**STON PA GSHEN RAB: SIX MARRIAGES AND MANY MORE FUNERALS**

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**First Part: A Brief Survey of Early Developments**

In Narratives on gShen and Bon

**gShen and Bon** in Dunhuang Sources

It is well known among tibetologists, old Tibetan sources repeatedly mention ritualists, who are variously named or described as *(pha) gshen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo.*¹ These old sources are evidently not Buddhist and were found somewhat off-centre to Tibet in the so-called ‘Library’ Cave #17, in Dunhuang, Eastern Turkestan. Many have also noted that these brief references to ritualists relate to the name of the founder of Bon, sTon pa gShen rab mi bo,² which starts appearing systematically in the first self-consciously Bon sources, such as the *Klu `bum* and *mDo ’dus.* In fact, given the relatively late emergence of Bon literature—starting during the so-called *phyi dar,* the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet (from approximately the 10th–11th c. AD)—these stray Dunhuang references may represent the earliest textual evidence for the name. Non-Buddhist, Tibetan-language Dunhuang sources thus seem to have preserved the earliest extant precursors of a gShen rab(s) figure, including some narrative context.

The Dunhuang gShen rab(s) references and descriptions mostly appear in a context of ritual on death and healing and seem to imply a senior male figure who, considering his name and function, either is the best gShen ritual specialist *(gshen rab),* or is a man *(myi bo)* with great ritual expertise, who simply hails from the gShen clan *(gshen rabs).* At one point even a tantalisingly brief iconography appears.³

¹ References appear in Karmay (1975) and slightly more extensively, also in Stein (1988), later.
² See amongst many others Karmay (1983) and Stein (1988); see also Chu Junjie (1991).
³ PT1289:612f, a funerary text about animal sacrifice (c.q., *mdzo mo*) describes gShen rabs as a type of tantrist: *... gshen rabs kyi myi bo pha se gshes / [613] gshang dril chen na phug ma g-yon na sams / gshog the ra ther bu ni phug ma g-yas na sams / sild ni bdur rigs ni tsho / mgy gshis ni gshen kyis sdo “sad “do. For the mythic embedding of the ritual use of bird wings, see also PT1194:36–55 and Stein (1971:54). See now also the Mythic Origins of the Bird Wing Liberator in Bellezza (2008:506f, cf. 429ff). Here and elsewhere in section III of his Herculean study, Bellezza—quite courageously in fact—presents tentative renderings of often extremely problematic Dunhuang passages. But one wonders why reference to Stein’s and others’ ground-
These texts also mention quite a few other gshen ritual specialists by name, in similar contexts, such as, frequently, (Pha) Dur gshen rma da (na), but also sGal gshen tho’u yug, etc. (these names often appear there in many variants, listed elsewhere: see next note).

The words gshen and bon are well attested in Dunhuang manuscripts. They mostly appear in non-Buddhist sources as technical terms for ritual specialists. Knowledge of the precise distinction of these ritualistic titles seems to have already been lost at the time of their recording in Dunhuang or elsewhere. The names, the various types of breaking work on the same passages and to earlier solutions of the same problems is so conspicuously absent. Mainly a posthumously published, equally tentative translation of 101731 by Thomas (1957) apparently deserves a brief but rather dismissive review (p.529, n.623). Also, the Gendün Chöphel syndrome apparently still plagues Tibetan Studies, alas: certainly since translators from Russian and Chinese are meticulously credited, one also wonders why the learned Triten Norbutse and Menri Geshes who by their own saying have laboured on the translations from the Tibetan remain without credit or mention!

On iconography, also compare a later, rather more exotic description of Sri bon Dur bon (sic!) rma da that appears in the in the Dur gsas lha srung bka’i shing sphyen drungs pa of the Mu cho’i khron ‘dur funerary collection (Bon bKa’ gyur III, Vol.6, pp.303-681): p.304.1: .../ phyog na ‘dur gshog ldem pa bsnams ... One page earlier (p.302.6ff), Srid gshen Mu cho ldem drug is likewise graphically described. The Mu cho’i khron ‘dur and ‘Dur chog cycles are traditionally attributed to Khu tsa zla’od (11th c. AD) or to Thog thog lhung lha.

For the wing implement in funerary context, see from the same collection, untitled, pp.197.3ff, and for its mythic origins, see the gShog rab(s) also included there, p.213ff. Cf. Bellezza 2008:429ff: Bellezza’s very interesting and detailed comparison of the wing origin narrative of the PT194 and the Mu cho’i khron ‘dur, more than anything else perhaps, also highlights the marked differences between these strata of texts and thus underlines the great caution that one should observe when attempting to understand and interpret, in accordance with later historiographical (re)constructions and doctrinal exegesis, earlier Dunhuang-period texts—leaving aside for the moment the involved question how long the rituals, myths and narratives that appear there predate the compilation of individual texts. Based on his ubiquitous, trademark ‘exegetically enhanced’ readings and reconstruction of Dunhuang funerary sources, Bellezza then tries to reach even greater time-depth and to reconstruct prehistoric mortuary rites. Yet, along this exegetical path even the most intrepid, die-hard explorer may easily fall into the trappings of anachronism, traditional exegesis (cf. p.543, n.697), and apologetics. In the book announcement and introduction (p.12), Bellezza indeed promises (new) philological methodology (cf. his methodological prelude to section II, pp.201-5). But philology, methodologically, usually would direct its analyses in the opposite direction: deconstructing later textual elaboration in historical perspective, i.e., in reference to earlier literary strata, rather than reconstructing earlier layers from later historical (re)constructions and attempt exegesis (at the risk of anachronism).
ritual specialists, and their occurrences in sources, will be discussed in more detail somewhere else.\footnote{See forthcoming publication on the ‘location’ of origin of Bon. This is the second volume in a tripartite publication project based on the Leiden Three Pillars of Bon research programme (funded by NWO and Leiden University, 2005–2010). The publishing programme furthermore includes a Ph.D.-thesis by Kalsang Norbu Gurung which deals specifically with the topic of the founder of Bon (third ‘pillar’). Also included is a monograph of a preceding project: Antecedents of Bon Religion in Tibet. This deals with continuity and change in Bon doctrine at the turn of the first millennium AD, particularly in death ritual and the so-called ‘Aural Transmission from Zhang zhung’ (first ‘pillar’, funded by NWO, 2002–2005). Bellezza (2008) in his section III approximately covers the same ground that I intended to cover in the 2002-05 NWO Antecedents project. I of course shared a research outline of this project on continuity and change in death ritual with him early in 2003 and also a more elaborate description by means of a historiographical paper at the Oxford IATS 2003 (cited by him on p.202, n.1, in his historiographical prelude). Under this configuration it is probably necessary to clarify that beyond that early exchange, his present publication was prepared independently from my project, using his own resources and research data. The other two volumes in the Three Pillars project will also give more in-depth discussion of aspects and topics that this survey can only briefly touch upon. For developments of the gShen rab myth in early Bon sources, I particularly refer to the third ‘pillar’ of the forthcoming publications.}

As said, Dunhuang gShen rab(s) narratives usually show a simple paradigm of crisis and crisis management, solving problems relating to illness and death by means of healing rites and funerary service and seem to be used in a context of ritual recitation (e.g. smrang or rabs) of precedents (and the implied credits) that typically precede ritual.\footnote{See, amongst many others, Stein (1971), Lako (1958), and Karmay (1998).} This story paradigm is also common to a much wider stock of Dunhuang stories relating activities of unnamed gshen and bon ritual specialists. A similar paradigm also appears in the Klu ‘bun, the ‘hundred thousand’ verses on naga-s (snake deities). Partly, this source may be contemporaneous (starting 10\textsuperscript{th} c. AD?) and partly perhaps also later (that is to say, the collection may have developed over some time). The paradigm resurfaces again in later collections, such as among others, briefly in the (probably) 11\textsuperscript{th} c. AD Mu cho ’i khrom ’dur and ’Dur chog funerary texts.

Dunhuang references to a gShen rab(s) figure most likely pertain to the 9\textsuperscript{th}–10\textsuperscript{th} c. AD, but that is basically just a wild guess, be it one of an educated variety.\footnote{Most likely, we have to settle for a relatively late date of most of the Dunhuang documents used for this study (cf. Beckwith PIATS 2006); “most”: simply because I haven’t studied all yet. We probably should not take the generally presumed antiquity of Dunhuang documents (as dating to the imperial period) for granted. Early dates for some documents, such as for instance proposed by MacDonald (1971), have failed to convince. Rolf Stein in my opinion rightly raised questions} The polished narrative structure of
Dunhuang stories involving gShen rab(s) *cum suis* suggests that, by then, they had already become stock narrative tropes, in which a gShen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo and Dur gshen rma da (na) and a few others (the mentioned sGal gshen thö’u yug etc.), by epic concentration, had become the focal points of excellent ‘priestly’ characteristics. They appear a-historically as ideal-typical ritual agents and story characters. The opaque narrative form of the stories suggests considerable distance to their contexts of origin and to historical and topographical realities connected to the names—if there ever were historical persons underlying them (but cf. Thomas 1957, in his several introductions). This gestation may take us back one or more centuries for the possible historical origins of the names and, less likely: events; say 7th–8th c. AD? What is reflected in Dunhuang sources may thus have been shaped by a considerable period of oral *cum* written transmission and therefore adhere to the logic of narrative, more than that of history and topography. If there ever were concrete historical and geographical contexts connected with the names and stories, it will be difficult to infer those from the late form and shape the stock of story elements that they have become part of has reached us in.

Still, something more can be said about the origins of the narratives. The gshen ritual specialists that are mentioned by name may have been particularly famous ritualists, whose ‘names’ have become legendary. For (Pha) gShen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo it is moreover possible, if not likely, that we are dealing with descriptions of a priestly function (Stein 1988:44) and not with a particular individual or personal name. Could this ritual expertise have been the privileged specialisation of a gShen clan? These are of course not necessarily mutually exclusive: it may be difficult to draw a clear boundary between name and title.

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about that in his review of her work in “Tibetica Antiqua” (1985). I presently work on the assumption that the Dunhuang documents that I am dealing with are late imperial at the earliest, but probably mostly post-imperial in their redaction. So far, my working hypothesis has been that the earliest records that I use would fit a date in the 9th-10th century AD. On the other hand, what is recorded in non-Buddhist Dunhuang documents may reflect traditions that reach back one or more centuries before their date of composition. I do not doubt that some Dunhuang sources represent and preserve traditions—historical, ritual, narrative and otherwise—that in any case predate the formation of the first self-consciously Bon documents (the *Klu ’bum* is a bit of a border-line case), which perhaps start forming from the 10th c. AD. That still makes non-Buddhist Dunhuang sources roughly contiguous with the earliest self-consciously Bon sources and in any case contemporaneous with Tibetan Buddhism. Also, to state the bleeding obvious: for practical reasons, consciously non-Buddhist interest groups in the early phyi dar, wherever they were, did not relate to the physical documents that are preserved in Dunhuang, but to comparable traditions that may have been around also elsewhere.
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The later sTon pa gShen rab character may thus have developed from a *primus inter pares* among gShen and bon ritual specialists, whose historicity we cannot now trace anymore in the opaque story characters that remain in Dunhuang-period narratives. Alternatively, the name may also derive from a ritualistic title that in the early *phyi dar* was read as a personal name, by Tibetan interest groups: newly styled bon po-s, who, consciously or not, allowed their collective memory to coagulate around a respectable non-Buddhist name or person, a suitable perceived founder of their newly invented ‘non-Buddhist’ tradition.

What is important to stress, however, is that in the narratives that remain in Dunhuang sources there is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that the gShen rab(s) figure mentioned there was considered to be a founder of a tradition called Bon. There also is no connection whatsoever of Dunhuang gShen rab(s) narratives to Zhang zhung or Ta zig, even though those place names do appear in other contexts: the narratives mostly are securely located more centrally in Tibet. I have argued elsewhere (PIATS 2006) that the connection of the myth of the founder with Zhang zhung and Ta zig significantly postdates even early self-consciously Bon literature: it is conspicuously absent from collections such as the *Klu 'bum*, *mDo 'dus* or the *Mu cho'i khrom 'dur*; all of which, in some form or other, seem to pertain to the inceptive period of Bon: the 10th–11th c. AD.7 Dunhuang gShen rab(s) narratives also

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7 Occasionally, Bellezza (2008) also notes such indications of non-Zhang zhung provenance (e.g. p.369), only to gloss them over forthwith, for unclear reasons. Through circumstantial and occasionally also anachronistic arguments, based on often much later sources and unverifiable traditional attributions, he attributes Zhang zhung provenance to rites such as are described in the *Mu cho'i khrom 'dur* and in Dunhuang sources. He subsequently harnesses these ‘exegetically enhanced’ data as circumstantial evidence—a missing link as it were—for arguing that the rather indifferent early and/or pre-historic material data from in the field may also pertain to ‘Zhang zhung’. This argument utterly fails to convince. It is a fragile theoretical edifice that I should not recommend dwelling in. The narratives he discusses mostly *clearly are not* located in Zhang zhung, which moreover otherwise is a well-known entity in this period. Thus the evidence, before exegetical enhancement, in fact appears to argue against the thesis of a cradle of Tibetan culture in Zhang zhung and also to contradict the book’s title. These systematic attempts to project a grand Bon Zhang zhung Empire back into earlier sources by interpolation, and beyond that into Tibetan pre- and proto-history, based on traditional historical constructs and exegesis in later Bon and Buddhist historiography, are a telling example for the fundamental dangers that may lurk in this exegetically tinged methodology. Most of the weight of the arguments now lies in the starting hypotheses and not in unadorned evidence (i.e., before exegetical enhancement). Based on the overwhelming lack of a connection to Zhang zhung in the earliest sources, one should probably advise to rename the book simply to *Foundations of Civilisation in Tibet*, not insisting on identifying Zhang zhung rather
contain no convincing references to Bon as a self-conscious religious tradition. To clarify this important point we need to discuss very briefly some crucial terms: *bon, bon po* and *g-yung drung bon*.

