of *sMan ri* abbots and the *A khrid* lineage thereupon diverge.

It is also evident that the *A khrid* system—at least to the extent that text A permits us to grasp its history—originated in *gCañ*, where it was developed and finally codified by lamas native to the region. With *Šes rab rgyal mchan* this tradition is broken, and of the following six lamas, at least four were, like him, natives of the eastern part of Tibet. The above outline will become clearer when compared with App. 1 in Part I.

At this stage I would like to make a few remarks concerning the relations between the Bonpos of the period in question (11th—17th century) and another contemporary lamaist tradition, that of the Nyingmapas. The English Introduction quoted above states that *rJogs chen* teachings are “shared by the Rnying-ma-pa and the Bon-po”, but leaves it at that. That we are here dealing with a problem which is, in fact, of the greatest importance to a fuller understanding of the nature not only of *rJogs chen*, but also of the very nature of the Bonpo tradition, is, I think, evident, and Professor Snellgrove very rightly states: “Fundamental to this interesting problem (viz. the difference between *bonpos* and *rñiñ-ma-pas*) is a comparative study of the tantras and the *rDzogs-chen* (‘Great Perfection’) literature of these two oldest ‘Tibetan Buddhist’ groups.”¹⁸

In a larger perspective, the study of the *rJogs chen* literature may hold the clue to a fuller understanding of the troubled centuries following the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet (8th—11th cent.); this is precisely the period in which the Bonpo as well as the Nyingmapa sects were formed. Professor Tucci (“Die Religionen Tibets”, Stuttgart 1970, p. 19) points to the importance of the hitherto unexplored *rJogs chen* literature: “The development of Tibetan Buddhism in its initial phases is by no means as uncomplicated as the orthodox tradition would have us believe. Only systematic research in the history and beginning of the *rDsogs c'en* may permit one to judge the extent to which the tradition must be revised as regards these events.”



1. dGons mjod ri khrod pa



2. rNam rgyal ka ra



3. Ses rab rgyal mchan



4. Rin chen rgyal mchan



5. Kun bzhan rgyal mchan



6. blo gros rgyal mchan



7. bsTan pa 'od zer



8. Ni ma 'od zer

I do not at present dispose of material for a full treatment of this problem. However, it is clear that the *A khrid* system did, in fact, develop in contact with the Nyingmapa school. A study of volume KA (*“gTer ston rnam thar”* of the *“Rin chen gter mjad”*, i.e. the volume which contains the biographies of the principal Nyingmapa ‘Treasure-Discoverers’ (*gter ston*), shows that a number of Bonpo ‘Treasure-Discoverers’ are included. Among them is *A ya bon po Lha ’bum* alias *Gu ru rnon rce* who is characterised as *bon snags*, “a Bonpo tantricist”, and who was a considerable ‘Treasure-Discoverer’ in *gCarñ* where he was born, according to a Bonpo source, in 1136¹⁹. Thus he would seem, both geographically and historically, to be fairly close to the milieu we are studying.

A far more important indication, however, concerns *dPon gsas Khyuñ thog rcal*, who likewise is styled “a Bonpo tantricist” (*bon gyi snags ’chanñ*). The *“gTer ston rnam thar”* also calls him *Rig ’jin rgod ldem* and states that he is called *dPon gsas Khyuñ rgod* by the Bonpos. He is thus at once identifiable with *dByil ston dPon gsas Khyuñ rgod* (text A gives his name as *Khyuñ rgod rcal*, p. 39 l. 21) alias *Rig ’jin rgod kyi ldem ’phrul* (b. 1175)²⁰, the teacher of *’A ža bLo gros rgyal mchan*; the latter belongs to the *A khrid* lineage.²¹ A nephew of *dPon gsas*, *dByil ston Nam mkha’ bsod nams*, was one of the teachers of *rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ* himself (text A, p. 40 l. 1). On the other hand, *dPon gsas Khyuñ thog* is of considerable importance in the Nyingmapa tradition, being the author of ‘Treasures’²², and is even considered to have incarnated himself in a later lama, *dPal ldan ’jam dbyañ bla ma*²³. We thus see a lama, important both in Nyingmapa and Bonpo traditions, playing a significant part in the development of the *A khrid* system.

Another case, directly relevant to this study, is *bsTan gñis gliñ pa Padma che dbañ rgyal po* (second half of the 15th century)²⁴, of whom the *“gTer ston rnam thar”* says: “He brought to light the Great, Medium, and Small ‘Oral Transmissions of *Ta pi hri ca*’ and other Bonpo works.”²⁵ *Ta pi hri ca*, however, is a quasi-historical *Žañ žuñ* lama belonging to the Bonpo *sÑan rgyud* tradition of *rJogs chen*²⁶; he lived in the 8th century, being the guru of *Gyer spuñs chen po sNañ bžer lod po*, a contemporary of king *Khri sroñ lde bcan*²⁷. We have already noted the close contact between the *A khrid* and *sÑan rgyud* systems; it is therefore interesting to note that *sÑan rgyud* texts were accepted as authoritative by Nyingmapas.²⁸

As regards text B, I have translated the *mūla* (*dños gži*) (p. 79-100), i.e.

Ch. 5—10 inclusive. This section deals with the actual obtaining of liberation once the preliminaries—contemplation of impermanence, the bodhisattva's vow, acquiring of merit, etc.—have been accomplished. I have tried to give a translation as close as possible to the Tibetan text, without taking into account the general background of Buddhist thought as it presented itself to the Tibetans of the 13th century. To take this background into consideration would necessitate a much more comprehensive study. As for the immediate sources of text B, the only other work mentioned in text A and explicitly qualified as *A khrid* is the “*g-Yas ru'i A khrid chen mo*” by 'Gro mgon g-Yor po me dpal, born in 1134. This text, like text B, is stated to have been composed in accordance with the practice of *dGoñs mjod*²⁹. The *A khrid* system must therefore, in fact, have been codified in the second half of the 12th century, i.e. a century before the composition of text B by *Bru chen*.

The ultimate sources of the *A khrid* system cannot be clearly discerned at this stage. However, the English Introduction quoted above states that *dGoñs mjod Ri khrod chen po* extracted the teachings from the “*Khro rgyud*”. This is certainly identical with the “*Khro bo rgyud kyi skor*” which together with the “*Ži ba don gyi skor*” forms the “*sPyi spuñs yan lag gi skor*”, one of the collections of texts which are included in the tantric section of the Bonpo *bKa' gyur*.³⁰ The teachings of the “*Khro rgyud*” are thus ultimately attributed to *sTon pa gšen rab* himself.

The “*bKa' gyur brten gyur*” (p.8 1.21 et seq.) states that although “The Six Tantras” of the *gšen-Treasure* (*gšen gter rgyud drug*), which were hidden as ‘Treasures’ when the ‘Knowledge-Holders’ fled to the West³¹, disappeared due to a curse, they are, according to *mKhas grub sKyabs ston rin po che*, identical with “The Six Great Tantras” (*rgyud chen drug*)³² found by *Khu cha Zla 'od 'bar* in the Earth-Male-Tiger Year (i.e. 1038) at *sPa gro phug gcal*.³³ The context makes it clear that “The Six Great Tantras” correspond to the “*Khro rgyud*”.

dGoñs mjod being born in the same year that the “*Khro rgyud*” was discovered (1038), there would seem to be no reason why he should not, as the Introduction states, have based his *A khrid* system on it. It is also interesting that this text was found at *sPa gro phug gcal*, a site which, as mentioned in note 28, is of considerable importance to the Nyingmapas as well as the Bonpos.

The text published in New Delhi and on which the present study is based is stated (p. 117) to have been edited on the basis of three copies:

- (a) A copy of *A khrid* included in a collection entitled *gSañ rgyud*.
- (b) A copy originating from *Dol po* (Nepal).
- (c) A copy from *sTod Tre pa dgon pa*.

As I have not been able to consult these three copies, I have felt that it is preferable to postpone a full philological discussion of a number of difficult passages.

Both texts A and B have been read together with the Bonpo *dge bšes* (now abbot of *sMan ri gsar pa* in Himachal Pradesh) Sangye Tenzin Jongdong (ST) during the autumn of 1968, in Oslo. His patient help has been indispensable for a full understanding of the text. A number of difficult passages have been translated with the help of *dge bšes* Samten Gyaltzen Karmay (SG) during a visit to London in June 1969. Both Tibetan scholars have given invaluable assistance for which I am deeply grateful. I am also indebted to Mme. A. Macdonald, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, who has read the first two biographies and provided a number of valuable suggestions, as well as much encouragement. Finally I must thank my teacher, Professor Nils Simonsson, Oslo, who from the start has encouraged my studies and given freely of his time and advice.