1. *A Brief Note on Bon*

The most convincing indications so far for an ‘established Bon religion’ in the imperial period have been pointed out by Samten Karmay, as early as 1981. Informally, we long ago agreed to disagree on this. It is very difficult to find *terra firma* for Bon in the period. Before moving on with our survey, I should like to spend some time with Karmay’s discussion of ‘imperial Bon’ and try to put up some problematic points for further discussion, even though I realise it will not be possible to settle the issue yet. Karmay (1998/1981:166) quotes from PT972:

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so so byis pa skye bo rnam/ mu stegs bon la yid ches te/ las kyi don du mtshan ma spyod/
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“Ordinary people, have faith in Bon, the ‘non-Buddhist doctrine’. For activity they (i.e., ordinary people who follow Bon) indulge in materials” (ibid. p.163).

We do not need to search very long for the appropriate meaning of the word *bon* in this context, as it is clarified in a following passage: warning people not to have faith in *mo bon* ritual specialists. These *mo bon* here may indeed designate that ubiquitous diviner-type of ritual specialist that meets us so often in Bon sources, also the earliest ones:

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mo bon dag la srid ma llos/ ’dre srin dag la yar ma mchod/ bdud dang bgag (bgegs) la skyab ma tshal/... (ibid. p.166).
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traditionally, as the foundation of that civilization—a thesis as of yet unproven and even flatly contradicted by evidence.

8 For discussion of possibly early evidence for Bon in the imperial period see Karmay (1998/1981:157f.); cf. also his article on the *Can lnga* (see esp. pp.289ff.). Much of his work on myth and ritual is in fact geared toward clarifying ancient Tibetan religious culture, e.g., his articles on: the little black-headed man; the soul and the turquoise; *gjud* offering *bhangs* and *riung rta* (cf. p.532 & 35). Karmay argues convincingly for the survival of ancient rites and beliefs (much more convincing than some recent, often anachronistically and poorly argued—or even downright nativist—efforts). I still hesitate calling this Bon, but that does not in any way diminish the importance of the discussion (cf. also Stein 1988 and Chu Junjie 1991).

9 Alternatively, following a kind hint by Dan Martin one might translate *ts kyi don du mtshan ma spyod* as: for their affairs they investigate omens (rely on divination).

10 Cf. also the use of *mo bâ*, in the text on divination (*mo*) PT1047:20 (on this text see MacDonald 1971:272f). Cf. also ITJ0738:1v12 and 1v62: *mo bab.*
“Do not put your trust in the mo bon. Do not worship the ‘dre or the srin. Do not seek protection from the bdud or the bgegs. [Then extols the Buddhist alternative; ibid. p.163]”

Therefore mu stegs bon, given the context, must apply to the mo bon type ritual specialist and does not refer to the general public, which is here admonished to seek refuge in the Buddha and the saṅgha rather than in these diviner?-type Bon ritual specialists. The addition of the phrase “ordinary people who follow Bon”, in Karmay’s translation, at the implied subject of the following sentence, while certainly possible, is not really necessary. The interpretation that the text itself suggests is moreover entirely in keeping with other occurrences of personal uses of the term bon in Dunhuang sources: they invariably point to ritual specialists of some sort (not necessarily ‘diviners’—if that indeed is the trade that mo bon here implies).

Karmay (1998:160) points to another possible indication: bon yas ‘dod smrang: “The Bon (religion) is the archetypal myth of rituals which require ritual objects of offering” in PT239. In a careful analysis of this cryptic Tibetan passage, Karmay shows that it needs to be contrasted with Buddhist sensibilities also voiced there. Given that wider context, the use of the word bon indeed appears ambiguous. Yet, given the full array of usage of the word bon for a person in Dunhuang sources, this occurrence too, while indeed more ambiguous than in PT972, fits the meaning of ritual specialists better than that of an organised religion of some sort (or of ordinary adherents of that). Given the ritualistic activities implied, it seems to refer specifically to the concrete trade of Bon ritual specialists and not to some abstract entity ‘Bon religion’ (which also is not attested anywhere else in documents of the period).

However remarkable, these passages as such do not warrant or recommend positing an entire self-conscious cluster of traditions with “a firmly established religion embodying a popular system of belief known as Bon”. All we can gather from PT972 is that people put faith in Bon ritual specialists, and that Buddhists should advise against that.

‘Ordinary followers’ are not named in PT972. If there would have been such followers or an implied religious tradition, one would expect (rather numerous) references elsewhere. The issue of self-naming without ‘other’ is of course problematic. But in this case, Buddhism clearly was already established and hence there would have been a real need for a distinctive name, in case such an ‘established religion called Bon’ really existed at the time.

[I am not sure whether one can draw a clear distinction between ‘ritual specialist’ and ‘ordinary adherent’ here.]
Karmay quite rightly notes that the term *bon* occasionally (but only very rarely) is also used for something of ‘religious’, probably mainly ritual, content and cites several Dunhuang-period passages in support. On close examination, however, these occurrences do not really affect the above analysis. Sparse references to *bon* ‘religious’ (ritual) content also invariably appear to refer to the specific content of ritual performance of Bon specialists and they do not imply the more abstract notion of some kind of self-conscious, organised, popular or elite Bon religion.

Given the present state of knowledge and evidence, prevalent academic sensibilities—as aptly expressed in ‘Ockham’s razor’—do not recommend assuming an entity such as ‘an established religion called Bon’. Positing, without any additional compelling evidence, that the various ritualistic phenomena that in Dunhuang sources are associated with *bon* and *gschen* imply some kind of organised religion, popular or otherwise (cf. the funerary rites of PT1042), i.e., that they would imply an entity beyond the concrete phenomena described and named, would be superfluous at best and could be confusing and seriously get in the way of the future heuristics at worst.

I readily concede that it is logically impossible to prove that a pink elephant does not exist and I therefore do not recommend arguing that there could not possibly have been imperial-period Bon religion. My point is that given the data and pending further evidence, we need not hypostasise ‘early Bon’: it is not compellingly mentioned, described, or even suggested in the most closely contemporary sources. Bon may be implied, but we have no way of ascertaining that. At the present state of knowledge, it would simply be an unnecessary assumption.

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13 Karmay refers to what looks like a preamble to the title of the funerary text PT1040.1: [1] $|2\text{ bon } \text{ 'di gang ba'i bon gis sel } [2] \text{ yang bskag pa lo tus gi bro la thosgo } [3] $|2\text{ rgyal byin gi rabs l}', discussed by Stein 1971:345. The occurrence of *bon* in PT1248.1: (p?)a' bu tu' bon rabs phyang shal na mchis pa la dpe' blangs pa'ol (“the account of Bon, entitled the Son of the Father. This was copied from the manuscript kept at the official library”) is uncertain, as the first one or two syllables are missing. In any case *bon rabs* clearly places *bon* in the context of *rabs*, which is part of what we saw that *bon* ritual specialists do. The word *bon*, as a non-personal reference to the content of rituals closely associated with the verb *gyer*, reciting or chanting in a ritual manner; see, for instance, the funerary text PT1134.124: *bon gанг gis/nil bgyer/ and PT 1136.56: *nub gasM bon gsheN bon du bgyerd*. PT443, among all kinds of evil (magic) that the deity invoked there, Ma ha ba la rdo 'je mechog, will protects against, are mentioned curses and incantations by *bon* and by (people from) Yol (Lalou 1947:222). This reference to *bon* similarly and typically implicates ritual specialists or their repertoire.
The conspicuous lack of imperial-period ‘Bon’ self-references *vis-à-vis* the undeniable presence of Buddhist ‘others’ (that from their side entertain plenty of such references) would in fact rather suggest the contrary, that there was no imperial-period Bon religion. The chances that no clear self-references whatsoever would have remained for a presumably comprehensive and powerful imperial-period ‘Bon’ religion, such as we find described in later Bon and Buddhist sources, would defeat any statistical likelihood of the hypothesis, however well argued (for instance by Karmay).

That leaves us with the burden—a fascinating task in fact—to study how these later narratives on Bon came to be; as I presently propose to do for a sample of stories in the *mDo ’ dus*, which refer to sTon pa gShen rab’s marriages.

2. *A Brief Note on Bon po*

We also need to look into the crucial designation *bon po*. In contrast with the word *bon, bon po* only rarely occurs in Dunhuang documents, mainly in that odd funerary document PT1042 and also a few times in PT1285, a true treasure trove for narratives on *bon* and *gshen* and their presumed locations. In these sources the use of *bon po* seems to indicate shifts in usage, perhaps one or more innovations on older schemes of *gshen* and *bon* specialists.

In PT1042, a shift in usage clearly involves or coincides with a specific and distinctly technical use of the term *bon po*, as a ritual title that is combined with other systematic terms that seem to describe a function rather than the usual toponym or patronym (it is then usually followed by a more personal-looking name). This needs to be contrasted with the construction of names in texts such as PT1285. In PT1042, references to *bon po* specialists also often typically cluster together with references to *sku gshen* type specialists.

Even as late as the *phyi dar mDo ’ dus, bon po* still appears as a designation for ritual specialists only. But, needless to say, by the time of the *mDo ’ dus* the word *bon*, signifying all kinds of special teachings, old or reformed, is already ubiquitous.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) While *gryn drung bon* in the *mDo ’ dus*, except for the titles, appears only four times, each time in chapter 12 (*ston pa la btsod kyi cho ’phrul* [added later: *bstan pa’i btsod pa’i le’u*]), which moreover may be later additions.
Together with IOL734 (v. Thomas 1957), a ritualistic narrative on ‘the age of decline’, the mentioned PT1285\(^6\) probably is one of the most important documents for understanding the structure of non-Buddhist Dunhuang-period ritualistic narratives and the character of bon and gshen. It may well reflect one of the above-mentioned shifts in usage of the term bon po for a ritual specialist, which, eventually, became epitomised by the gShen rab(s) character, as its ideal type.

In the light of received wisdom, it must appear strange that in texts such as PT1285 all the really competent gshen and bon po hail from areas near Central Tibet, mainly the Yar klung(s) tsangs po area, while droves of exotic male (pho or pha) gshen thod (d)kar and female mo gshen appear ineffective in their methods\(^7\) and almost seem to be ridiculed.\(^8\) Local bon po-s are without exception depicted as superior to the exotic male (pho) and female (mo) gshen. That these male and female gshen types are associated with foreign origins is explicitly indicated. They are vaguely said to be from dags ri dkar po (sunny white mountain; yang (陽) and sribs ri nag po (shadowy black mountain; yin (陰)), successively.\(^9\)

\(^6\) See Lalou (1958), Stein (1971) and Dotson, “Bon and Gshen in Old Tibetan Ritual Texts”, forthcoming in JAS.
\(^7\) PT1285:39-41, 66-68, 86f, 110, 136f, 151f, and 165-76.
\(^8\) See Lalou (1958:162), this mocking quality is also clearly implied in her paraphrase of the passages.
\(^9\) Stein (1971: 510-11) associates these ‘mountains’ or their sides, with yin and yang. But compare IOL734:175-185, where bDags[s] ri (thams cad) are connected to Pu rMa bo and Srib ri (thams cad) to what may be his spouse (ICam) Yul ma. In 11:6-8 they appear in a configuration more familiar from PT1285 (pho mo gshen bygga).

Thomas (1957) considers the possibility of the difference in usage of the northern and southern slopes of mountains in Eastern Tibet; he refers to Futterer (1901:l.430) and Tafel (1914:1.170).

Cf. also the use of phu (upper) and mda’ lower parts of a mountain, associated with dads [emend: dags] and srib [emend: sribs], successively, in one of the texts found in the dGa’ thang ‘bum pa in gTam shul, the rNel dri ’dul ba’i thabs (gTam shul dga’ thang ‘bum pa che nas gar rnal byang ba’i bon gi gua’ dpyad btags, Lhasa 2007, published by Pasang Wangdu) 2.3f, repeated at many other places. This seems only one of the numerous variants of this name that were produced during lengthy transmission. In the same text (23.1lf), gtags snying pha rgya dang / sribs snying ma rgya appear. A bit more similar to the Dunhuang form, which probably is more original, is a passage on pp.354ff where at least the male gshen are invited: gtags [dags ri dkar po las’ pho gruen thod dkar gru/ go [gto] dang dpad byges ni ‘a/ ...”

The non-Buddhist dGa’ thang ‘bum pa texts seems to retell and rephrase ancient Dunhuang period ritual narratives in slightly adjusted forms. The dating of these texts is uncertain. In any case, it seems improbable that the non-Buddhist section, which Pasang Wangdu identifies as Bon, would physically pertain to the imperial period. But the fact that some of the narratives and rituals continue ritual narrative traditions of the Dunhuang period should be obvious indeed. Equally obvious are the stray odd name and other anachronistic elements that reveal later
Are pho gshen thod dkar perhaps outlandish folks from Tokharistan (Tho kar?), those Yüeh-chîh or Yuèzhî? Are they folks from the region of Bactria, who also happen to wear white turbans (thod dkar. cf. Lalou 1958:162)? Or are those pho gshen thod dkar merely male ritual specialists of unknown origin who wear white turbans, as opposed female mo gshen who wear a zhu/zhwva bub? As said, these pho and mo gshen come in droves and remain anonymous, while local bon po-s, instead, have personal names. But note that many of the named bon po-s also feature the gshen element in their names: the use of the designation bon or gshen as such, certainly does not seem to be a relevant divide for these PT1285 figures.