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“Bonpo Studies” was presented at the University of Oslo in 1969 for the degree of *magister artium*. Since then, several important works have been published, among which particular mention must be made of Samten Gyaltzen Karmay’s, excellent book “The Treasury of Good Sayings, A Tibetan History of Bon”, London, 1972. A number of useful texts have also been published by the Bonpos themselves. However, as it is hoped that the present study has retained its usefulness, it is reprinted without any significant additions or alterations.

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Notes to Introduction

1. I.e. *A khrid thun mchams bčō lña dan čha lag bčas bžugs so*.
2. I have adopted the spelling *dGoñs mjod* which is the one found in text A; however, text B, like the foreword, has (twice) the spelling *dGoñs mjad*.

3. All dates are based on information found in "*Saṅs rgyas kyi bstan rcis no mchar nor bu'i phren ba*" published (p. 23-40) in "Tibetan *Ṣang Ṣung Dictionary*" (Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, New Delhi 1965). A translation of this text ("A Chronological Table of the Bonpo: The *bsTan rcis* of *Ni ma bstan 'jin*") has been accepted for publication by *Acta Orientalia*, Copenhagen.
4. The colophon has the following text (p. 115 1.4–11):
 "de ltar man ṅag khrid kyi lag len go rim thun thun mchams daṅ bčas pa 'di ni/ rje Ri khrod pa yab sras brgyud par bčas pa'i mjod srol lo/ 'Gro mgon g-Yor me daṅ mchan ldan bLo gros rin po che'i thugs bčud mñam med 'Dul ba rin po che'i Ṣal gdams phyag len ji lta ba la/ luṅ daṅ man ṅag gi skabs sbyar ṅams myoṅ gis gsal ttab nas čuṅ zad gsal žiṅ go bde bar dpe' thob don thob gyi chul du sñigs ma'i Bru bsgom rGyal ba g-yuṅ druṅ la rce gčig gi ṅams len pa 'Dru sgom sByin pa 'od zer gyis bskul nas rin čhen spuṅs la mKhar sna'i dgon du bkod pa'o'"
5. A slight variation from the title as given on p. 64 : °*khrid kyi rim pa lag len thun*°.
6. *mJod srol* is erroneous for *mjad srol*, cf. p. 41 1. 2 where text B—as in the colophon—is stated to have been composed in accordance with *Ri khrod pa yab sras kyi mjad srol*; precisely the same words are employed to qualify the "*A khrid čhen mo*" by *g-Yor po me dpal*, p. 26 1. 1.
7. "Example" (*dpe*) and "Meaning" (*don*) would seem to refer to the triad *dpe riags don* which is dealt with on p. 52.
8. One of the gurus of *Bru čhen* and his predecessor in the *A khrid* lineage.
9. Two lamas of the *A khrid* lineage (12th cent.); the latter was the guru of '*Dul ba rin po che*, cf. Part I, App. 1.
10. This title is, in fact, simply that of the first section (vol. KA) of the work which in a printed letter from the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation (Jan. 2nd, 1966) is referred to as "*rJogs čhen sñan brgyud rgyal ba'i phyag khrid*", which surely is the correct title.
11. The text (vol. ČHA fol. 10a-10b) :
 "de ltar rjogs pa čhen po Ṣaṅ žuṅ sñan brgyud kyi phyi naṅ gsaṅ ba yaṅ gsaṅ daṅ bčas pa'i gnad bsdus/ zab mo'i gdams pa du ma'i bčud dril ba/ grub čhen goṅ ma rnam kyi Ṣal gdams mthar thug pa 'di ni/ Bru'i bcun pa rGyal ba g-yuṅ druṅ la/ [unclear] . . . pa'i bšes gñen bKra šis rin čhen gyis yaṅ nas yaṅ du bskul ba'i don du/ lag len go rims, bžin du/ g-Yas ru dBen sa kha'i dgon du sbyar ba'o'"
12. Published in "History and Doctrine of Bonpo Nišpanna-yoga", Śatapitaka Series No. 73. New Delhi 1968.
13. See Part I, App. 2.
14. Id.
15. *Bru chaṅ* is one of the five *chaṅ* of the Bonpos. the others being *rMe'u sPa*, *Žu*, and *gŠen* (ST). On p. 5 1. 13-14 *A khrid* is qualified as *Bru chaṅ gi*; it is further stated to form one of the three sections of *gDams pa skor gsum*, the other two being *Bon žig gi Lhan skyes* and *rMe chaṅ gi Khrid rim gsal sgron*. Thus systems similar to *A khrid* have been associated with the family-lineages of *Bon žig* and *rMe('u)*. This information is contained in an interlineary note.
16. All the *Bru chaṅ* lamas, including *Rin chen blo gros* are stated to originate from *g-Yas ru dBen sa kha*. This can hardly be the monastery of *dBen sa kha*, but presumably the region surrounding it.
17. He is frequently given the title *rGyal ba gñis pa*, i.e. he is considered almost equal to *sTon pa gšen rab*. It is remarkable that he was not only almost exactly contemporaneous with *gCon kha pa* (1357-1419) but also, like him, a considerable scholar inclined towards scholastic systematization rather than yogic mysticism, an ecclesiastic renovator and the founder of the monastery which thereafter became the centre of the sect.

18. "Nine Ways of Bon" p. 15.
19. "gTer ston rnam thar" fol. 43a4-43b3. "Ni ma bstan 'jin" (96) gives his year of birth as 1136, while the gTer ston rnam thar" states that he was contemporary with 'Brom ston (1008-1064).
20. In this case, too, there is a problem of chronology. "Ni ma bstan 'jin" (103) gives his date of birth as 1175. The "gTer ston rnam thar" fol. 227a, however, states that he was a contemporary of Lha bcun Byañ chub 'od (active 1042) and Jo bo Dī pam ka ra (i.e. Atīsa). His biography is found on fol. 50a6-51a4.
21. Cf. Part I, App. I.
22. "gTer ston rnam thar" fol. 78a5 et seq.: "Mañ yul Ri bo che dbal 'bar nas Rig 'jin rgod ldem gyis yañ gter du sbas pa'i Phag mo za brgya'i skor rnams . . ."; fol. 91b4 et seq.: "dPon gsas Khyuñ thog gi Che sgrub ye šes srog thig . . ."
23. Id. fol. 124b3.
24. Id. fol. 78a5-82a1. He is stated to have lived in the 7th rab byuñ (fol. 228b), i.e. AD 1447-1507.
25. Id. fol. 81a3: "Ta pi hri ca'i sñan brgyud che 'briñ Ćhuñ gsum sogs bon sde . . . spyan drañs . . ."
26. "Bon-po Nišpanna Yoga" p. 15.5-15.6, p. 26.5-27.4 (where the name is given as dPon Ćhen Ta pl ra ca).
27. Id. p. 27.4-31.5 gives an abridged version of the two episodes translated from the "Zañ žui sñan rgyud" by Professor Snellgrove in "A Cultural History of Tibet" p. 101-102 and p. 103-104.
28. A fuller representation of the information contained in the "gTer ston rnam thar" would exceed the scope of the present study. However, it should be mentioned that not only are a number of gter ston-lamas stated to have been born as Bonpos (which would, in fact, in no case be surprising), but a considerable number either discovered Bonpo 'Treasures', studied Bonpo texts, or had Bonpo pupils. It is interesting that one of the most important 'Treasure'-sites of the Nyingmapas, sPa gro Ćal is likewise of some importance in the Bonpo tradition, and particularly in the formation of the A khrid system. Cf. "Ni ma bstan 'jin" (76, 108); "bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur" p. 4 l. 11, p. 7 l. 8, p. 8 l. 23.
29. Cf. note 6. The text is considered by S.G. to have been rare in Tibet, if, indeed, it has at all survived to the present day.
30. "bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur" p. 8 l. 16 et seq.
31. This refers to the expulsion of the Bonpos from Tibet during the reign of king Khri sron lde bcan, according to "Ni ma bstan 'jin" (54) in 749. Cf. "A Cultural History of Tibet" p. 107.
32. "The Six Great Tantras" are as follows ("bKa' 'gyur brten 'gyur" p. 8 l. 25 et seq.):

1. lTa ba khyuñ Ćhen	g-yun drun gsan ba'i rgyud	24	le'u
2. rJu 'phrul dra ba	" " " " "	30	" "
3. dBal mo las kyi thig le	" " " " "	33	" "
4. 'Gu ya srog 'jin	" " " " "	29	" "
5. gSañ ba dgu 'phar	" " " " "	19	" "
6. gSañ ba thabs žabs	" " " " "	16	" "
33. "Ni ma bstan 'jin" (76).

PART I

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE A KHRID SYSTEM

rTogs ldan ňams brgyud kyī rnam thar rin čhen phriñ ba

p. 5-64 in "A-tri thun-tsham cho-na dañ cha-lak"

The complete contents, with page numbers, of the text in "A-tri thun-tsham" from which excerpts are here translated, are:

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B. dños	p. 8—14
1. sku'i khruñs lugs	p. 8
2. lam la dka' ba spyad chul	p. 8—11
3. gžan don šes rgyud grol chul	p. 11
4. dbyiñs su mya ñan 'das chul	p. 11—12
5. rje bžag bstan pa spel chul	p. 12—13
6. ma 'oñs luñ bstan 'jin chul	p. 13—14
C. sras bži	p. 14—42
1. sKye med drañ sroñ	p. 14
2. Pho sgom	p. 14
3. sGom 'bar gyi rnam thar (B)	p. 14—42
(a) dños	p. 14—19
(b) sras drug	p. 19—42
1. sÑa Phar phyin	p. 19
2. dBu brag pa	p. 19
3. gNam mcho do pa	p. 19
4. Jo gduñ	p. 19
5. Jo g-yuñ	p. 19—42

(a) dños	p. 19—21
(b) brgyud pa	p. 21—42
1. Žaň Dam pa chul šes	p. 21—24
2. g-Yor po me dpal	p. 24—28
3. 'Gro mgon bdud rci	p. 28—31
4. 'A za Blo gros	p. 31—35
5. 'Dul ba rin po čhe	p. 35—39
6. rGyal ba g-yuň druň (C)	p. 39—42
II. (Succeeding lamas)	p. 42—63
Nam mkha' 'od zer	p. 42—44
bSod (nams) blo (gros)	p. 44—47
rNam rgyal ka ra	p. 47—48
Rin čhen blo 'gros	p. 48—50
mŇam med Šes rab rgyal mchan	p. 50—52
Rin čhen rgyal mchan	p. 53
Nam mkha' ye šes	p. 53—54
Kun bzaň rgyal mchan	p. 54—55
sGo ŷo ba bLo gros rgyal mchan	p. 55—56
bsTan pa 'od zer	p. 59—63
Postscript	p. 63—64

The following are excerpts in translation, with page references (in parentheses) to the original Tibetan text in "A-tri thun-tsham":

A.

(RME'U DGOŇS MZOD RI KHROD PA)

(p. 8) The biography of that saint has three topics :

(a) his gurus,

(b) himself,

(c) his four sons.

(a) As for the first (topic) :

the great Žu skyid mkhar ba (Žu skye se ba),

rMe'u Lha ri gñan po,

Bru rje bcun g-Yuň druň bla ma,

Źu sGrol ba gšen rgyal,
 mCho bcun Nam mkha' rgyal mchan,
 g-Yu sgro legs pa,
 the adept Tre ston sGo cha,
 the venerable Khro chañ ('Brug lha)—

in all eight; those lamas were indeed the manifestations of Buddhas come for the welfare of beings.

(b) The second (topic): the biography of the saint himself has six parts:

- (1) first, the manner in which he was born;
- (2) how he experienced difficulties on the Way;
- (3) how for the welfare of others he set free their consciousness (*śes rgyud*);
- (4) how he passed beyond sorrow in the Unconditioned (*dbyiñs*)¹;
- (5) how his disciples to whom he had given the Word were set free;
- (6) how prophecies were fulfilled.

(1) First, the manner in which he was born:

At *Šaṅs kyi Gur žogs* in *g-Yas ru*, he is said to have been the eldest of four sons of *rMe'u Sag bstan*, the father, and *rDo rje mcho*, the mother. Now, although he had from his childhood on without effort remained free from the evil defilement of being visibly present (in the world)²—the power of actions performed in previous lives being good—his parents forced him to marry when he was eighteen; having become separated from his wife—being disgusted with (being) a worldly person—by means of numerous ways of escape like (absentation from) sexual union³ etc., he went forth in order to cut off (Ignorance) in one (life)⁴: the first (part).

(2) Secondly, how he experienced difficulties on the Way:

Thereafter, having brought a few goods, undertaking a course of studies (*thugs sbyoñ mjad*)⁵, he requested numerous precepts concerning *tantra* and (precepts) concerning Mind (*śiags sems kyi bon mañ du žus*)⁶ from his guru *Žu sKye se*. His guru having at that time said: "You must study under *Bru g-Yuñ druñ bla ma* and the noble (*sras*)⁷ (*Žu*) *sGrol ba gšen* (p. 9) *rgyal* whose mental capacities and skill in explanation are greater than mine!" he heard the "*Gab pa*" and the minor precepts of "*Sems phran*"⁸ from the lamas

of *Bru* and *Žu* respectively, and learnt tantric rituals from these two (*gñis bar nas*).

Thereafter, when having joined those two he heard the science of logic from *Ñañ stod sTag pa kha čhe*, reflecting carefully he thought: "As for those two, they will exercise the abbatial function (*mkhan sa*), so the teaching of the Word is firmly established. However, in this there is no profit for me; I require the spiritual realisation (*dge sbyor*) resulting from the full comprehension of the (esoteric) Sense of the Word." Having requested a consecration and the vow of an *upāsaka* from the two *ācāryas* of *Žu* and *Bru* (respectively), he was given the name of *g-Yuñ druñ rgyal po*.

Having thereafter gone to *dKar po brag*, he saw and understood the precepts and mind-issued instructions of *Tre ston Go čha* and the venerable *Khro chañ*; the instant traversal (of all the stages of meditation) (*thod brgal*)⁹ having arisen in his mind through intense effort in meditation for a few years, a limited number of insights (*rtogs pa sna 'ga'*) arose.

Having at that time thought, "As my insight and reflection (*lta dgoñs*) thus are excellent, it will be of greater benefit to beings if I become a monk (*rten bcun pa žig byas na*)", he went to *dBus*, bringing two loads of molasses which he offered to the *ācārya* *Žo g-yuñ*; the *ācārya* said: "In general, weariness (with worldly life) in a strong youth among those called 'men' is overhasty. As from among them you people from (*gCañ*) profess the greatest faith but have least faith in your hearts, you will not obtain monkhood; go back!"

As he entreated him again and again, he said: "Well, as the *upādhyāya* lives in retreat, ask him to come!" As he was going to the (hermitage of the) *upādhyāya*, the latter said to his servant-disciple that evening: "As I had an auspicious dream last night, whoever comes today, bring him to me!" When he (i.e. *Ri khrod čhen po*) arrived, the servant-disciple reported his request and brought him (to the *upādhyāya*). (The latter) leaving his solitary seclusion, the *ācārya* said when (p. 10) he and the *upādhyāya* met: "There is no reason for you to live in seclusion (as you leave it) every other day!" The *upādhyāya* said: "Do you not see? He will become a saint who upholds the spiritual lineage of the *vinaya*." As the *ācārya* said: "Tell me a sign (that occurred) at that time (in support of your claim)!" (the *upādhyāya* replied): "As in my dream I dream that a tree, a *so ma* plant, growing by my door became higher than my dwelling, spreading out with leaves and

fruit and flowers, he will become an upholder of the spiritual lineage of the *vinaya* and a propagator of the Doctrine.” Later, the meaning (of the prophecy) being fulfilled, he became one who upheld the ‘life’ of the Doctrine.

At that time, at the age of 24, he took a monk’s vows. The name which had been given to him by (the lamas of) *Bru* and *Žu* was not changed. The *ācārya* thereupon gave him the injunction: “Live as a hermit in *gCañ* and strive towards sainthood and success in meditation!” Having accordingly gone up (to *gCañ*), he visited the hermitages of *g-Yas ru dkar po brag* etc.; through doing away with every doubt and through study, mind and insight (*ñams rtogs*) became united without distinction, and spiritual delusions were dissolved in the Unconditioned (*bon ñid*).

Thus that holy saint had eight gurus, transmitters of the Word, full of grace:

full of grace regarding training of consciousness and (instruction in) mantras and Mind—the great *Žu sKye se* and *rMe’u Lha ri gñan po*;

full of grace regarding the opening of the Way, the preaching of the Doctrine and the giving of consecrations—*Žu sGrol ba (gšen rgyal)* and *Bru g-Yuñ druñ bla ma*;

full of grace regarding the guarding of vows and the *vinaya*—the *upādhyāya* and the *ācārya*;

full of grace regarding the precepts of the Oral Transmission (*sñan rgyud*), giving their blessing although he did not meet them personally—*Tre ston Go čha* and *Khro chañ ’Brug lha*: in all eight or six.