The Myi bo and the even more ubiquitous rMa da-type of gshen or bon po seem to be the ideal-typical first bon po-s, who evolved from those more competent, new-style aboriginal bon and gshen (whose expertise is extolled in PT1285). The latter are local, central to western Tibetan ritual specialists who are considered more efficient and are mentioned by individual names. The superiority of local bon po-s over foreign, possibly far-western, male and female gshen again points to some innovation in bon expertise, having, at least initially, taken place in the area where the PT1285 narratives, according to their long lists of locations clearly are located: in the upper reaches of the rTsang po River. Was this old rTsang (chen) area—which at that time may have reached up to Ma pang and Ti se—perhaps the actual historical proto-

20 Cf. the identification by Chris Beckwith, in an engaging lecture at the EPHE in Paris, May 29th 2006, where he spoke on Yüeh-chîh (Yuèzhî): "On the Name and Identity of the Tokharians". 
21 Lalou (1958:201) discusses this at length. N.B. in the middle of the 8th c. AD, Tokharistan included Tadjikistan. References to exotic ritual specialists of that ilk may later have been resumed in western Ta zig origin myths.
22 See Dotson, "Bon and Gshen in Old Tibetan Ritual Texts", forth. in JAOS.
23 Thomas (1957) repeatedly points out that rTsang in an older context may refer to a larger area (rTsang chen) than the area presently known as gTsang province. rTsang chen is mentioned in one of the texts discussed by Thomas (1955:4298) and in early historical documents from the Dunhuang period (Bacot 1940:184). This
heartland of ‘Bon’, rather than those vague regions to the far West of Tibet, indicated in later sources? The traditional *Come-from-the-West* narrative is indeed remarkably underdeveloped in these and other early texts. Significantly, that master narrative only rises to ascendency with or in fact shortly after the advent of self-conscious sTon pa gShen rab hagiography. Lists of locations in PT1285 may indeed point to the oldest known proto-heartland, if not of gShen rab and Bon, then at least of the earliest narratives regarding the gShen rab-type of *bon po* and his retrospective trade. Most interestingly, they are located in the vicinity of the itinerary of gShen rab when, according to the *mdo ’dus*, he left rKong po and founded Khyung lung rngul mkhar. This passage is discussed at length in an article on the location of that castle, forthcoming in the PIATS 2006.

As indicated, PT1042 may represent a unique strand within this *bon po* innovation. In an idiosyncratic way, PT1042 employs a wide array of technical terms for *bon* specialists, such as *mjo’l* or ‘jol, phangs, snyun, smag, rdal, and sman bon. References to *bon* specialists with personal names (such as often appear in PT1285) are conspicuously absent and it features a frequent and relatively unique occurrence of the *sku gshen* title. It may thus represent an altogether different strand, unrelated to what we see reflected in, for instance, PT1285 and its narratives on efficient local *bon* and *gshen*.

When compared to other such rites in Dunhuang sources, the singular complexity and elaboration of the death rites in PT1042 help underline its relatively unique character (and that of PT239; cf. also SS04 and SS62). One might try testing the hypothesis that PT1042 and its revisions according to Buddhist standards (PT239 &c.) are not so much an authentic surviving early record of ancient rites but a late

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24 The opposing circuits of P1285, as described by Dotson in “Bon and Gshen in Old Tibetan Ritual Texts”, forthc. in *JAS*, could also point to such an innovation. The east-west *‘bon’* circuit deviates from the regular ones and might suggest a new order of things. The west-east *‘gshen’* circuit suggests being the more regular route, as found in P1286 and P1290. But I seriously doubt that the differences in list of localities systematically relate to *bon* and *gshen* as such; they rather point to (ritual) narratives concerning marriage (east-west) and healing or death ritual (west-east).

There seems to be no relation between the ordering of localities and *bon* & *gshen*.

resume—in any case contemporary with the arrival of Buddhism—of what non-Buddhist funerary rites were remembered, thought, or simply supposed to be like in early Buddhist times, and arranged long after, specifically for the burial of historical Yar klung(s) kings and nobles; perhaps they were even arranged post-imperially, possibly a bit like those 'dur type of death rites of the Khrom 'dur and 'Dur chog gter ma literature, (re)invented somewhere around the 11th c. AD.

The name Bon, as in g-Yung drung Bon, seems to have been coined in the early phyi dar period, or shortly before, in explicit reference to earlier narratives about bon and gshen ritual specialists that survived from the imperial period. As we saw, Dunhuang sources have indeed preserved quite a few of these. Pha gShen rab(s) kyi myi bo is only one of them—and not even the gshen most frequently mentioned. Later survivals of these narrative traditions are also extant, e.g. in the gNag rabs and rNel dri 'dul ba'i thabs. In Dunhuang sources, gshen specialists are mentioned slightly more frequently than the ones that are explicitly labelled bon. But in most Dunhuang sources the distinction between them already appears opaque or confused. The rise of or shift to the designation bon instead of gshen, for ritual specialists may mark one of, again perhaps, a series of innovations. But we of course have to be careful not needlessly to historicise data and create chronologies and innovations where there are none: we may simply be looking at approximately synchronic variability.

So much should be clear: looking, as many have done, for the origins of the name Bon in the earliest roots of the semantics of the syllable/verb/noun “bon” in Dunhuang sources by far precedes the relevance of the same for its recycled usage in the early phyi dar Bon period. This exercise would only be meaningful if the usage of the word bon in the imperial period would relate more directly and more significantly to the way it was engaged by early phyi dar groups that appropriated the word for their identity discourse.

Those later phyi dar Bon groups are entirely ‘subaltern’ Buddhist in outlook but at the same time are fully entitled to their separate Bon status. Present-day bon po-s o may legitimately claim to be heirs of so-

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28 This will be discussed in the first (‘Antecedents’) volume of the Three Pillars publication project.

27 gShen rab myi bo is one of the gshen bzhi: see the gNag rabs in Pasang Wangdu (2007), p.19.8f; gshen bzhi sgyan drung ’tshul/ gshen bzhi sgyan drung bar bzang /// bdud bon drang nag chu legs dang / thar bon dru skyol dang /// gshen nag sgyan dang / gshen bzhi bo bzhi] ...
called pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture, but with the same ‘genetic’ right they may also claim to be legitimate heirs of pre-phyi dar or even pre-snga dar—perhaps also Central Asian—varieties of Buddhism. One might push this a bit further and posit that it may be a bit pedantic to argue that Tibetan Buddhists are more rightfully entitled to early Buddhist heritage than are bon po-s. Conversely: while bon po-s clearly have sought, engaged, and (re)invented so-called indigenous heritage, often in adjusted or ‘reformed’ formats (which clearly reveal shared ethical, soteriological and doctrinal sensibilities), Buddhist traditions carry that Tibetan heritage as well. See, for example, Karmay’s (1998) discussion of what are generally presumed to be widely shared continuities from ‘indigenous’ Tibetan periods, such as, concepts of the soul and the turquoise, glud offering, bsangs, and the use of rlung rta. The main difference lies in how all this is engaged in identity discourse.

3. A Brief Note on g-Yung drung Bon

As is well known, g-yung drung first appears in Tibetan inscriptions\(^{28}\) and in early translated Buddhist texts. There it signifies “eternal”, but it is also used in the sense of a permanent state of release, a nirvanic category (Buddhist religious context). The earliest occurrences in Dunhuang sources confirm this usage. But the Tibetan semantic fields of g-yung and drung, taken individually, are surprisingly limited and cannot support the usual meaning “eternal” of the combination g-yung drung. See for example what appears in the combined wisdom of the THDL lexical database:

**g-yung**

DM [contributed by Dan Martin] vges pa. G.ces 587.3. baangs mi’am bran g-yog. vges pa. zhan pa. A clan. Btsan-lha. rmu rgyod du’u ba’i spyod pa gzhon dus g-yung.

Zhi-byed Coll.1 271.2.

JV [contributed by Jim Valby] statue labor, cross between cow and yak, place in Tibet.

**drung**

YOGA [Yogakārābhūmi Glossary] antike.


JV his holiness, near to, beside, at, to, title/address of honor, civil officer, official, presence of, near to.

IW [contributed by Ives Waldo] 1) root; 2) near, in front of, in the presence of; 3) attendant.

RY [contributed by Erik Hein Schmidt, Rangjung Yeshe Dictionary] bla ma’i drung nas - in the master’s presence. beside, next to, attendant; -- pa - Sir, reverend; near, before, presence of, near to.

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\(^{28}\) E.g., the Zhol inscription, erected approximately 764 AD (Richardson 1985:1–25).
Presumed or real ‘Zhang zhung’ lexicon also cannot explain g-yung drung. ZZ. Drung mu (svastika) seems to derive from Tib. g-yung drung (see Dan Martin’s Zhang-zhung Dictionary, e-text July 2007),29 with the productive Zhang zhung marker mu added (cf. Martin 2000:75 on this).

By all appearances the combination g-yung drung is a loan word.30 That being so, the most likely option would be a loan from Chinese:31 probably some regional form of Chinese from the Tang period or before. The Mahayutpati relates the Tibetan translation term g-yung drung to the Sanskrit sanatanah. Sakaki’s edition, at sanatanah and g-yung drung, gives a straightforward Chinese translation 不動 (bu4 dong3; not changing) but also a more curious, somewhat Tibetan phonetic-looking 永中 (yong3 zhong1/4), a combination that I am not familiar with. Mathews does not list it and, apart from personal names, 永中 does not seem to occur frequently in older Chinese texts. According to his introduction, Sakaki’s Chinese renderings derive from perhaps late 13th or at the latest 18th c. AD Chinese equivalents, based on the Tibetan. Often these were not checked against Buddhist sources.

There are numerous combinations with 永 to consider and the problems besetting early Chinese phonology are complex and beyond the competence of a non-specialist. This problem requires serious and methodical linguistic investigation that would lead far beyond the present article. I will nonetheless make a modest start, hopefully for linguists to follow (Appendix I). However plausible the connection based on modern Mandarin pronunciations may seem, I see only tenuous evidence to support derivation from 永中, 永終, or 永常, from older layers of Chinese; and if so, the derivation most likely occurred long before the Tibetan Dunhuang period.

The identity of Bon as we know it now is epitomised by the phrase g-yung drung bon, a term has been in use since the earliest self-consciously Bon literature, such as the mDo ’dus and Klu ’bum. The

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30 The prepart “ge” is not uncommon to loan words (cf., for example Tibetan g-gu, turquoise, and Chinese 玉 yu4, precious stone, especially for jade); e-mail communication by Chris Beckwith (July 11th, 2008).

31 Thanks are due to Dorothee Kohren, for kindly pointing out the possibility of a loan from Chinese.
usage in the mDo 'dus²⁷ (and Klu 'bum)³³ mainly seems to invoke an old sense of g-yung drung and refers to an exalted if not transcendent state or realm (also attested in Dunhuang sources);³⁴ shadows of eternalism loom large in between the lines. Something like that is also implied in the frequent phrase g-yung drung lha'i bon (exalted or 'high' Bon, 'of the gods'; reminiscent of the Dunhuang phrase lha'i chos),³⁵ particularly frequent in self-references.³⁶ Interestingly, this also appears as g-yung drung dag pa'i bon: pure Bon.

g-Yung drung bon in the mDo 'dus²⁷ (and the Klu 'bum)⁸ is closely related to statement of truth. Generally, truth (bden) is considered a key

³² E.g., g-yung drung ma 'gur snying po long (p.60.6), zad med g-yung drung dhyings su gras pa'i bon (p.124.1) and 'gur med g-yung drung thob (in a unique enumeration of types of bon on pp.123.3–4.1: de la bon gyis rams gras na!
  1) 'dus byas 'khor ba'i bon rams
  2) 'dus ma byas pa nga nga nga 'das pa'i bon!
  3) thu gye rje rgyu chen po bon rams
  4) 'phral ngog bden pa'i bon!
  5) stid par byegdul pa'i bon!
  6) dge 'dul 'byed pa'i bon!
  ston pa'i bhu 'mi
  1) gnam bzhod bon!
  2) rang shar rig par rang rdol bon!
  3) rgyu ni thu rtags lug bon!
  4) rdz shing rang 'gur bon!
  5) skye med gabod nas dag pa'i bon!
  6) snang med dpe' las 'das pa'i bon!
  7) tshad med lhun [124] la rtags pa'i bon!
  8) zad med g-yung drung dhyings su gras pa'i bon!
  9) btsai med lhun gyis grub pa'i bon!

See also mi dog g-yung drung sa thob (p.160.4), g-yung drung bstan byed (p.175.5), and bka 'shis g-yung drung snyes mig thob pa'i bka 'shis (p.191.3)

³³ Klu 'bum dkar po (the rTags bstan phun tshogs gling edition), pp.185f.: g-yung drung gi bon 'phral ngag bden pa chu rgyan.

³⁴ E.g., PT16.34r1: ska tsho g-yung drung du bzhes te ; PT239.14r5: bde skyid g-yung drung gnas su phyIn par skog / ;, and PT1287.376: ... skye shi las bsgrol to / g-yung drung du bton to // . For a more elaborate discussion, see Stein (1983:163,169; ref. Dan Martin); he speculates that g-yung drung might point to Chinese Buddhist vocabulary.

³⁵ See, e.g., Karmay 1998(1981):159.n.7. He believes that in the imperial period lha'i chos and lha'i yid ches chos byen (bya) in PT1284 do not refer to Buddhism but to 'Bon'.