As, saluting the feet of the above lamas, he studied and (p. 11) mastered the entire Bon of Cause and Effect, excellent insight arose in his mind:

Thus, at *sKyor mo luñ* he saw the faces of (the gods of) the *rNam dag* (cycle, complete) with sons, mothers, chief gods and their entourage, and having in one instant ascended all the Stages, he strode forth in the sky, went through mountains without being impeded, and, firm stone becoming like mud, the master left clear imprints of his hands and feet at *Brag spyañ thag mo*. He also showed other signs of spiritual perfection and feats of magic. He boasted many shining accomplishments. He established the tradition of attainment in meditation (*sgom sgrub*). He propagated the Doctrine of Mahāyāna so that it spread.

(3) Thirdly, how for the welfare of others he set free their consciousness:

When the Saint accordingly went to *bLon po steñs* in *Šañs*, his entourage, lay patrons and disciples, gathered in great numbers; his four special spiritual sons, his two 'wives', his eight 'younger brothers', etc. gathered in the four groups:

in general (*spyir gyi*), the entourage of masters of meditation, who have obtained the Sense (of the Scriptures), inseparably connected with insight and contemplation;

the entourage of practitioners of tantras, who reach sainthood through adoration and realization;

the entourage of pure monks who reach sainthood through the rules of the *vinaya*, through renunciation and insight;

the entourage of those who, having taken the bodhisattva's vow of prayer and of entering¹⁰ (on the bodhisattva's course), pray for those who suffer and are poor.

Further, as for the instruction left behind, composed by himself, he composed:

“*sGom rim ċhe 'briñ ċhuñ gsum*”,

“*Gegs sel*”,

“*gċod*”,

“*sPyir gdams*”,

“*bKa' 'khor chig bži pa*”,

“*Sems la grol 'debs*”, and many other works.

Further, the excellency of his greatness (*sku ċhe ba'i yon tan*), the deeds (*'phrin las*) he performed etc., what he did by means of many activities (*mjad spyod rnam thar du ma*), are known from his Detailed Biography.

(4) Fourthly, how he passed beyond sorrow in the Unconditioned:

Having reached his 59th year, (he performed) his last (deed) for the welfare of beings while being visibly present (in this world.) When he was invited by *Khro chañ rGyal mchan* (p. 12) to *Byañ 'Dab ('Dam)* in order to consecrate (a new copy of the) “*Khams ċhen*”, he said to his attendants:

“Although I do not wish to go at this time, I must go.” Giving for one summer many sermons and admitting many to the state of monkhood, a feeling of indisposition taking a turn for the worse (*ma dag pa'i snañ ba log tu byuñ nas*), the lama said when he was offered sweet and savoury food by *Khro chañ bsTan pa'i jo mo*: “It is not proper that I drink this!” Repeating this three times, he is said to have said (to himself), the food being offered (again): “When somebody wants (one to eat), one should be indifferent to the taste; (therefore) I should do that (i.e. accept the food)”¹¹. Thereupon he said: “As I will soon wish to go, let me terminate the final rites connected with my instructions!”

Going to *sÑiñ druñ bon gnas*, having said while on his way: “I shall make this my burial-place,”¹² a votive cairn (*tho*) is said to have been erected in a valley meadow. He rode round (the cairn) three times, saying: “The expanse (*dkyus*) of the Unconditioned (*bon ñid*) has been utterly cut (*thag čhod*)! The attachment of *samsāra* has been utterly cut! The illusion of *bar do* has been utterly cut!”

Thereafter, at the end of fourteen days' halt during which he was ill, in the Fire-Male-Rat Year (1096)¹³, at the appearance of the first light of dawn on the fourth day of the second winter month, sound, light and rays, (those) three (signs of death) having appeared¹⁴, he passed beyond sorrow in the Unconditioned.

(5) Fifthly, how the Doctrine was spread through his disciples:

Although in general his flock (*gdul bya*) and his disciples were numerous beyond comprehension, those particularly noble ones who, having good *karma*, strove for the welfare of beings were: his four Spiritual Sons to whom he had entrusted his Word; his two ‘Wives’; his eight ‘Younger Brothers’; and his two ‘Youngest Sons’.

Thus, as for the four Spiritual Sons:

he gave the unborn Word of (right) action to *gÑal sKye med drañ sroñ* in the west;

he gave the miraculously formed Word of insight to *Žabs (bŽag) sGom čhen 'bar ba* in the east;

he gave the meditation-Word of *samādhī* to *Pho sgom žig po* in the north;

he gave the Word of power over the illusion of literal sense and real sense to *Yar 'brog Me ston* in the south, (p. 13).

As for his two 'Wives' they were:

Ÿo mo rgyal mo of 'O *yug sgo luñ* and
bCun ma Dar sgron of 'O *yug*.

As for his eight 'Younger Brothers' they were:

the *devaputra rGya Ye šes sñiñ po* of *Khoñ lam*,
sTag lo 'dul ba of *sTod luñ*
'*U zañs (sañs) sgom dkar* of *Gram*,
Lañ 'Gro'i jo gšen,
the *devaputra Čog lha jo dad* of *Lha steñs*,
the abbot *Chul khrim s 'od zer* of *Šañs*,
sTon pa grub pa of *rGyañ ro*, and
Dam pa pho bcun of *rJiñ mo che*.

As for the two 'Youngest Sons' they were:

gNas rten Jo sogs of *rJiñ mo che* and
the *devaputra Tor rjin (ga rji) jo sras* of *sPra ba lun*.

In addition to these, 508 siddhas. Generally staying in the hermitages, about 300 followers-in-attendance appeared. Being like a lamp of the Doctrine—all the (subsequent) hermit adepts spreading from him—he was extremely gracious towards his followers. As for those from among his disciples who, striving for the welfare of beings, being particularly noble ones endowed with good *karma*, were like lamps of the Doctrine, (they were): *sGom (čhen) 'bar(ba)* and *Yar ('brog) Me (ston)*.

(6) Sixthly, from the events foretold by prophetic utterances (will here be mentioned):

(a) From the "*Dul ba gliñ grags*":

"As for the manifestation of *gSer thog lče 'byams*, he will belong to the family of *rMe'u* and bear the name of '*Dul ba*. The (continued) power

of actions performed in previous lives becoming active, on his accepting the monk's rules, a prophecy will be made. Having obtained spiritual instruction from *mCho* (*bcun Nam mkha' rgyal mchan*) and (*Bru rje bcun*) *g-Yuñ* (*druñ bla ma*), the monastic rules will be spread everywhere." Thus it is said.

(b) Further, from the "Gro mgon gyi 'phrul lde":

"As for the manifestation of *Sad ne ga'u*, the 'lifetree' of *Bon* will be firmly planted by *rMe'u g-Yuñ druñ rgyal mchan* (i.e. *Ri khrod čhen po*) through his meditating in *g-Yas ru Šaṅ* on the Sense of Ultimate Nature (*gnas lugs don*). For him *Māra*, creator of impediments, will be turned into a disciple. Thereafter he will guard the doctrine of the *rMe'u* (lineage) for three generations (p. 14). Thereupon he will become one who does not return (to *samsāra*)."

(c) From the "gNad byañ drug ču pa" by *rKyañ 'phags*:

"As for the manifestation of the mind of *Chad med 'od ldan*—(he will be called) *'rMe ston Dam pa ri khrod'*. His bodily stature will be small, his eyes bright. His skin will be dark and of an even hue. He will possess the spiritual insight *Kun tu bzañ po*. Hundreds of disciples will obtain buddhahood. His ten lineage-holders will work for the welfare of beings. His lineage will last to the end of the world. Those who bow down before his feet will obtain buddhahood in the course of one rebirth. He has opened the way to salvation for five hundred thousand (beings)."

As it is thus written, that holy lama accordingly was a *mahāsattva*, come for the welfare of beings.

* * * *

B.

(SGOM ČHEN 'BAR BA)

The biography of his Spiritual Sons has four parts:

1. *sKye med drañ sron*;
 2. *Pho sgom*;
- their biographies are found elsewhere.

3. *sGom 'bar*;

—his biography has two parts:

- (a) himself
- (b) that of his six Sons.

(a) Firstly, as for the biography of *sGom 'bar* himself :

(As for) the adept (?) *gCañ gi Se bo*¹⁵: His native land was *Ñañ ro rGyañ mkhar ba*; his family were bonpos of (the lineage of) *Žabs (bŽag)*; he was the second of three brothers.

Being from his childhood full of faith, he is said to have heard the Doctrine explained by *Lha rje rgyal mchan (chab)*. Upon growing up, he travelled to India and all the border areas to trade. Once, when together with one called *Žug dkar* the two went trading, enemies (i.e. robbers) appeared and they became miserable (i.e. destitute); accordingly they both swore an oath to turn towards religion. Thereafter *Žug dkar* requested the Hermit Lama for (instruction in) meditation.

sGom 'bar, however, went trading again and obtained about fifty strings of coins¹⁶; (p. 15) as he went to trade them, at that time the venerable Saint, having met his guru, the great *sKye se*, at *sKyi mkhar*, was on his way (home); at that time desire for deliverance (*ñes 'byuñ gi dad pa*)¹⁷ was born in the man from *gCañ* (i.e. *sGom 'bar*).

As he begged: “O Saint! I too will come in the entourage of your holiness,” the Saint said: “How much food have you got? Make preparations (for travelling!)” Replying: “I will go just like this,” he came.

Upon arriving at the bank of the (river) *Ñañ čhu*, violent disgust (with *samsāra*) was born, and he threw his trousers and (bamboo) carrying-frame¹⁸ in the water and said: “Go down from here! I will go upwards—our period of companionship has been (too) long!” Thereafter, acting as servant to the Saint at *'U yug yor po*, he asked for (instruction in) meditation, and a wonderful (feeling of spiritual realization) arose.

At that time, all (the disciples) went to beg alms. As the man from *gCañ*, having asked for permission to go, also went (begging), spiritual realization (*dge sbyor*) did not arise in the way it had done before. Abandoning the alms-begging, he returned to the Saint and said: “I have not had spiritual realization!” He answered: “That is the result of begging.” As he (i.e. *sGom 'bar*) became angry, saying: “Very well, you did not say that the other

day!” the Saint replied: “I will let you have instruction.” But although he gave him a few precepts (*gdams ñag 'ga' zuñ*), (spiritual realization) did not arise; although, further, he even gave him the instruction contained in the “*mThar thug rgyas bñi*” and other volumes, it did not arise.

Then *sGom chen* (*'bar ba*) said: “Those who have some wealth, perform religious offerings (*chogs 'khor*); I have no wealth to perform religious offerings.

Those who have insight and meditation retain spiritual experience (*ñams myoñ*); I have no realization to retain spiritual experience.”

This is called ‘The Lament of *sGom 'bar*’. At that occasion *sGom 'bar* (really) said that as absolute non-existence (of spiritual realization) did not exist, there existed (spiritual realization), (but only to a certain degree) like the sun (from time to time appearing) between the clouds¹⁹. In this manner he passed three years at that very place in indolence and indifference.

Thereafter, one autumn as all (the disciples) were dispersing, on his asking the Saint for a consecration (p. 16), he (i.e. the Saint) said, placing a vase on the top of his head: “*sGom 'bar*! As you are very loud in your laments, you are one in whom the rust (which covers the mirror of your mind) and the obscuration of forming the concept of object and subject must now disappear. See whether there (in your mind) is clinging to the (notion of) ego or not!” At that time his spiritual realization is said to have increased.

Again, having gone to *dBus* to procure food, and having stayed a few years as a servant at *mCho sman lha khañ*, he (again) went up (to *gCañ*). Coming to his guru, he said: “When one’s guru’s grace is great, one meets with spiritual realization; (even) when it is small, he gives (his disciples) sacrificial cakes to eat; as you do not act thus towards me who ask to be firmly placed in the retaining of spiritual realization, my realization, having now vanished, does not exist.”

As he wept, the venerable one said: “For seeking spiritual realization which has been lost, there is advice.

“For making manifest that which is hidden, there is advice.

“For breaking that which is hard, there is advice.

“For giving birth to faith if you do not believe, there is advice.”

Having spoken, he gave religious discourses for a few days.

Thereafter, having said one day: "Come up from here!" and having brought him to a grassy bog, he said: "'*Bar ba!* As you are said to have been very strong when you were young, make a leap here!"

'*Bar ba*, acting accordingly, having slipped, fell, and his body tumbled down very violently. Spiritual realization arising at that instant, he cried and laughed without stopping.

The Saint said: "Has spiritual realization dissolved 'hardness' (*dge sbyor 'thas pa bšig pa 'am*)? If you seek that which has been lost, act in this way. You (now) know the precept given by *Se thuñ pa*." By then his spiritual realization is said to have been without interruption.

Thereupon the Saint is said to have said: "Until I die, you shall stay here. When I have died, *Khyuñ po bon po'i dgon pa* at *sÑi mo phag pu* will be given to you. (p. 17) Go there! Through you there will be welfare for living beings."

As he himself thus had had many hindrances and faults in his own realization, he was skilled in setting things aright when faults arose in the spiritual realization of others.

Later, when his guru had died, (*sÑi mo*) *pha(g pu ?)* was given to him by *g-Yuñ (druñ) rdo (rje)*; at *sÑi mo ša sñi'i dgon pa*, *Jo mo gañs* and several other hermitages he made his meditation (*thugs dam*) like the flow of a river; his contemplation (*ñams rtogs*) becoming manifest, he was endowed with many miraculous powers, namely:

When *g-Yuñ (druñ) rdo (rje)* came to meet him, not finding his wealth through gain by means of²⁰, he said: "Go to sleep without numerous unfulfilled wishes!"

Further, as he was staying at *Ra mañs*, on his saying: "Here in the direction of our country there issues a great clamour of people being driven out from their country—see (what it is)!" (his disciples) looking, saw a beggar shaking off lice and dust. As he heard the sound of the insects, he had the clairvoyancy of sound.

His mind being free from anxiety, further, as he was staying at *Phag zer*, a *nāginī* actually listened to his instruction.

Further, as he was staying at *gDoñ čhuñ*, as a demon (*bcan*) was going up and down the country-side, it made an oblique salutation in the direction of the *ācārya*; having bound the demon of *Čhu ma phug* in an oath, (it promised to perform) whatever (the lama) wished, (merely) on hearing

(the wish). This and many other stories are told of his binding ghosts (*mi ma yin*) by an oath.

Further, whatever was given to him of food and goods, he gave it to the blind, to beggars and to the helpless. He performed no rude act; not sitting on yellow cushions (himself), he is said to have showed great respect to the monks²¹.

In reality, although that lama had the appearance of a tantric adept (*snags pa*), he was adorned by the Triple Vow. Thus (p. 18) there were many deeds arising from his innate nature (*gṣis 'byuñ gi rnam thar*); they may be found in his detailed biography.

Finally, having reached the end of his life, in his 77th year, showing the manner of the passing away of that which is impermanent, he said: "By disease the body is weakened, by discursive thought the mind. As for the pain of illness, it is without self-nature. As for the quiescent (*spros bral*) mind, it cannot die. I am one who has realized the Void. Carry my corpse on the mountain. Even if it is burnt, no miraculous signs will appear."

In short, as he had obtained control over his mind and contemplated *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* without distinguishing between the two, he obtained buddhahood in the Unconditioned (*dbyiñs*), with rainbowlight as sign of realization.

As for his followers and disciples, although there were many adepts (*rtogs ldan gañ zag*) in all directions, from among them the most eminent were the six spiritual sons of *sGom 'bar*:

in *Khams*, *sÑa Pha rol tu phyin pa* and *dBu brag pa*;

at the border between *dBu* and (*g-Yas*) *ru*, *Žañ gNam mcho do pa* and *Khyuñ sgom Jo g-yuñ*;

in *gCañ*, *Mar ston rGyal legs (sMan goñ ba)* and the *siddha Jo gduñ*.

Although (there were these) and many others, the ones who effected the welfare of beings and carried on the lineage through their instruction in philosophy and meditation (*lta sgom*) were the Precious *sMan goñ ba* and *Khyuñ sgom Jo g-yuñ*.

Further, as for the events mentioned in prophecies:

(a) The "*'Gro mgon gyi 'phrul lde*" says:

"To the place called *sÑi mo ša sñi*, one bearing the name of *sGom čen 'bar ba* will come. Through the Sense of Mahāyāna he will guide

living beings. The doctrine of *Ri sgom* will spread somewhat. Thereupon for three rebirths he will effect the welfare of beings in the land of *U rgyan*. Thereafter, not taking birth in the Palace of Knowledge-Holders, he will attain perfect buddhahood." Thus it is said.