³⁶ Cf. also references to presumed linguistic origins: g-yung drung lha'i skad du: in the language of ...

³⁷ g-Yung drung bon appears synonymous with bden pa'i bon (p.94.5, 152.2), ma 'khrul bden pa'i bon (98.1) or 'phral ngog bden pa'i bon (122.1, pp.123f (123.4), and on p.219.2).

³⁸ 24.6f.: bon g-yung drung gi dhyings thams cad dang! ... g-yung drung gi sa bshad thar pa'i bon no/.
characteristic of Bon, as much as untruth (rdzun) is typical for demonic teachings and doings (or for the demon par excellence: bDud Khyab pa lag ring). Untruth not merely implies telling lies, but here is used in the sense of mistaken, ineffective, false, unethical (harmful and therefore ineffective) teachings. The older quality of g-yung drung bon, as eternal and indestructible, is further specified as changeless: g-yung drung 'gyur med bon. Part of the latter phrase also occurs in a related context of truthfulness, when gShen rab defends his non-violent ways (no hunting), against bDud Khyab pa lag ring, as the practice (spyod pa) of ma 'khrul bden pa'i bon (unerring true Bon), which he then, most curiously, explains as protecting the eternal and changeless realm or empire: apparently true, eternal, and changeless Bon equals defending the eternal empire! This may reveal some of the real-life implications (or aspirations) of truthfulness and effectiveness. Of course, g-yung drung bon also frequently appears as a reference to a body of ritual lore (like gyer; also attested in Dunhuang sources) or corpus of teachings, apparently with four gates.
Present-day bon po-s take care to distinguish g-Yung drung bon from so-called unreformed 'old Bon' and, since approximately the 18th c. AD, also from gSar bon; while stressing the point that the latter au fond also are Bon. The distinction specifically of gSar bon obviously is a more recent concern (and one which also is not on the forefront of explanations shared with an outsider). But in reference to the distinction of contemporary Bon from ‘unreformed’ varieties of Bon, such as may still be preserved in its lower vehicles, bon po-s seem to have retained memories of developments of early phyi dar Bon identity discourse. There is a fair chance that the term g-yung drung bon in early Bon discourse was originally coined precisely to set it apart from this worldly goals and apotropaic rites of ‘unreformed’ Bon, such as that mentioned nebulous (and probably (re)invented) pre-imperial entity ‘dur bon, which, even though it is referred to in Dunhuang sources, we mainly know from later historiography on earlier periods and from later gter ma literature such as the Dur chog and Mu cho’i khrom ‘dur rites. g-Yung drung bon thus sets itself apart as a reformed and nirvanic variety of Bon, which instead strives toward (a state of) release or liberation, here apparently characterised as g-yung drung. Needless to say, these are goals that accord well with phyi dar Buddhist sensibilities, but it is interesting that phyi dar bon po-s elected a term so obviously associated with ‘vile’ eternalism.

When it appears in an old context, we therefore may have to translate g-Yung drung bon as ‘Nirvanic Bon’ rather than as ‘Eternal Bon’. Thus an old (i.e., older than Bon) Tibetan translation term for the Buddhist sumnum bonum was elected as the Bon shibboleth, which may even be a phonetical rendering of a Chinese loanword!

Continuing the Discussion:

gShen and Bon in Early Bon Sources

Back to our brief survey of the early history of gShen rab stories: the Dunhuang gShen rab(s) character, who in many stories does indeed appear slightly senior (Stein 1988:44), for understandable reasons makes it into the role of founder, while his colleagues in narrative, such as the Dur gshen rma da (na)-type of gshen, seem all but forgotten.

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1. bcha s gru bzhig lung du brtis/E / yeh byas do ma ra ni bkra la bya drungs / / Cf. P1134.124: bya gang gi/ ni bi byerd /...
2. P.109.2l: g-yung drung bon sgo bzhin (Karmay.52b.2 omits bzhin), at the mention of the ma brtags pa’i dgra bzhin.
Quite contrary to later usage, the Dur gshen type even occurs slightly more frequently in old ritualistic Dunhuang-period sources than does the gShen rab(s) type of ritual specialist. Considering the great importance of healing and death ritual in that literature, this should hardly come as a surprise. 'Dur refers to tombs and funerary rites after all, associated with controversial blood sacrifices, a Buddhist anathema. It is probably for this reason that the old 'dur gshen funerary type ritual specialist was eventually marginalised; for example: banished, in a most telling way, to the specific contexts of the exceptional funerary rites of those somewhat eccentric 'dur gter ma cycles, such as the Mu cho'i khrom 'dur and 'Dur chog, which are attributed to Ku tsha zla 'od (sPa ro find, perhaps of the 11th c. AD) or to Thog thog lhung lha. It is telling indeed that the rMa da-type gshen should rise to prominence once again precisely in these self-proclaimed 'dur rites.

These late 'dur death ritual cycles consciously seem to court—and perhaps also to a certain extent reinvent—that good old & powerful, but controversial 'dur funerary expertise, to be used, eccentrical, especially for cases of violent, sudden, or accidental death (gri 'dur). I was told—in fact by the very recipient of this felicitation volume—that 'dur rites would not be considered appropriate for ordinary deaths.44

Dur gshen rma da (na) also occasionally reappears in other, later Bon sources, such as, the mDo chen po bzhi (in all three titles), in the Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang45 and the Kun 'bum.46 In the mDo chen po bzhi we incidentally encounter very interesting spelling variants: instead of rma da we also find rma lo47 and rma bo (more on these elsewhere).48

44 More on this follows in my forthcoming volume on Antecedents of Bon Religion in Tibet, which deals with continuity and change in Bon funerary doctrine at the turn of the first millennium. See now also Bellozza, 2008 and cf. n.4 above: he makes extensive use of these Mu cho'i khrom 'dur and attempts to embed his findings of material remains in (north-)western Tibet, particularly those pertaining to funerary culture, in this and other Bon sources via his trade-mark 'exegetically enhanced' readings of non-Buddhist Dunhuang funerary texts.

45 E.g., p.31.7 of the Dolanji MS (cf. p.314.6 in the Bon bKa' 'gyur III version of the mDo 'dus).

46 In the Kun 'dal lcags lha, p.353, the name 'dur gshen rma da applies as one of the eight great protectors (skyobs pa chen po). All of these will be discussed in detail elsewhere (‘Location’ volume).

47 sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo, p.144.2, and Srid pa khams gsum sems can skye mchi'i mdo, p.124.5: 'dur ggas rma lo.

48 Blu med go phang sgrub lhabs, p.486.3, and sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo, p.60.6 and 148.5: 'dur ggas rma bo. These clusters of names will also be discussed in the forthcoming monograph on the ‘location’ of origin of Bon and the significance of the rMa name in its history of ideas.
These first oblique Dunhuang references to a gShen rab(s) character—in a sense of course unfortunately⁶—appear rather off-
centre, compared to the opposite far western corners where the
heartland of Bon is usually visualised.⁵⁰ Thomas (1957) feels that he has
good reason to believe that, language-wise and narratologically, some
Dunhuang sources are of local origin and he therefore assumes that
some passages may in fact have originated in that very north-eastern
quarter of the Tibetan empire. It should indeed be obvious that
Dunhuang narratives and their elements partly may not only have
been recorded in north-eastern Buddhist Dunhuang, but may in fact also
have originated there and not in a traditionally presumed western
heartland of Bon. I now emphatically refer to the origins of individual
narremes and not to the early locations in which these narremes later
were incorporated into the narratives that eventually fed into Bon
master narratives and phyi dar Bon identity discourse.

Some narrative content of Dunhuang sources may indeed gravi-
tate on north-eastern Tibet for the simple reason that the narratives
were around in that area. While, because of its proximity and
availability, local cultures thus may have left a more significant stamp
on the library than those from other quarters of what was then becom-
ing Tibet, and while the first narremes on gShen rab(s) were preserved
somewhat off-centre, we nonetheless have reason to believe that what
was collected in the Tibetan Dunhuang caves reflects narrative traditions
that were prominent in wider Tibet, also for instance in southern

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⁶ Imagine finding such caches in areas where Bon later was most prominent!
⁵⁰ As I will argue in the ‘Location’ volume, through examination of narratives and by
tracing individual narremes through various non-Buddhist Dunhuang and early
Bon sources, we are able to localise a proto-heartland of ‘Bon’ (if there ever was
such an entity beyond its literary tropes) much closer to Central Tibet than has
generally been assumed. Analysis of Dunhuang sources yields a cluster of names
and narremes, the central elements of which, quite serendipitously, receive
surprising independent confirmation from later Bon sources, which are usually
overlooked. The exact topographical locations that go with the names are still
unclear; the descriptive parts are not entirely consistent and also not completely
inconsistent. This may be because, as the master narrative developed, the location
moved westward. In any case, the heartland ‘trajectory’ seems to lie mainly within
the ancient rTisang chen river area, probably somewhere between rKong po and the
Kailas area. But what look like the earliest layers in Dunhuang narratives may even
put it squarely in present-day dBus.

The deliberations on the (personal) use of the word bon po in Dunhuang
Tibetan and early Bon sources also already anticipate on that conclusion: this is
where the really good bon and gshen ritual specialists are from!
Six Marriages and Many More Funerals

quarters. Important evidence testifying to the presence or survival of narratives of that ilk in other areas of Tibet does occasionally surface, such as in the Klu ‘bum (cf. Stein 1971), in some of the texts that were recently recovered from dGa’ thang ‘bum pa in southern Tibet (Pasang Wangdu 2007), and in other Bon sources as well.

The scattered narrative relics from Dunhuang most likely reflect wider narrative traditions, which formed the point of origin of later, self-consciously Bon legends about a ston pa called gShen rab mi bo. The ston pa variety of the name of the founder is first attested in the Klu ‘bum and thus starts developing no earlier than the early Buddhist phyi dar. This is the time that non-Buddhist interest groups felt challenged to show to the world a suitable founder who could outshine that other famous ston pa, the historical Buddha of successfully emerging phyi dar Buddhist sects. Work within the Three Pillars of Bon research scheme on the available sources confirms the obvious and ubiquitous observation that, like for other pillars of identity, also for narratives on the founder we cannot but observe that the quantum leap into self-consciously Bon narratives takes place at the turn of the first millennium AD.

From that turning point onward, stories not only gain narrative weight and complexity, but also acquire a distinct identity vector. Ritualistic narrative traditions evolve into the type of teaching hagiography and identity discourse that we still find reflected in extant recensions of the ‘biography’ of the founder of Bon, the mDo ’dus and, in a more developed manner, in the gZer myig (and gZi brjod). A good starting hypothesis would therefore be that the mDo ’dus and gZer myig use a comparable matrix of oral and written traditions of narratives regarding a gShen rab(s) figure, the earliest written records of which we find in Dunhuang sources.

\[5^1\text{In any case, I am far from arguing that the heartland of Bon would be anywhere near Dunhuang (cf. Beckwith, PIATS 2006). The fact that about the only pre-tenth c. AD non-Buddhist Tibetan sources that we have, hail from the Dunhuang area and the fact that obviously much material of local relevance ended up in those caches, should not seduce us to conflate the two, and assume that the haphazard preservation of references to non-Buddhist culture in an eccentric location recommends that eccentric location as the centre of that non-Buddhist culture.}\]

\[5^2\text{See Stein 1988, cf. Karmay 1975 and Spanken/MacDonald 1978–79.}\]

\[5^3\text{See the ‘Location’ volume of the Three Pillars of Bon programme.}\]

\[5^4\text{In one volume, Karmay (1975:176) presumes parts may date back to the 10th c. AD or before. See Blezer 2008, “William of Ockham, Jan van Gorp and Tibetan Studies” and Gurung, forthc. PIATS 2006.}\]

\[5^5\text{Usually in two volumes, according to Karmay (1975:177) to be dated around the 11th c. AD or earlier.}\]

It is at this point in time that the grand narratives on gShen rab and Bon really take off. They start to ‘get organised’ and develop, they breed and split like amoebas, in conjunction with the formation of Bon as a cluster of more or less consciously non-Buddhist interest groups in Tibet. As far as the structure and complexity of the stories goes, there is a considerable gap between narratives reflected in Dunhuang sources and those contained in hagiographical sources of the turn of the first millennium.\textsuperscript{57} But, as said, the older paradigm also remains productive in later times, e.g., in then still developing Klu 'bum collections, which continue the older Dunhuang narrative paradigm and develop it further (as is clearly indicated by the mentioned use of the title ston pa, “teacher”), but also in other, later (often ritualistic) texts.

Later hagiographical collections made use of narratives that were ‘around’. The main narratives of later hagiography, such as the mDo 'dus, still are of the crisis management type, but the paradigm appears more elaborate now and also includes elopement (nb. of gShen rab), occasional construction work, and the like as stock elements. The typical elaborated story paradigm features gShen rab, now styled sTon pa, going or being invited abroad, resolving a crisis, teaching, and bringing home a bride as a prize. The Dunhuang layer of narratives barely carries a vector of (collective) identity, while, on the other hand, the later phyi dar hagiographical layer is clearly and consciously narrating towards a religious founder and a separate Bon cultural and religious identity and thus clearly reflects the emergence of an ‘organised’ form of Bon religion (however factionally and regionally disjointed and apparently disorganised).