(b) The "*lDe mig 'briñ po*" of *db Yil (ston Khyuñ rgod rcal)* says:

"One who will carry on the lineage of his doctrine, called *sGom pa 'Od khyim 'bar ba*, will appear on the borders of *dBus* and *gCañ* (p. 19). He will cause the doctrine of *Ri sgom* to spread." Thus it is said.

This lama, who by natural disposition had become a yogin through the power (of former acts) as he was a saint, free from the rejecting (of sin) and amassing (of virtue), the hindrance (of evil) and the realization (of good), was a manifestation of the *sugata*, come for the welfare of beings.

C.

(BRU ČHEN RGYAL BA G-YUÑ DRUÑ)

(p. 39) Sixthly, as for the biography of the excellent *rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ*:

His native land was *g-Yas ru dBen sa kha*²²; he was born as the son of *Bru ža bSod nams rgyal mchan*²³; he was the third (*tha ltag*)²⁴ of four brothers.

Now, being an incarnation come for the welfare of beings, from his youth onwards he possessed many excellent qualities. At the age of eight he expounded the "*mChan ñid srid pa'i mjod phug*"²⁵. Thereafter he took the pure vows of a *drañ sroñ*²⁶ from *'Dul ba rin po čhe*. Being given the name of *rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ*, he acted in conformity with the substance of the teachings of the discipline.

Further, requesting the external, internal and secret texts (*bon sde*) together with their initiations, ritual texts, and benedictions, he purified his mind (*thugs rgyud sbyaṅs*). Requesting in particular (initiation into) the Great Vehicle of Ultimate Nature (*gnas lugs theg čhen*), he exerted himself spiritually—one-pointedly and without wavering.

The lama himself has said: "Firstly, having requested the teachings concerning the vows of discipline, I kept them without either secrecy or ostentation; intermediately reflecting on the boon of studying, I wholly did

away with all doubts; finally, having requested the immaculate Ultimate Nature, knowledge of the Self arising, this entering, too, into the midst of men both in this (life) and the next—(all this is) the blessing of the holy lama (whose activity is) threefold²⁷”.

Further, from *dByil ston Nam mkha' bsod nams*, (p. 40) the nephew of *dByil ston Khyuñ rgod rcal*; from *Luñ sgom bKra šis rgyal mchan*, of the lineage of *Luñ bon Lha gñan*; from *rMa ston Drañ sroñ*, of the lineage of *rMa ston srid 'jin*, and others, he requested initiations, ritual texts, precepts, and benedictions. In particular, having requested—bowing down at the feet of *rTogs ldan Dad šes* of *La stod*²⁸, and of *Žañ ston bSod nams rin čhen* of 'Ĵad, and other lineage-lamas—the cycle of “The Oral Transmission of the Great Perfection” (*rJogs pa čhen po sñan rgyud kyi skor rnams*) together with its initiations, conferring of ritual texts, benedictions, spiritual attitude (?) (*ñams*), lineage, and permission (to practice the instruction received), he performed the chief of spiritual exertions (i.e. the Great Perfection).

Thereafter he studied (*ñams len mjad*) at *g-Yas ru mKhar sna'i brag*, *Ra goñ yon po*, and various other hermitages.

The lama himself has said: “Through the grace of showing adoration and respect towards the exalted *siddhas*, a sensation of faith and unshakeable resolution arose (*yid čhes thag čhod spros mtha' čhod pa čig byuñ*)²⁹”. Accordingly, the basis of knowledge without discrimination appearing from within, the stream of the defilement of distinguishing between subject and object was cut off; the Foundation, Spontaneous Luminosity, appearing without interruption, the Way, characterised by Sound, Light and Rays, was set free (dissolved) on its own plane (*rañ sar*); Liberation, the Fruit of the Three *Kāyas* becoming manifest, the Great Bliss, the very plane of the *Dharmakāya*³⁰, was grasped; further, he beheld the entourage of his chief tutelary deities; the meditation (*dgoñs pa*) consisting in the projection and reabsorption of *utpatti(krama)* and *nišpanna(krama)* was set free (dissolved) on its own plane—the setting free (i.e. dissolution) of these and countless other mental experiences was born in his mind.

As for the works (*bka' brten*) composed by himself:

the “*Lag len pod čhuñ*”, a summary of external, internal, and secret ceremonies;

the “*gZuñs bsdus*”, a precious summary of all ‘essences’;

the "Guide to the Ceremonies (*lag len dmar khrid*) of the Oral Transmission of the Great Perfection";
 further, the "Manual (*lag khrid*) of the (Worship of the) Fierce Deities (*dbal gsas*)";
 "Precepts Concerning Psychic Veins, 'Wind' and Bindu";
 various epistles (*yig sna*) concerning relative truth and the physical world (*snod bcud*);
 "Instruction in the Recitation of (the mantra styled) 'The Emptying of the Pit of the States of Woe'";
 "The Volume of Songs of Spiritual Instruction";
 "Prayers to the Lineage-Lamas", and other works. (p. 41)

In particular, as regards this jewel-precept, the cycle of texts dealing with "A *khrid*", he composed the "*Thun mchams bcho lha pa*"³¹ and the "*rGyab skyor rin chen gsal 'debs*"³² in accordance with the spiritual practice (*thugs dgoñs*) of 'Gro mgon³ g-Yor po Me dpal and the illustrious *bLo gros*³³.

The above works were not proclaimed³⁴ as if to tamper with (the Doctrine) or from a (vain) delight in scholarship³⁵, but only to aid his own memory and to arrange (the teachings) in order to facilitate the understanding (of them) for inferior minds.

Being thus simultaneously scholarly, noble, and good, he obtained the dignity of the abbacy (*bla ma gdan sa bzuñ*)³⁶, and having turned the wheel of the Word of listening, explaining, meditating, realization etc., he effected the welfare of beings beyond reckoning; being a lamp of the precious Doctrine, he established beings beyond reckoning who were to be converted on the way of ripening and (ultimate) liberation.

Finally, at the age of 49, he displayed the manner of passing beyond sorrow and transitoriness. As for the signs of his *siddhi*, he left behind many relics—*riñ srel*, rainbow-light etc.

As for his disciples, although there are, nowadays³⁷, many *kalyāṇamitras* and adept-saints in Upper, Middle and Lower (Tibet), there are (in particular) the (veritable) essence of the Doctrine, (namely) his younger brother *Bru Nam mkha' 'od zer* and his nephew *Bru ston bSod nams rgyal mchan* and many others.

As for the events foretold by prophetic utterances:

(a) the “*gNad byañ drug ču rca gčig*” of *rKyañ 'phags* says:

“As for the emanation of the mind of *sNañ ba mdog čan*, there will be one called *Bru ža rje bcun*. The fourteen *svastikasattvas* of his spiritual lineage will guide living beings. *rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ*, the manifestation of all the *sugatas*, the noble healers, (p. 42) will come for the welfare of beings. Those who bow down at his lotus-feet, being freed from the five *skandhas* of birth, will be established on the path of liberation. He will open the door of liberation for three hundred thousand beings.”

(b) The “*Nañ rgyud gliñ bsgrags*” of *rMa* says:

“Thereafter, as for the members of the family of *Bru*, there will be many bearing the name of *g-Yuñ druñ nam mkha'*³⁸ who will spread the Doctrine.”

Accordingly, the distinguished lama, his brother and his nephew thus were all manifestations of the *sugatas*, come for the welfare of beings.

[Part II of this article, “The Essential Teachings of the *A Khrid System*” will appear in the next issue of *Kailash*—Ed.]

Notes to Part I

1. *dbYiñs* is used in the sense of *čhos dbyiñs* (*bon dbyiñs*) (*dharmadhātu*), or *boñ ñid* (*dharmatā*), cf. p. 18, 1. 7: *grub rtags gža' 'od dañ bčas nas dbyiñs su sañs rgyas pa lags soj*
2. *dNos snañ* ‘being visibly present’ (ST), cf. p. 11, 1. 21: *dnos snañ 'gro don tha ma*.
3. The meaning of *mje bsdu* would seem to be ‘sexual union’, but this only makes sense in the present context if one supposes that a negative has been lost, i.e. **mje mi bsdu*, ‘abstention from sexual union’.
4. I follow ST’s explanation of the somewhat elliptical *gčig čhod du thon pa*.
5. *Thugs sbyoñs/ blo sbyoñs* is said to be a technical term particular to the *bKa' gdams pa*, cf. Blue Annals p. 926, and TPS p. 98-99 where *blo sbyoñ* however is defined as a “particular class of mystic handbook of the Kadampa” and as precursors of the later *lam rim* literature. According to my Tibetan informants however, the expression simply means “to study”.
6. For *bon* in the meaning of ‘precept’, cf. Snellgrove “Nine Ways of Bon” p. 226 1. 9 where *bla med theg pa'i bon 'di dag* is translated “the religious truths of this Supreme Way”.
7. *sras* is used as an honorific title for young laymen (SG). That it cannot mean “son” is obvious as *Grol ba gčen rgyal* belongs to *Žu chañ* while *g-Yuñ druñ bla ma* belongs to *Bru chañ*.
8. The “*Gab pa*” has been published by the Bonpo Foundation; the other text might be the “*Sems phran sde bdun*” (SG).
9. *Thod brgal* is not, as Snellgrove seems to suggest (“Four Lamas of Dolpo”, p. 139), a specifically *rjogs čhen* term. It translates sk. *vyutkrānta* in the term *vyutkrnātaka-samādhi*, tib. *thod (b)rgal gyi sñoms par 'jug pa*. It likewise translates *viškanda* in *viškandaka-samādhi*, tib. as above. See Hobogirin p. 353, 1, (fasc. IV, Paris 1967) where J. May translates the entire phrase by

- 'Accès à l'Égalité en Sautant'. In the light of this article, which provides a full discussion of the term and numerous references, Ruegg's translation of the sentence *śes rab thod rgal pa rnams su mi čhug pa*, "they must be attentive inasmuch as his supreme knowledge was superb" (*thod rgal* seems to be translated by 'superb') ("The Life of Bu ston rin po che" p. 76), can now be corrected. *Thod rgal* is dealt with by Tucci, "Die Religionen Tibets" (Stuttgart 1970), p. 103-5.
10. *Sems bskyed smon 'jug*. *Sems bskyed pa* has two stages: the prayer (*smo lam*) that one may effect the welfare of beings, and the actual entering (*'jug pa*) on a bodhisattva's course (ST).
 11. '*Dod dus zas kyi ro sñoms de la gyis*! Is there an allusion to the *eka-rasa* (*ro sñoms*) doctrine?
 12. '*Cher sa* : the interpretation "burial-place" is given by my Tibetan informants. Might there be some confusion with *mched* "place for burying the dead" (Das p. 1041)? The *Dag yig* has "*mches dur du mčhod*" with the interlinear note : "*śi dur mčhod pa*" (p. 101, 1. 2). However, I am indebted to Mme Macdonald for another interpretation "dwelling-place, encampment" with the following references: *Si tu bka' čhems* fol. 144a : *cher sa 'résidence*'; *gCañ smyon rnam thar* fol. 28b: '*cher du 'chez lui*'. Cf. *Ch. gr.* p. 716, 1: '*cher sa—mcher sa 'brog sa'am*'; p. 711, 2 : *mcher sa—ba lañ gnas sam thas rva dañ sdod sa 'brog sa*. The translation given by Jä. p. 460 ('an old deserted settlement or dwelling') is clearly quite insufficient.
 13. The same year is given in "*Ńi ma bstan 'jin*" (89).
 14. *sGra, 'od* and *zer* are treated (separately) in *Bras bu rañ sa bzun ba sku gsum dmar thag bčad pa'i khrid* (publ. Delhi 1966), fol. 3a - 4a.
 15. *Don rtags kyi* is possibly a mistake for *don rtogs*. *sGom 'bar* is commonly known as *Don rtogs gCañ pa se bo* (SG).
 16. *Duñ 'phreñ* : 'a string on which are threaded a certain number of coins of small value' (ST). Cf. *doñ ce* 'coin . . . esp. a small coin' Jä. p. 258.
 17. *Nes 'byuñ gi dad pa* "a feeling of sadness resulting from the contemplation of the misery of *samsāra*." (SG).
 18. *Tog ma* 'trousers'; *phu lu* 'carrying frame' (SG).
 19. The reason for inserting an explanation which seems both unnecessary and erroneous, is probably an unwillingness to admit that this famous lama was entirely bereft of spiritual realization, even at this early stage in his career.
 20. Does *sel nags* mean 'forest', thus: "gain by means of (the produce of?) the forest"? Or is there a reference to cattle, cf. *nag čhags* 'cattle'? The whole passage is obscure.
 21. Thus explained by ST. However, the translation: "(although) he did not sit on yellow cushions, his share of (the) homage (shown by the lay community) was greater than that of the (other?) monks" would seem to be more accurate.
 22. The "*sŃan rgyud*" adds : "His family (*gduñ rus*) was *Bru*."
 23. Interlinear note: "Also called *Srid thub*."
 24. ST.
 25. Found as a Treasure in 1108. Published by Tenzin Namdak, Delhi 1966 ("Mdzod phug: Basic Verses and Commentary by Dran pa nam mkha" 125 p.) Further information concerning the text is found in the introduction to this edition (on the pages marked 127—129, but actually p. 3—5).
 26. *Drañ sroñ (rši)* is the Bonpo term for *dge sloñ (bhikṣu)*. Cf. Snellgrove "Nine Ways of Bon" p. 10.
 27. *gSum ldan gyi bla ma*, i.e. a lama whose threefold activity is as follows (ST):
 - (a) *dbañ bskur ba* — 'conferring of initiations'

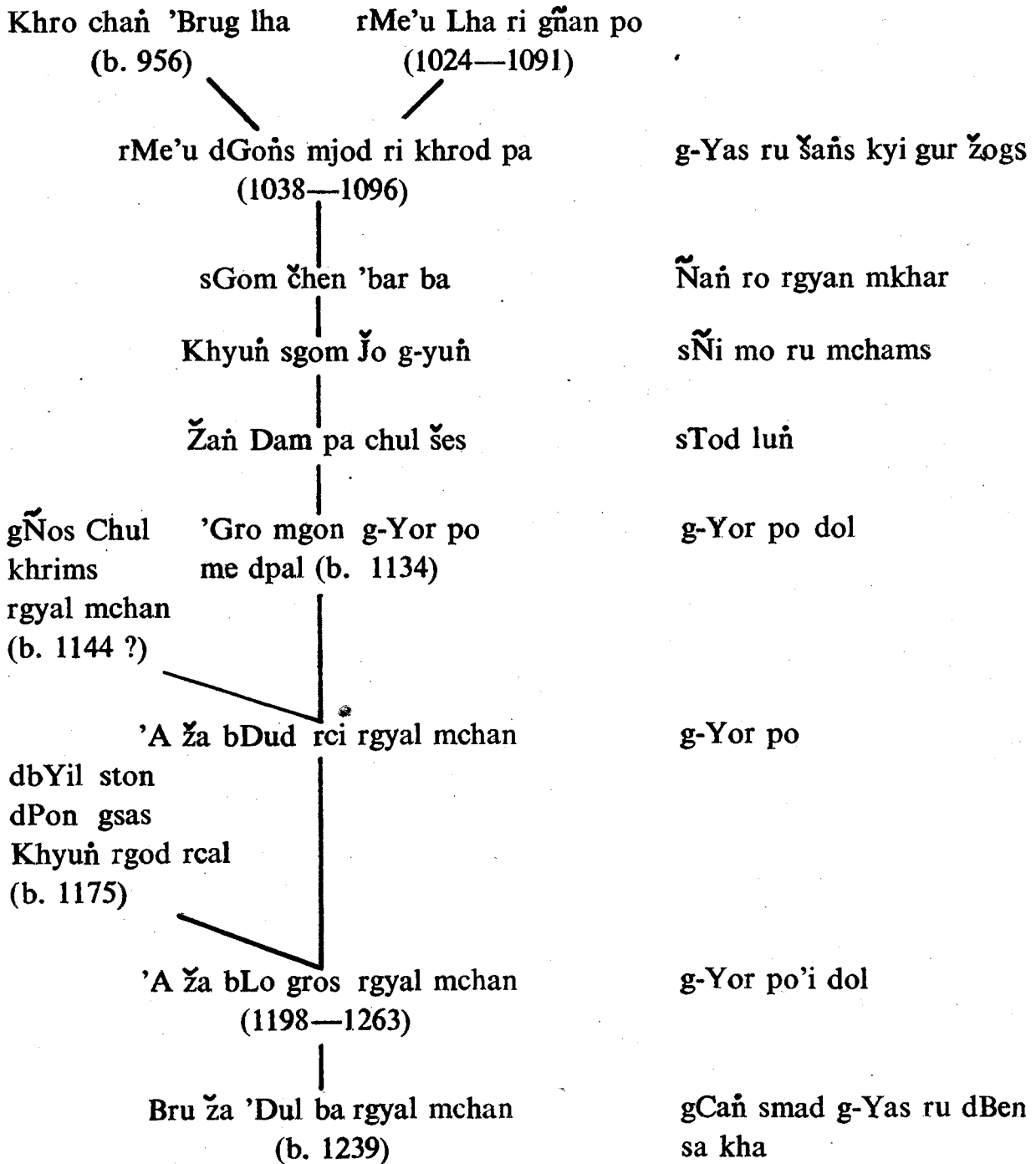
- (b) *luñ gnañ ba* — ‘imparting of ritual texts’
 (c) *rgyud bśad pa* — ‘explaining of tantras’.