The narrative develops further into the humongous 14\textsuperscript{th}-c. AD gter ma gZi brjids.\textsuperscript{58} And as legends grow, the date of birth of the founder seems to move back in time and even out of time, to the preternatural, eventually ending up in the Indian Palaeolithic; thus ‘out-origining’ the historical Buddha by a landslide. mKhan chen Nyi ma bstn ‘dzin (b. 1813) in his Chronology of the Teachings (bsTan rtsis) dates gShen rab to 16.016 BC (see Kværne 1971).
Second Part: The gShen rab Marriage Stories in the mDo 'dus: The Expanded ‘Expedition Abroad’ Narrative

Now let us look at some samples for the gShen rab narrative paradigm of the extended type in the mDo 'dus and examine how these relate to the more limited Dunhuang paradigm and to each other. As said, the later, more developed sTon pa gShen rab mi bo narrative paradigm is also of the crisis management type. It typically takes the form of an ‘expedition abroad’-narrative. It occurs in several stencilled variants, which, because of their topographical implications, I will discuss in more detail elsewhere ('Location' volume). Those expanded narratives have been preserved in the mDo 'dus and also in the larger hagiographical collections, the gZer myig and gZi brjed. I will here only briefly discuss these stories in their briefest and presumably (read: apparently) least edited form, such as they appear in the mDo 'dus. Six expeditions and marriages are mentioned here (see Appendix II), involving the daughters of:

1. the King of Hos (Dang ba yid ring, main narrative in mDo 'dus chapter 9);
2. the King of dPo' (main narrative in chapter 10);
3. the IIa (only brief mention in chpt. 6 and 18);
4. the gSas (only brief mention in chpt. 6 and 18);
5. the King of rKong po (Central Tibet; main narrative in chpt. 12);
6. Kong tse (main narrative in chpt. 11).  

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50 One reason to look more deeply into the possibility of doing of the expedition abroad narratives in early Bon hagiography and summarily include that discussion in the ‘Location’ volume is because those excursions abroad also map out the topographical environment of the narrative centre of the gShen rab myth and thus also reflect back on the narrated heartland of Bon, casa quo, ‘Ol mo lung ring, Khyung lung dngal mkhar, and indirectly also on Ta zig and Zhang zhung. The likelihood of a stencilling of the marriage stories is prone to have consequences for the perceptions of the topographical and political realities that are referred to in the stories as well.

51 This probably is a fictional character. Note that a rgyal chen po has dang ba yid ring is also mentioned in one of the mDo chen po bzhis; the fta med go 'phang brug thabs, on p.365.4: Bla med go 'phang brug thabs, on pp.364.7ff: sngon gyi skal pa dang po la' yul mchod 'dzam bu gling gi snying pal stag gtsug gi yul 'ol mo lung ring gi lho phye 'grel shen rje'i gling khrod ba ma che'i msko gling na' dur bya dang / dur seng dang / dur stag dang / zangs pa can dang / gnam la 'chung ba dang / nag la sken pa dang / lags ri la nge ba rnam gi gshug par byed pa'i yul de na' ri gtsug rnam 'bar bya ba yod do' grong khyer lung lding chen pa bya ba yod do: rgyal po chen po hos dang ba yid ring gi bya ba yod do' slob dpon chen po drang srong gtsug shen rgyal ba bya bu/ rgyal po chen po la btsen ma phya za' gu ling ma ting bya ba' snas rgyal byang id de ring mo dang! gsal ba ring mo bya ba/ bu mo gsal dag' yid glong shes bya/ ... See also the discussion of Ho de'i hos bdag later.
The Lha and gSas merely occur in listings of marital alliances and their contexts are not narrated in the mDo ’dus; the others are fully narrated ‘expeditions abroad’. Another early source, the bsGrags pa rin chen gling grags (Dolanji MS, Khedup Gyatso, p.29:1) does not even mention the Lha, gSas, and Kong tse episodes. It only mentions marriages with the Hos, dPo’, and rKong za. The basic plot and main character types of the episodes are very similar and are entirely comparable to the simpler Dunhuang paradigm. It may be interesting to note that in the mDo ’dus the pairs of offspring or relatives show remarkably little individuality. The cardboard pair of RMa lo & g-Yu lo (relatives), for instance, usually acts as one entity and is of uncertain, if not confused, descent (more on that in the ‘Location’ volume). Their artificiality is clearly apparent and so is that of the Lung ’dren & rGyud ’dren (dPo’) or the gTo bu & dPyad bu (Hos) pair (offspring), whose names refer to familiar pairs of doctrinal and ritual elements. They may even have entered the respectable gShen family tree as textual corruptions. In any case, all appear the artificially construed, ideal-typical, male kin and offspring of a great man. Comparison of the four main stories suggests that all may be calques from one of two prototypes: either the brief story of rKong po provided the prototype or, perhaps, the typologically similar Hos story (which in its narrames eventually might relate to old rfSang instead).

gShen rab in rKong po

Among the successful marriage exploits of the great man and teacher gShen rab, the rKong po prototype certainly stands out because in some of its referents—even though not in its plot!—it could possibly be (partly) historical. The rKong po story provides the briefest version of an expedition-abroad narrative with little elaboration, embellishments and inserts. In its referents, it also appears most securely seated in history. The historicity of the King of rKong po, rKong rje dKar po rmang po rje, is relatively firm: he already meets us in early written
Six Marriages and Many More Funerals

sources, such as the rKong po inscription (Richardson, 1985:64ff) and Dunhuang sources (e.g., PT1060, PT1285–87 and ITJ0734). It is interesting to contemplate that this reference to a rKong rje dKar po might incidentally preserve the same trace of a date for the narrative origins of the gShen rab character as does the narrative outlook of relevant Dunhuang sources: it also points to approximately the 8th c. AD, for the matrix from which narrative elements were drawn.

The Confucius or Kong tse story may have been incorporated into this cycle of ‘expedition abroad’ and marriage stories merely because of (structural) similarities with the rKong po story. That marriage episode, too, is not listed in the Gling grags text (Dolanji 29:1); it therefore looks like a later addition. (rGya) Kong tse ‘phrul gyi rgyal po (rGya = China), as a name, seems to be a conflation of a transliteration and a translation. The Chinese (rGya) Kong or Keng tse is a story character known from similar narratives preserved in Dunhuang, in Tibetan and Chinese,62 but also from a later Mongol version,63 and from other Chinese versions that surfaced more recently in China (19th c. AD; for the latter see Soymié, 1954). The Tibetan name obviously transliterates the Chinese name Confucius (Kong Fuzi, 孔夫子), but it here denotes a king (rgyal po) and story character without significant Confucian associations. The character Kong (孔) is rendered by Kong or Keng. Stein argues that it has to be read as “sage or divine being, possessing supernatural powers” and that this in turn has been translated into Tibetan as ‘phrul or sprul (Stein, 1973:417). In the Tibetan version of the Chinese name Confucius: Kong tse ‘phrul gyi rgyal po, a phonetic rendering (Kong tse) thus appears to have been joined to a translation of the same (‘phrul).

In the process of assimilation of the Kong tse story, Tibetans may however have read “Kong” as a toponym, similar to “rKong” or rKong po in rKong rje dKar po. It is very well possible that the main reasons for including this particular narrative in the mDo ‘dus are the match in ‘toponymical’ (r)Kong names and some other, more structural similarities in the narratives as well. The form in which the story eventually appears in the mDo ‘dus, definitely shows similarities with

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63 That Mongol version apparently derives form a Tibetan one that probably was not earlier than the 13th c. AD, which suggests that there may have been other Tibetan versions around.
the rKong po story, such as the crisis paradigm, important construction work (temple in the sea and the central caste called Khyung lung rngul mkhar—its founding is in fact only mentioned in these two stories), and, of course the marriage exploit. There also is a more subtle associative, somewhat tangled fabric of motifs perceptible in the narrative and in references elsewhere, which somehow involve the Kong or Keng tse name. In Tibet, the Kong or Keng tse name is connected with astrological and other practical skills or wisdom.

In this light, a description of Yid ki khye’u chung in mDo ’dus (p.59.6): Yid ki khye’u chung rdzu ’phrul can [60] yi ge ’phrul slag sku la gyon/ deserves comparison to the attempted explanation of the name of Kong tse ’phrul gyi rgyal po on the basis of gab tse astrology in the gZer myig and gZi brjed. In the gZer myig Kong tse ’phrul gyi rgyal po is said to have been born with special signs.64 In the mDo ’dus, rdzu ’phrul can yi ge ’phrul slag—a magical (rdzu ’phrul can) fur coat (slag pa) with magical (’phrul) letters (yi ge)—may derive from a phrase used elsewhere: ’phrul gyi yi ge ’phrul and lag (hand), in reference to astrology,65 the magical letters of gab tse astrology on the palm of the hand (lag) of Kong tse, in the Yid ki khye’u chung narrative, in transmission, changed into a coat (slag) with magical letters.

The Kong tse or Confucius story may have been ‘just one of those narratives that were around’ at the north-eastern borders of Tibet, at the time that the sTon pa gShen rab hagiography started to develop: probably simply too good a story to ignore. In spite of the somewhat serendipitous nature of the inclusion of the Chinese Kong tse story into the mDo ’dus gShen rab repertoire, its presence should also alert us that for understanding the gShen rab character, Chinese connections may occasionally also need to be pursued.

64 See the edition of the gZer myig Tsering Thar, Beijing 1998 (1991), chapter 13, p.506.1ff: ... lag pa g-yas g-yon gyi mthil la] gab rtse'i ’phrul gyi yi ge sum cu rgyal rtags sa ’khor bar bris nas chags pa] de la gab kyang shin tu spro ba skyes nas mthun gsal pa ni/ rgyal po rgya’i rigs la ’phrul gyi yi ge gab tse san cu] ’khor bar bris pas/rgya kong tse ’phrul gyi rgyal por ming btags so.

65 Cf. also the gZi brjed, Dolanji dpe cha edition, vol.11, chapter 50, p.1891ff, which apparently does not locate the letters on the palms of the hands (in fact it is not clear from the text where exactly they are supposed to manifest): ... ’khang mthil na ‘gyur ba med pa’i g-yang drung shar bal ... [189.5] ... shen tu yang mthun dang ldan pa’i legs na] ’phrul gyi yi ge sum cu bris pa zhi’g snang bal mthun gyang rgyal po rgya yi rigs kong rtsi ’phrul gyi dbang yig can zhugs bya bar btags so ...
gShen rab(s) in rTsang:
Hos dang ba yid ring, rTsang Ho de’i hos bdag and His po his bdag?

Already in Dunhuang sources, a Lord of Hos appears in the immediate narrative environment of a gShen rab(s) myi bo figure. Here too, gShen rab(s) myi bo comes to the aid of a Lord of Hos (and his son). In the second part of PT1136 we find a ‘healing/funeral’ narrative in which a lord from rTsang (chen), Jo bo rTsang Ho de’i hos bdag, and his son, variously called sMa bu, rMa bu, and Smra bon zing ba’i zing skies, are involved in securing proper funerary service for their unfortunate daughter and sister. This story also involves a marital alliance with a Lord from Gu ge (rkang phran), which apparently is not entirely successful and leads to the lady’s misfortune. The similar clustering of narremes in the simpler Dunhuang version of the story may therefore render it a very likely candidate for the construction of the expanded Hos-story in the mDo ’dus or for the other marriage stories.

We therefore need to look into the Jo bo (Lord) of rTsang, called Ho de’i hos bdag, of PT1136. There appear to be problems, particularly concerning names. These problems seem to be the result of conflation and condensation of story elements over time, so typical of orality. The name Hos bdag, ‘Master of (the) Hos’, clearly suggests a ruler of an area or people called Hos, such as indeed also meets us later in mDo ’dus chapter nine. But if his son is named sMa, rMa or sMra bu (zing ba’i zing skies) and if rMa would have to be understood as a toponym, then the reading of his name could be problematic. One would rather expect something like rTsang or Hos bu. Compare, for instance Hos za, for the name of the married daughter of the King Hos (Dang ba yid ring), in the mDo ’dus, where all this appears in more polished form.

As has become evident in a detailed study of the uses of smra/rma/sma in Dunhuang sources (forthc. ‘Location’ volume), the fact that rma might also function as a toponym, at least elsewhere, is not at all unlikely.66 As such the name may have migrated from stories originating in the rMa chu (river) area in far north-eastern Tibet to other narrative contexts. Yet, most likely, the name sMa/rMa bu in PT1136 does not specifically mean son of a man from the rMa chu area anymore, but in this narrative, in a different geographical context, the name may have assumed the meaning of myi bu, son of man, more or less in a mythical sense, as also invoked in ritual recitation, such as in

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66 The uses of rma of course do not necessarily need to match in all text locations.
smrang and rabs, a genre that the stories under discussion definitely pertain to. This argument is developed in greater detail elsewhere, the middle-length version ('bring po) of which will appear in an edited volume on Emerging Religions, Breaking the Paradigm (of traditional historiography) and a full-length version (rgyas pu) in the 'Location' volume. The main conclusions of that research, I have resumed in Oxford, for an invited lecture, which may come on-line soon.67 PT1136 and a couple of other Dunhuang sources are very important for our understanding of the development of gShen rab(s) and its narrative environment, including visualisations of a heartland of Bon.

Coming back to the name hos. Based on its occurrences in Dunhuang sources, it seems very unlikely that hos in Hos bdag is to be taken as a toponym. PT1136 and IOL734, suggests that Ho de’i hos bdag is a narrative variant of the name His de chen po (father and king) and the deity’s (or king’s) name His po his bdag, both of which appear in IOL734 (cf. Thomas 1957:IV:52ff.); or vice versa. In IOL734 meets us another group of stories that involve similar ‘rMa’ characters. Hos there appears a variant of his and I therefore should advise against digging into hos for further realia. But this orthographic manoeuvre of course merely shifts the burden of a ‘breathless’ (his) exercise in toponymy from hos to his (or vice versa). The narreme may have been around for a while. This is a fine example for how clusters of names (central Tibetan Hos and originally Eastern Tibetan rMa) migrate and are transmuted.