28. His biography is found on p. 94.2–98.2 of “Bon-po Niṣpanna Yoga”.
29. The *varia lectio* given here found in “Niṣpanna Yoga” (p. 102, 4) is preferable.
30. It is fair to underline that my Bonpo informants objected to the translation ‘*dharmakāya*’, pointing out that *dharma* translates *chos*. As *bon* is, nevertheless, synonymous with *chos* (as far as Buddhist metaphysics is concerned) I have retained the translation, the term ‘*dharmakāya*’ having, after all, won for itself a place in Western idiom.
31. A part of which is translated in Part II of the present study.
32. I.e. the “*Ño sprod rin Chen gsal ’debs rgyab skyor gyi gdams pa*”, p. 117–185 of the “A-TRI THUN TSHAM CHO-NA DAN”. On p. 184 l. 13–20 of this text we find the following colophon:
 “Da (emend : de) ltar “Ño sprod rin po che’i gsal ’debs rgyab skyor gyi gdams pa’/ bla ma dam pa rnam kyī dgoñs chul dañ/ mñam med ’Dul ba rin po che’i žal gdams/ phyag len dañ mi ’gal bar/ dus sñigs ma’i Bru sgom rGyal ba g-yun drun la/ phyogs med kyī ñams len pa/ ’Bru sgom sByin pa ’od zer gyis bskul te/ gab pa bton/ sbas pa bśigs/ bskuñs pa phyuñs te/ chig don gsal bas spros nas/ Rin Chen spuñs pa mKhar sna’i dgon par sbyar . . .”
33. Cf. Part I, App. 1. ‘The illustrious *bLo gros* is ’*A ža bLo gros rgyal mchan*.
34. The texts were, of course, *dictated* to his pupils.
35. Acc. to ST, *ra chod* means ‘to tamper with, emend, (the scriptures)’ and thus carries a strong pejorative sense (*bka’ la ra chod*—ST).
36. Presumably the abbacy of *g-Yas ru dBen sa kha* is meant; cf. p. 26 l. 10–14 (speaking of *g-Yor po Me dpal*):
 “de nas Bru ston Ñi rgyal gyi gdan sa / g-Yas ru dBen sa khar lo ’ga’ bžugs te/ mkhas pa gÑos Chul khriṃs rgyal mchan dañ gñis/ bstan pa’i rgyal thebs mjad čin/ bka’ gžun bśad ñan gyi ’khor lo rgya Chen po bskor bas/ gdan sa rin po che la yañ bka’ drin šin tu che ba lags so/”; p. 29 l. 16–17 (*A ža bDud rci rgyal mchan*): “khoñ gi bstan pa’i rgyal thebs mjad čin/ bka’ luñ ñan bśad kyī ’khor lo bskor . . .”; p. 32 l. 12–16 (*A ža bLo gros rgyal mchan*); p. 36 l. 13.
37. If the *din san* (the passage is found only in the *A khrid* version) should, in fact, as SG suggests, be translated “nowadays”, this would seem to indicate that the present biography, and indeed probably the entire text A up to this biography, is written by a pupil of *Bru Chen*, i.e. in the first half of the 14th century. Needless to say, it would be extremely important for a correct evaluation of the information text A contains if its date of composition could be fixed.
38. *g-Yun druñ nam mkha’* is probably to be understood, or has at least been interpreted as, (*rGyal ba*) *g-Yuñ druñ* and (his brother) *Nam mkha’* (‘od zer).

Appendix I

The spiritual lineage of *A khrid*

Yul



Bru ža rGyal ba g-yuñ druñ (1242—1290)		g-Yas ru dBen sa kha
Bru ža Nam mkha' 'od zer (younger brother of GY)		”
Bru ža bSod nams rgyal mchan (nephew of GY, 1268—1321)		”
Bru ža bSod nams blo gros (1277—1341)		”
Bru ža rNam rgyal ka ra		”
(?Bru ža?) Rin čhen blo gros		”
mÑam med Šes rab rgyal mchan (<i>sMan ri</i>) (1356—1415)		rGyal roñ gi čhu čhen rGyal mo dñul čhu
Go Rin čhen rgyal mchan (<i>sMan ri</i>) (b. 1360)		mDo khams Lha thu
gÑa' Nam mkha' ye šes (<i>sMan ri</i>) (abbot 1446)		rMa pom ra'i smad/čhu 'khrug (rMa čhu khrug)
sGa Kun bzañ rgyal mchan (ab. 1464)		sTa 'u mdo skya
sGo jo ba bLo gros rgyal mchan		rGyal roñ stod kyi Sogs tiñ spo za
'Gru bsTan pa 'od zer		dGe sdiñ bon groñ
'Gru Ñi ma 'od zer (1562—1637)		dGe sdiñ gnas snañ

Appendix 2

Specimen of the Text of the Biography of
Bru čhen Compared with the Version Found
 in the *rJogs pa čhen po Žaň žuň sñan rgyud*
kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar ("Bonpo
 Nišpanna-Yoga", p. 98 1.4 et seq.)

The beginning of the Biography of *Bru čhen* as found in text A and in the "Bonpo Nišpanna Yoga", the variants found in the latter text being given in the notes. This short passage will suffice to show the near-identity of the two texts.

(p. 39 1.6 et seq.) . . . drug pa mchan ldan rgyal ba g-yuň druň gi rnam thar la¹/ yul ni g-Yas ru dBen sa khar²/ yab Bru-ža bSod nams rgyal mchan (interlinear note: Srid thub yaň zer) gyi sras su/ sku 'khruňs te/ sku mched bži yod pa'i tha ltag yin³/ de yaň sprul sku 'gro ba'i don la byon pa yin pas/ čhuň nas yon tan⁴ du ma daň ldan te/ dguň lo brgyad la⁵ mChan ñid⁶ "Srid pa'i mjod phug⁷" bśad/ de nas 'Dul ba rin po čhe'i druň du/ dag pa draň sroň gi sdom pa blaňs te/ chul miň rGyal ba g-yuň druň du mchan gsol žiň/ bslab pa chul khirms kyi⁸ don daň ldan par mjad/ gžan yaň phyi naň gsaň gsum gyi bon sde la/ dbaň luň byin rlabs daň bčas pa žus šin/ thugs rgyud sbyaňs/ khyad par gnas lugs theg čhen gyi no sprođ žus pas⁹/ rce gčig yeňs med kyi thugs dam mjad de/ bla ma ñid kyi gsuň las kyaň/ bdag gis kyaň daň po sruň sdom gyi bslab pa žus nas no lgog¹⁴ med par bsruňs/ bar du thos bsam kyi bka' drin mnos nas sgro 'dogs¹¹ legs par bčad/ tha ma¹² yaň dag pa'i gnas lugs žus nas¹³ raň no šes pa cam byuň¹⁴ bas/ 'di phyi gñis kar¹⁵ mi khyur chud pa cam byuň ba 'di yaň¹⁶/ gsum ldan gyi bla ma dam pa de'i bka' drin lags so/ žes gsuňs so/ gžan yaň dByil ston Khyun rgod real gyi dbon po dByil ston Nam mkha' bsod nams sam¹⁷/ Luň bon Lha gñan gyi brgyud pa Luň sgom bKra šis rgyal mchan nam¹⁸/rMa ston Srid 'jin gyi brgyud pa/ rma ston Draň sroň las sogs rnam las kyaň¹⁹/ dbaň luň gdams pa byin rlabs daň bčas pa žus/

1. Bru čhen po rGyal ba g-yuň druň gi lo rgyus la lña/ daň po gcaň ma mi lus thob pa yab daň yum gyi lo rgyus ni/
2. kha/ gduň rus Bru yin/
3. yab ... rgyal mchan la/ sras sku mched .../
4. sbyaňs pa'i yon tan
5. brgyad pa la

6. mchan nid omitted
7. phugs
8. kyi omitted
9. žus nas
10. mñon lkog
11. sgros 'dogs
12. tha mar
13. žus nas omitted
14. byas
15. gñis ka
16. ... cam byas pa 'di ni/
17. ... bsod nams dañ/
18. ... dañ
19. la yañ

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