The migration did not stop here. The mDo chen po bzhi and mDo ’dus may erroneously derive hos, as if it were a toponym, from older narratives about a Hos bdag in rTsang, as are preserved in Dunhuang texts. The reading of hos as a toponym in the name of the king that in the mDo ’dus is called Dang ba yid ring, creates the need for to a locality called Hos and thus gave rise to a novel narrative entity: six Hos mo islands: Hos mo gling drug.68 But here too, we see that ‘new’ often merely implies ‘newly recycled’ in accordance with pre-existing names and sensibilities. The mDo ’dus Hos mo gling reconstruction of Dunhuang-period hos narremes, incidentally, also seems to indicate that the rTsang area, where the Hos bdag in the Dunhuang precursor hails from, relates to Hos mo gling and perhaps to the nearly homophonous ‘Ol mo gling.

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67 Oxford University Faculty of Oriental Studies, Nisarga Distinguished Guest Speaker Series: The Advent of Buddhism in Tibet, March 7th 2008: “Narrating the Centre of Bon: Narrating Bon out of the Centre”.

68 Cf. the Kan 'bum khra bo bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs (tentative dating 13th c. AD or younger), p.306, where these six islands are located in the north-eastern direction of gShen yul ‘Ol mo lung ring (p.28.3’).
This is a conclusion that we also reached independently, in the above-mentioned middling and long versions of our discussion of the topographical implications of narrative elements. Early indications for a proto-heartland of Bon are more centrally in Tibet. Hos mo gling and 'Ol mo gling originally may have been related narrative entities that both were associated with a proto-heartland of Bon, but that at some point went separate ways. The mDo 'dus king of Hos, like gShen rab, in its literary construction might thus also refer to a fictional character.

A 'great king' Hos dang ba yid ring also appears in one of the mDo chen po bzhi.69 In an elaborate geographical layout he is placed in the city Lang ling, south of sTag gzig gi yul 'Ol mo lung ring,70 located in the heart of Yul mchog 'Dzam bu gling. Incidentally, that is also the place where, according to the gZer myig, gShen rab's father, rGyal bon thod dkar, first spotted his lovely wife rGyal bzhad ma, gShen rab's mother. It is well known that the mDo chen po bzhi live from the same fount of stories as the mDo 'dus (Blezer 2008, “Ockham”).

The Open Ends of Hos and Bon

But the Hos story does not end with the narrativisation of Dunhuang-period precedents into the expanded expedition abroad narratives of Bon hagiography on its founder. In fact, it seems that later tradition, in its narrative reconstructions of pre-tenth century themes from 'non-Buddhist' founts that it considered suitable for this purpose, has very closely followed the leads—say: native narrative vectors—that the original contexts provided or suggested, not only to these later, increasingly self-conscious bon po-s in the early phyi dar, but to us still. Thus, not only do we see the new major narrative vectors of Bon identity-discourse arise, together with those, we also see minor vectors appear, which look like vestiges as it were, of original contexts of the recycled narrative elements, which were retained as significant.

If we carefully study later perceptions and connotations of hos, we have reason to believe that emerging bon po-s perceived the Hos narratives on gShen rab(s) myi bo—as they presently are still reflected in PT1136—as being inextricably close to gShen rab(s) and the origins of their own tradition and identity.

69 See the Bla med go 'phang bsgrub thabs, chapter one: 'Chi bdag zdog byed kyi mdo las Gling bzhi't le'u, pp.363-6, esp. p.365.4. The passage is quoted above at the expedition abroad narratives (see the King of Hos).
70 The Kun 'bum also locates Lang (ma) ling to the south of 'Ol mo lung ring: p.30.5 and p.59.3f. (Lang ling).
Besides the inclusion of *hos* narremes into later sTon pa gShen rab hagiography, another telling sign is that, perhaps already shortly after its incorporation into the first Bon legends and myths on a founder—at least from the twelfth century AD—the word *hos* even moved to the very centre of Bon, as a general, abstract, and presumably Zhang zhung term for a bon ritual specialist,71 which was also believed to cover many of the other meanings of *bon.*72 The connection between the Lord of Hos and gShen rab(s) apparently was perceived to be so close—as in narratological analyses they indeed turn out to be—that later traditional scholars had to conclude that *hos* and *bon* are

71 Already in the 12th c. AD, Hos started to shift from its original and specific ‘location’ in narrative, of a clan name or toponym, a usage also still reflected in the mDo ‘dus, to a more generic qualification for Bon. See for example the rGyud thugs rje nyi na'i man nang ye shes zang thal, a text included in the bKa’ ‘gyur rgyud sde’i skor, vol.VI, pp.455-560, Dolanji 1972. This text was discovered by Gu ru mon rts (b. 1136 AD), whose Buddhist name according to the volume introduction is supposed to be A ya bon po lha’ bum. In an interesting list of lexical equations (pp.500), on p.500.2 there appears lists for *bon* and *ghen*; zhang zhung skad du hos/ me ngag skad du rog rog/ bru zha’i skad du rang snar/ bod skad du bon/ zhang zhung skad du u po yul me ngag skad du ni le hrung/ bru zha’i skad du zang zang (lha’ bod skad du ghen).

72 Another possibly relatively early reference we find in the highly interesting Ka ba gyi dgu, collection, of nine volumes in Vol.Ca, Vol.50 of the Mongyol Lhasay (III) edition (this is Vol.53 of the Bon bKa’ ‘gyur, 2031f. In the 1991 edition, arranged by Ayong Rinpoche). According to the dKar chag of Bla mGon chung ‘byung drung tshul khrims dbang grags (b.1868), this cycle of nine texts was extracted from the red mchod rten at 16sam yas by two A ska ra (p.108: a tsa ra rnam gyis kyi bston yas mchod rten dmar po nas thon pa’i ka ba gyi dgu las ...). On pp.33.1f: (Ayong ed.: 17r.1f) we read that the ‘Bar ba’i klong gyi ston pa answers and teaches Rin po chen snyan gyi khye’u chung po on the spontaneously arising *hos* teachings from the vast expanse of the primordial dimension: spgyur na hos bya ba ni lhan gyi bya brug shes pa yin bon gyi bya brug ma’ gos pa yin/ dang phur [millions] bya ba rnam drungs yi’i rdol ba’i rdol thibs bsam ni khyab/ rig pa rdol nas shar tsam na/ hos rdol ces kyi de la bya/ gyung drung hos kyi sgot ba ni lha ba rang ’byung la zer/ lha ba rang ’byung klong chen ni ... This passage is revealing for later uses and constructions of *hos* but also for the contested issue of rdol bon.

A late digest of these developing sensibilities appears in the rNam bshad dka’ gnad rab gsal, by the abbot of sMen ri, mKhan chen Nyi ma bstan ’dzin (b. 1813 AD), published in the Shes rab kyi bla na med par phrin pa fung po rtogs po’i rgyan las skabs dpa’i rnam bshad thugs don dka’ gnad rab gsal, The Bonpo Approach to Prajnaparamita, pp.57-406, Vol.I, Dolanji 1985. On p.92.5 Nyi ma bstan ’dzin writes: hos zhes bya ba ni ye srid guang drung bon gyi guang msho lta bu yin tel ston pa’i phug msho blo gur/ rten rgya rnam las/ hos ru dang/ hos gur/ hos cha zhes sogs guang pa dang/. Not only is *hos* equivalent with *bon*, with guang drung bon even, it also lends its name to sTon pa gShen rab’s attributes, his staff tent etc. (quote from Daqkar’s contextual ZZ dictionary). The Hos ru is discussed in chpt.26 of the ‘Dul ba yongs rdeogs rnam dag sdom byed kyi rgyud (in ‘Dul ba rgyud drug, Bon bKa’ ‘gyur III, Vol.3, pp.425.5-28.3, reference by Dan Martin).
near-synonyms, be they perceived as words from different languages: presumably from Zhang zhung and Tibetan.⁷³

The Hos clan of Hos mo ling drug is then construed as being associated with Zhang zhung as one of its ancient priestly tribes, in analogy to the way that the dMu and gShen clan eventually become associated with 'Ol mo lung ring: Hos apparently was perceived as being so central to gShen rabs and 'Ol mo lung ring that, with the passage of time and after many recastings of Bon origins—and after Zhang zhung had moved to the centre of Bon identity—it almost became a multiform of the Bon master narrative. Apparently this could happen in spite of the fact that the Ho de'i hos bdag, in his original context, was marked as a Lord of rTsang. Discussion of his location should also be tied in with my analysis of the location of yul chab kyi ya bgo, also mentioned in PT1136 (and PT1060), discussed elsewhere.⁷⁴

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⁷³ It is interesting that while hos is visualised as a Zhang zhung word, bon is considered a Tibetan synonym!!

⁷⁴ I first presented these ideas during the Bon 2006 IATS (paper forthcoming). While Bellezza then still passionately disagreed with me, I may have been more convincing then, than I surmised. I proposed to read yul chab kyi ya bgo and yar chab rtsang po (probably a comparable entity, that appears in the md0'i dus, p.102.2ff., Khedup Gyatso edition) as the area defined by the upper divide or headwaters of the (Yar lung rtsang po) river in old rTsang chen. Bellezza interrupted the proceedings of the panel and pointed out that, in his view, yul chab kyi ya bgo could not possibly mean that. He strongly felt that it is abundantly clear from the following passage in PT1136: the mention of the marriage of a Lord of Gu ge (rkang phran), that yul chab kyi ya bgo should be located in Guge, in western Tibet. During the discussion session, the next day, he explained that, certainly considering the mention of a large marriage party, the wedding should be visualised as taking place in Guge, and that yul chab kyi ya bgo therefore should also be located in western Tibet, probably even west of Kallas, near Guge (likewise PT1136 and its rituals).

I use that passage in the forthcoming IATS paper together with some other, related passages, notably PT1060, to argue for a more central location of the Khyung lung castle. The reference to the headwaters of the Yar lung rTsang po curiously seems to place matters in the upper reaches of that river, in old rTsang chen, broadly conceived—as it has to be in the imperial period: somewhere along the rTsang po, between central Tibet and Kallas & Tise. In my reading of PT1136, the Lord of Gu ge came to yul chab kyi ya bgo to woo a local lady, lCam lho rgyal byang mo tsun, so the scene setting of the events and hence yul chab kyi ya bgo are somewhere in rTsang (chen), where the Lord of rTsang and his daughter are from.

While Bellezza and I did not manage to come to an agreement there and then, I am both honoured and surprised to read that he chose to publish my Bonn thesis after all, and not to pursue his own opinion on the matter. Bellezza now also cites the same PT1060 passage in support. But, alas, he subsequently forgot to disambiguate his translation sufficiently (p.528 reads: "Well then, [her parents] elected to betroth lCam lho-rgyal byang-mo tsun to the lord of the people of Gu-ge, in the river country of the upper headwaters"). What is worse, he does not draw the
Within the current narratological analyses, these kind of literary appropriations and recastings of ‘Bon’s’ perceived past may provide revealing insights into the construction and genealogy of religious historical knowledge. Reflection on the construction of the narratives reveals some of the sensibilities according to which older narremes are reassembled into new narrative structures and contribute to new master narratives: it shows which traditional links are respected and eventually even cultivated, such as Hos–gShen rab(s), and which associations later authors feel obliged or at liberty to ignore, such as the connection Hos–rTsang. The rise of Ti se-centred Zhang zhung sacred geography, in which, probably somewhere around the time of construction of the Gling grags narratives, matters Bon become connected to Zhang zhung, Ta zig etc., does not allow the Hos name to remain attached to its early rTsang origins. This is not so much topographical negligence but the simple logic of religious narrative that prioritises expression of particular structures and potentials for meaning over historical and geographical fact. It certainly constitutes a problem or even contradiction to modern sensibilities of space and time, but it may simply be ‘the right thing to do’ in terms of logic of religious myth.

Conclusions

Considering the narrative proximity of the Dunhuang and mDo ’dus Hos stories, their general proximity to the mDo chen po bzhi, and the perceived importance of the Hos name and the hos type, I should
indicate the Hos story as the most likely prototype for the marriage exploits in the mDo ' dus. PT1136 even involves an arranged marriage! After all, the earliest gShen rab hagiography is traditionally classified under the mDo chen po bzhi! Even though the rKong po story arguably presents the briefest form of a later expedition abroad paradigm, for the reasons mentioned, I should still prefer to identify the Hos story.

Because of preceding publication and ongoing research (Stein 1988 and Kalsang Norbu) it would probably be both unnecessary and premature to write into the conclusions that stOn pa gShen rab is a phyi dar literary invention that goes back to non-Buddhist ritualistic narratives of the end of the first millennium AD; but here it is, just in case someone might have missed that.

What probably intrigues me most is that we are actually able to observe how, at the beginning of the phyi dar, old narremes and names are recycled into new narrative contexts that self-consciously reflect emerging Bon identity. The master narratives and identity vectors are new but the narrative elements, more often than not, are not.

It is also clear that a smattering of context and various religious, historical, and literary sensibilities remain connected to migrating narremes and determine whether and how they eventually are incorporated into new contexts and master narratives. A clear example for this is the vicissitudes of the controversial Dur gShen rma da name.

Generally, we get a sense of how Bon narratives emerge at the turn of the first millennium AD and also start to appreciate which traditional sensibilities rule historiographic (re)constructions of identity narratives of that ilk, simply by studying how early Bon identity discourse is consciously assembled from pre-existing antecedents, which are genuinely believed to belong to a pre- or in any case non-Buddhist and ‘indigenous’ past—to use that despicable “i”-word, at least once. Clearly not everything that could fit the story frame goes.

There also is a notion that the literary void from which Bon emerges as a writing tradition at the beginning of the second millennium in Buddhist Tibet may not be that empty after all. To some that is perhaps reassuring. The sparse disparate reflexes and relics of the preceding period that are preserved in Dunhuang sources present an off-centre, fragmentary, but at least relevant and real record. This allows one to extrapolate to a more complete matrix of rituals and narratives that may have existed at the time, in oral and written forms, and may have informed emerging Bon, perhaps in a manner quite similar to the dynamics of construction that we have analysed here, for the mDo ' dus expedition-abroad narratives and their Dunhuang precursors.
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Appendix I: g-Yung and 永, and on Drung and 中, 終 or 常

This appendix is meant to facilitate those who would like to pursue the hypothesis of possible early borrowing of Tibetan g-yung drung from Chinese. There are several combinations with 永, yong¹, that we need to consider for tracing g-yung drung to Chinese vocabulary; not all are equally likely, however. Phonetically, the most eligible candidates are:

永中 yong³ zhong¹, a combination of Mathews 7589: yung³ and 1504: chung¹: the middle;¹⁴
永終 yong³ zhong¹: = 永久 and 永远终止, combination of Mathews 7589: yung³ and 1500: chung¹: the end, finally; death; the whole of; after all; still;
永常 yong³ chung², 7589.26: constantly: 永 yong³ (7589, yung³: perpetual; eternal; long; far-reaching) combined with 常 chung² (221, ch’ung²: constantly); and perhaps

But also see some semantically and partly also phonetically related combinations, such as:

永生 yong³ sheng¹⁵, 7589.35 eternal life: 永 and 生 sheng¹⁵ (5738, shēng¹: life);
永遠 yong³ yuan¹, 7589.44: perpetually, eternally, forever: 永 and 遠 yuan¹ (7734, yuán¹: distant in time & place);
永久 yong³ jiù¹, 7589.7: perpetually; eternally: 永 and 久 jiù¹ (1188, ch’iu¹: finally, a long time).

Considering its semantics and even morphology, Tibetan g-yung drung may be a loan word. Chinese recommends itself as a likely source. But we should appreciate the timeframe and trace which phonetical values pertain to the periods in which borrowing is most likely to have occurred: probably at the end of the first millennium or before. Plausible-

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¹⁴ My thanks go to Bill Baxter, Chris Beckwith, Wolfgang Behr, Roland Bielmeier, George van Driem, Guo Hui, Felix Haller, Weldon South Goblin, Tsuguhito Takeuchi, and Jeroen Widdershof, who all in the best of academic tradition provided advice and important further leads. These preliminary notes could not have been extended without their expert help. I nonetheless assume full responsibility for any shortcomings and oversights.

¹⁵ Perhaps 仲 is here used phonetically?

¹⁶ 永远终止, yōngyuǎn zhōngzhǐ "end forever"; from Hányǔ dà cídǎn 漢語大詞典; reference and translation kindly provided by Bill Baxter.
looking phonetical values of modern Mandarin would first need to be related to (reconstructions for) Late or Early Middle and Old Chinese.

This is where the first problems for the hypothesis arise. Non-linguists cannot critically discuss Late Middle Chinese presentations as they appear in Pulleyblank (1991), but we should at least note their provisional nature and appreciate that there is considerable disagreement among specialists. Pulleyblank (1991) presents the following:


Please note that Baxter’s proposed OCh initial *wr meanwhile has been hypothesised as *G(r) (adapted from Pan Wuyun (1997:19), now also accepted by Baxter & Sagart);^78

Cf. Takata (1988:404f), based on Old Tibetan transcriptions of the 9th–10th c. AD Hexi dialect in north-western China, finds weng(2), we, wen and ‘u’;^79 he lists 切間 (Qie4 yun4) transcription xi‘ai2, and for 阿西 (he4 xi1), for the late mediaeval period, he reconstructs ji‘ai3;^80

p.410: **zhōng, 中**, 2:3, M00073A, Y. tsug, L. triw, E. truug, K1007a: middle, center; see also zhòng;

p.410: **zhōng, 終**, 120:5, M27372, Y. tsug, L. tshiw, E. tseug, K1002e: end, finish; the end, forever;

p.50: **chǎng, 常**, 50:8, M08955, Y. tsəug’, L. šfiag, E. dziag, K725e: constant, usual;

And see also less likely formations (most of which need not be discussed any further):


p.280: **shēng, 生**, 100:0, M21670, Y. sæg, L. sæjı̇, E. shajı̇/ṣejı̇, K812a: be born; life; living, alive; fresh; raw;

p.387: **yuǎn, 遠**, 162:10, M39047A, Y. yan’, L. yan’, E. wuan’, K256f: distant, far; see also yuàn;


^78 Thanks to Wolfgang Behr for this reference.

^79 Cited by Takata from the TD, Tiandi bayang shenzhoujing. Thanks to Weldon South Coblin for clarifying this.

^80 Takata (1988) seems to support Pulleyblank’s EMCh wiajg’. Thanks to Chris Beckwith for this reference.
There clearly are problems with the hypothesis:

1) 中: zhong\(^1\), L tśwy and E truwn, while phonologically close to Tib. drung, lexically is off, while 永中 is poorly attested in literary evidence and therefore is an unlikely source.

2) 终: zhong\(^1\), while very similar in Mandarin, in L tśwy and in E taww, does not relate well to drung. Lexically, the core of its semantic field (“end”) also seems less on the mark.

3) 存: The palatal affricate cun\(^2\), L tšw\(\) and E tšw, for quite similar reasons as in the previous option, phonologically is difficult to reconcile with drung (but perhaps only more so).

4) 常: chang\(^2\), in spite the its vowel quality, may be the most likely candidate of all. The vowel discrepancy between L ŝhau and E dziaŋ and drung might be accounted for: one would merely need to accommodate a vowel change from a to u. Depending on regional phonetic values of Tibetan -u-, which at least in modern eastern Tibet may approach -a-, this problem may well resolve itself on the receiving end; but that is of course not recommended procedure!

Weldon South Coblin informs me that in very late medieval Chinese dialects of the Gansu corridor, the vowel of words like 常 became rounded and in Tibetan transcriptions were spelled -o-. Also noting that Old Tibetan made a sharp distinction between the vowels -o- and -u- in the finals -ung and -ong. Also, these late transcriptions postdate the pertinent period of ca. 600 AD by about 400 years. So South Coblin feels this may be a blind alley.\(^{31}\)

There also are problems with 永. Baxter’s representation in ‘Qiyeun’ Middle Chinese: hjwengX (pronounce: wen? or yen?) would seem to allow borrowing into what is later written as Tib. g-yung (yung or yen).\(^{32}\)
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But Pulleyblank’s bilabial  
and Baxter’s OCh reconstruction  
*wrang? contradict this (cf. his  
for hjwengX). South Coblin, from  
his expertise on old north-western Chinese, also represents  
as ueng (Qieyun  
), in the relevant period of around 600 AD, i.e. the  
Qieyun period in the history of Chinese phonology.63 Baxter and he  
moreover are in agreement with the important data procured by  
Takata, based on Old Tibetan transcriptional data: weng(2), we, wen,  
and ‘u (see his Hexi reconstruction  
). Baxter and South Coblin in  
this context also both point to (jyuiping) wing5, in modern Cantonese.

South Coblin (ibid.) underlines that the pronunciations of yong3:  
jou or jou, for  吾, where the main vowel is rounded and matches  
present Lhasa pronunciation of g-yung (jug), do indeed not appear in  
varieties of standard Chinese until later. The earliest orthographically  
attested one known is in Phags-pa Chinese.64 Then one finds them in  
Ming and Qing times in Korean sinological and European missionary  
transcriptions of Guanhua from central & north China. This is of course  
rather (too) late for our concern. He therefore feels that the vowel  
similarity between modern standard Chinese pronunciation of  
and (Old) Tibetan g-yung may be coincidental. Baxter also believes that  
the present-day Mandarin phonetics yong3 (jug) for 吾 may be relatively  
late: yeg > yan > jou—yan is what many Mandarin dialects have.65  

But apparently weng (and wing) is not the only avenue open.  
Wolfgang Behr informs me that the MCh initial *hj, which Baxter  
derives from OCh labiolaryngeal *wr, following Pan Wuyun (1997),  
meantwhile is generally believed to derive from a labialized OCh  
uvular *g(r).66 Laurent Sagart gives a list of reconstructions based on  
that initial *g, which in his view indeed must have been inherently  
labial or labialised and in MCh thus primarily occurs in words with a  
rounded vowel or with a medial -w-.67 The OCh initial *g of 吾

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63 E-mail communication, July 19th 2008; cf. South Coblin (1994), the Geng group, entry1062.
64 South Coblin (2007:111), entry 38: xiong [hiong]; 吾 is listed at the tone shǎng (上).
65 E-mail communication, July 18th 2008.
66 This has been adopted into the Baxter-Sagart system, occasionally with slight modifications.
67 In “Reconstructing Old Chinese uvulars in the Baxter-Sagart system”, a paper read  
at the 40th ICSTLL, Hægeb, 27th-29th of September, 2007 (reference thanks to Behr),  
Sagart gives (OCh > MCh > Mandarin):
王 *gaj > hjweng > weng “king” (WT gong “a superior one”);
胃 *g[r] > hjwe > wêl “stomach” (WT gôol-pu “stomach”);
于 *g(r) > hjir > yu “go; at” (WT ‘gô “go”);
preferably fed into Tib. ga and could not result in ya (in Tib. g-yung, pronounced as juug).

South Coblin (1986:105) thus, based on such sensibilities, connects ḳ to Tib. rgyang “distance” and the related rkṣẏng “to extend, stretch, spread” (cf. Starostin). Thus other connotations of ḳ: “long, far reaching” have fed into Tib. “distance” and “to stretch, extend”.

This may appear confusing: while, in reference to work in a relevant period in north-western China by Takata, South Coblin and Baxter propose that ḳ, *g*rang through the Middle Chinese representation hjwàng, fed into late mediaeval Hexi weng(2) and eventually into modern Cantonese wing, there apparently also exists another possible avenue for ḳ, which leads from *g*rang into Tib. rgyang. Would that perhaps open new possibilities for derivation of Tib. g-yung in the Qiyeun period? But, needless to say, we took care to historicise Chinese phonology properly, but we should of course also be on guard against anachronisms in the pronunciation of Tibetan!

Probably since at least the 9th c. AD, the prescript ga- in g-yung is not articulated anymore in Central Tibetan (it merely causes a shift to a high tone). But in Proto- and Early Old Tibetan, g-yung was still pronounced iyü or giüu. The ancient pronunciation has been preserved in eastern (e.g. Amdo-region) and western Tibetan (e.g. Balti) dialects,
which have remained largely oblivious to Central Tibetan reforms. One might therefore still attempt to connect OCh *g~* to Tib. g-yu (note the labial (u) onset in both!) and thus relate OCh *gwjiangx or *G"rang? to Proto or early OT g-yung: yju or gjug. For g-yung drung: 93

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>文言</th>
<th>Old Tibetan</th>
<th>(i) Mandarin</th>
<th>MOCh</th>
<th>OCh</th>
<th>(Source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>永常</td>
<td>gju drug &gt;</td>
<td>yùng chuang</td>
<td>hjwang xidzeng</td>
<td>*g&quot;rang? *jrung</td>
<td>Baxter's with &quot;r&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>永中</td>
<td>gju drug ek.</td>
<td>jwang jung</td>
<td>gwjiang x kejuung</td>
<td>South Cabin 1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>永終</td>
<td>gju drug ec.</td>
<td>xQe jing</td>
<td>hjwang x xjuung</td>
<td>Baxter's with &quot;r&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common sense would recommend lending considerable weight to Takata’s conclusions on the phonetic value weng(2) of 永, found in transliterations pertaining to the in 9th-10th c. AD, relating to the河西 (he² xi¹) dialect (cf. ji"a’i’). This indeed is a corner of north-western China where Tibetan and Chinese intensively met, roughly in a relevant period. But, on second thought, one should also appreciate that any borrowing ought to be dated significantly before the earliest occurrences of g-yung drung in Tibetan inscriptions etc. The Zhol inscription already dates to approximately 764 AD. Dunhuang was not

**Nouns:**
- g-yog, Themchen yjø castrated yak;
- g-yu, Themchen yjø turquoise;
- g-yog po, Themchen yjøkue servant;

**Verbs:**
- g-yar, Themchen yjar; to borrow;
- g-yog, Themchen yjø; to throw;
- g-yol, Themchen yjø to keep off (sunlight).

92 For examples from Western Tibetan Balti (xiu) see Bielmeier (1985:181). He kindly shared some examples by e-mail communication (July 22nd 2008);
- hjøq beside xiøq—WT g-yog: yak;
- xiø—WT g-yu: turquoise;
- hjøq beside xiøq: cover, quilt, WT g-yogs, and the verb xiøq: to cover, WT g-yog.

Bielmeier also points to a different development for the word for “lynx,” which is simply i in WAT (Western Arabak Tibetan). The WT background is not clear, as we find the two spellings g-yi and dbyi in WT. Felix Haller (2004) noted that in Themchen WT dbyi- and g-yi- seem to merge into ghj- (gh for the voiced velar fricative “gama”). Thus Themchen ghjørkha; summer < WT dbyar kha (cf. Haller (2004), Themchen 38), but cf. Balti ghβjø; summer < WT dbyar vs. xja: rust < WT g-’yu’.

93 Gong Hwang-cherng (2002) wrote on Old Tibetan g-y- and related questions. See esp. pp. 383ff. Tib. g-y- in his reconstruction represents a glottal stop onset plus glide: j- (thanks to South Cabin for this reference).
conquered by Tibetans until 781 AD, or, at the earliest, in the 60s of that century: being besieged perhaps in the 50s and 60s (Horlemann 2002). Historical data, like phonetical data (shift giug to juy), therefore also make a loan as late as the Tibetan Dunhuang period seem unlikely. If g-yung drung was borrowed at all, it must have happened earlier, probably before the rise of literary Tibetan.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

1) Available historical linguistic and phonological data do not encourage derivation of the modern Lhasa pronunciation (juy) of the first syllable of Tib. g-yung drung from Modern Mandarin pronunciations of jy, yong. Instead, most linguists, starting from a hypothetical Old Chinese reconstruction *G*rang, prefer a phonological development that prioritises the bilabial quality of the reconstructed bilabialised uvular stop *(G)* into something that closely resembles Baxter’s representation of the position of the syllable in the Middle Chinese system as hjwengX and emphasise a development through a mid to lower-mid front unrounded vowel into something that may have sounded like uep. This is a development that moreover is entirely compatible with the data acquired by Tanaka for the late mediaeval Hexi: weng(2). It can also be followed into modern Cantonese wing.

At the same time, South Coblin and Starostin have formulated a possible loan of the syllable represented by jy into Tib. rgyang etc. This seems to represent an entirely separate route, which prioritises another main quality of the reconstructed *G*: its quality as a uvular stop *(G)*. This alternate route would allow connecting jy to a Proto Tibetan or Early OT pronunciation of g-yung as yjuy or giuy, especially if the inherent bilabiality would later manifest as the vowel colour -u-. Following Sagart (2007), we have reason to believe it did. See, for example, his reconstructions for the arising of the -u- vowel following a *G*(r) initial:

- OCh *(G)*a > MCh hju > yu “go; at” (WT ’gro “go”);
- *(G)*at > hjwot > yuè “transgress” (WT ’grod-pa “to go, to travel”);
- *(G)*a[n] > hjwon > yùdn “long robe” (WT gon “garment”).

But note that on the Tibetan side this invariably results in a rounded -o- and not in a Tib. -u-. Perhaps this is comparable to the shift that South Coblin observed for -ang to -ong, but not to -ung, in late mediaeval dialects of the Gansu corridor. Perhaps we should visualise this second phonological route elsewhere, and not in north-western China?
2) The second character for a possible loan from Chinese remains even more uncertain. Even the most likely matches for Tib. *drung* in g-yung drung, such as: (永)常, (永)中, or perhaps also (永)終, all appear problematic in some way. Still, derivation of g-yung drung from 永常, even though it poses problems in the lack of bilabial colouring of its vowel and therefore is not deemed very likely, also cannot be ruled out completely. We should note that while the rise of a rounded -o- is in some situations attested for later periods, a Tib. -u- remains tenuous and hypothetical. Therefore, if borrowing from Chinese is tenable at all, given the available options, a loan from 永常, through (Baxter) *rang? djang* seems the most likely scenario. But in any case, we would then be looking at a loan from Old Chinese into Proto or Early OT rather than a loan from some Tang-period Chinese into early literary OT.

More textual support on both sides would be needed to confirm anything at this point; but that would lead too far beyond our present concern. I nonetheless hope that these few notes may inspire more thorough and methodical investigations by specialists.

*
**APPENDIX II: THE MARRIAGE STORIES OF STON PA GSHIEN RAB**

according to the *mDo ’dus* (Mongyal Lhasay’s *Bonpo bKa’ gyur* (III) edition = Khedup Gyatso MS edition, Dolanji 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hos za Gyal med ma</th>
<th>dPo’ za Thang mo</th>
<th>Ha za Gung drug</th>
<th>gSas za Ngang drug</th>
<th>rKong za Khri lcam</th>
<th>Kong tse’i bu mo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hos za rgyal med 42,4, 203.6</td>
<td>dpo’ za thang mo 42.5, 81.3, 100.6</td>
<td>lha za gung drug 43.1</td>
<td>gzas za ngang drug 43.2, 179.6</td>
<td>rkongs za khri lcam 45.4</td>
<td>‘phrul sgyur 43.6, 89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hos za rgyal med ma 67.2, 178.6</td>
<td>dpo’ za thang mo 80.2</td>
<td>lha za bzing drug 179.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kong za ‘phrul bsgyur 179.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hos za 192.5</td>
<td>dpo’ za thang mo 100.1, 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dpa’o za thang mo 100.6, 101.2</td>
<td>dpo za thang mo 179.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dpo za 102.6</td>
<td>dpon za thang mo 203.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dpon za thang mo 217.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(rtsangho dge'i) hos
(bdag): P1136, 31-38


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[6:42.4]  bsos pa'i snying po bzhed pa nyid yab
[6:42.5]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab
[6:42.6]  gsal pa gsal rab
[6:42.7]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.1]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab
[6:43.2]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab
[6:43.3]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.4]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.5]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.6]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.7]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.8]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.9]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.10]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab

[6:43.11]  gsal ba'i bstan pa gsal rab
Six Marriages and Many More Funerals

nyes pa yis/ srin po'i damag stong the ke s tab s nas khyer/ de tshe mgon btsun phyir [sic] gong khyer nas/ phyen [sic] tse'len [sic] med thugs rje skyes/ kong tse' phurl gyis rgyal po yis/ dge skes mha' ru phyin bya'i phyir/ khye'u chung tsi ber dung 'phring [sic] can du byon/ hra s rin 'tshams kyi gau [sic] m'dad/ dge 'dang mi dge'i shen [sic] phrag phyes/ dge ba'i skos thebs hla mi rgyal gyur te/ kong tse rgyal po yid rang rab tu thob/ dge ba'i skos mka'n an tse phy a la zhus/ de tshe hla bu yid ni smon lam skyes/ skyes gi lal ga gyon zhung gser gyis gyal gzi thongs/ klu'i bu tsa dung sprul thorgtshug can/ gsal khang brtsgs pa'i las mi ngag kyi byed do zer/ de tshe s rin po mya ngen dam po skyes gyis [85] ni/ srin gyis gsal khang brtsgs du/ rgyal ngid gsal tahig mnyam/ khye'u chung tsi ber can khyo/ slob don dga'am ci/ 'oes pas/ a tse la gungs pas/ 'lus rin po the'od kyi dpe'i gahi byung te/ thugs 'phurl gyis bshang m'dod kyi don khog phub te/ dbang po gyi ma'i zer la bde'n lam drang/ rig pa gars phyin 'dra

mgon sangs rgyas/ 'oes gsungs lung bstan rab du thob/ re [sic] rje nab phyogs gling nas nas/ rgyal po' khor tshogs mgon du byon/ hla ra dkar poston pa la phul/ hla phyag 'tshal nas zhus pa'i mdo/ e ma ston pa hla mis gso/ bdag ni rgyal po hos kyi rigs/ dang ba yid nging bya ba lags/ yul hos mo gling drug dag nas 'ong/ rgyu [sic] las dang/ [sic] pas stons bskyed de/ lam du tshogs brags sgrib sbyangs phyir/ bston pa gshen rab gdan 'dchen 'orgs/ yun kyi mchod gnas dag dus zhus/ pas thugs rje 'dzin par zhu/ 'oes zhus ston pas bka' rsha pa/ kye ma rgyal po dad pa can/ bdag ni bar po so brgyad du/ bka' shis zhal srons byed pa'i/ nga dang 'dra ba'i slob [62] bu cig/ rgyal po'i mchod pas lo gsum gyis/ 'oes gsungs/ yid kyi khye'u chung/ tshu [sic] bsang smra mkhan khye'u chung khyod/ gyang drug gsal gshen rgyal ba ste/ hos rgyal dang ba yid rang gyis/ lo gsum tshogs brags mchod gnas gyis/ 'oes gsal/ khye'u chung zhal nas nii/ slob don hra'i bka' byung na/ dmyal bar gtsong yang cha sams mod/ bden pa'i smin gyis/ rgyal bu khri shang shi rgyu la/ sdeg can mi dgu ro dgu byung/ dmag mi sum stong las dbang gyur/ e ma las ngan mun byas yi ri mug/ 'oes smras yi mug skyes ste ngus/ brtan_phrug dag gis' di skad do/ / / kye ma sams can skyes nas shi ba la/ ci sle me [sic] bon bdun 'gyur nas/ rgyal bu'i gned du nga' gno nas/ rgyal bu mi shi sos pa na/ brag [sic] phrug sduag pa shi ba rung/ 'oes pa'i tshig kyang brjod de'dig/ de la rgyal bu dag gis'pha ma yis/ brag [sic] phrug sduag pa snying rje ste/ rgyal bu shi nas rgyal rab chad/ [73] rgyal bu sos pa tibs yod nas/ brag [sic] phrug gned du gtsong bas leg/ 'oes smras brtan_phrug gned du btungs/ brag [sic] phrug sha bston bzhin du dbzungs/ m'og pa rkang pa gya'as la' thon/ bon pos las gi gya'as pa then/ ha 'da nag po snying phyang skel/ shas rnam gned du phyogs bsir gtor/ mo bo'n khym du phyin tsa rgyal bu shi nas' dug/ mo bon skyeng ste loeb nas shi/ de rje brtan_phrug dag gis'pha ma'i/ ha 'da nag po'i snying phyang bsad/ de nas brtan_phrug a ma des/ rgyal po' phra mo khr' od kyi/ mkhar dang rtsam thon dag la zhubgs/
bka’ rtsal ston pa’i bka’ / bdag dang shri po’i mi gcags nas / rang gis srog la bab gyur kyang/ slob dpon bka’ bca’ gcag mi srid pas / bdag ni ston pa’i gsung ltar byi/ oes gsung // ‘brog rta ston pa’ la’ bu’/ shing rta’ khor lo chibs su bcib //

khye’u dzhung hos mo gling la gshegs/ chu bo gyim shang bya bar rgal/ yul ni hos mo gling d rag byon/ mhar ni ’bar ba rtsis ngu nas/ rgyal po’i ’khor kyis [63] bsu ba byas/ tshogs bsags bsnyen bkur nga [sic!] ston byas/ de nas gyung drung gsug gahen rgyal ba des/ ka’ da shel kyis brag phugs du/ lo gsam hos gyis bla mchod byas/ hos ’khor khrims dmag song ba’ti sde’ bsun mo’ gu ming [sic!] ma ti mas/ slob dpon cig bu dro la drang/drogsd bya byas pa ni/ bdag gyung drung gsugs gahen rgyal ba rag/ dpang po mchod par gro mi gcags/’de ring dpang med tro [sic!]/gse’ bai/ dbang [sic!] po drang stong nges os kyis/ ’dod chags dug gis ru ma yin’ ’khor ba’i sde’ gsal bsnyad shing sde’ sgyu ma’i lus kyi chags pa sgang/ oes brjod slob dpon byon [sic!] nas srong/ bsun mus rtag gis skra ba’ti nas/ der bran gyis rgyal sa bzungs ba la/ bdag rgyal po’i bar sgon ’phrog dag skyes/ ’khor gyi dmag mi sum skong bsdu’/ mhar phags bran ’phrog pha ma bsad/ sdig pa dmags mi sphyi’ khur/ de’ dra’i las ngen byung [74] byung ba’ di/ ci yi ngyu dang ci ngyu rkyen/ ’bras bu ngan pa ci la bu byung/ drang na drangs thab ci lhar lag/ gshen rab ston pa nyid la zhu/ oes zhus ston pa nyid la zhu/ oes zhus ston pas gseye/ lam/ rgyal po’i bar bai sgon ma can/ khroy ni zhu don thab la mkhas/ gro do mzhad pa’i bsam pa can/ dsu ldam sems la sdig mi gyur/ de la nam yang ngen nang song mod/ ci lhar sdig cin [sic!] mi dgu yang las/ sngo dus las sphyod ngen pa las/ smon lam ma dag rgyud las byung/ rkyen ni sdig pa’i rnam smin tshogs/ ’bras bu ngan pa smin pa ni/ de la rgyal bu khrul shang ni/ bsam pa bzangs po’i lhan dag gis/ sum bsu rita gsam lha ru skyes/ lha bu dri ma med pa skyes/ bran phrug khrul shes bsam bzangs ste/ dga’ ldam lhar [75] skyes/ khrul shang ma ni bsam ba’i brin tsam ste/ lobs pas chu’ bur can gyis dnyal bar skyes/ khrul shang ma ni bsam ngen ste/ leags kyis sgog les lugs/ bai tshig gis ’bru sbyar te/ blo rig pa’i ye sdes thams cad mshyen bar shar/ laig ’phru I ’ders phyes pas slob dpon dgos sam ci/ oes pas srin po skyes de song/ der lha glu lha ma yin gyis brtsigs/ de mring rtsal I dan srid gyis gyis brtsigs pas bren/ bar gyen po’i las btags pas brjig/ dang rdzu ’phru N klus bris pas bkan/ skos sgam po phyas mzhad pas kags/ lags bsad ldan mis bta bas grub/ byin bder gshegs lha bsabs pas ngyas/ [86] bstan pa rnam smgs rjes bshag mzhad pas ni ngo mtsar to/ de yang gsgas khang zhul sros su/ ston pa gshen rab’ khrul das spyin drung nas/ khu yon gser gyi bshag lha la/ rin chen sa/ tshogs bstad dang/ dar mthson mzhed pa’i rma gos phul/ bka’ gsal mdzes pa’i mchod spin bsham/ kar nag bka’ gsal zhul sros mzhad/ de tsho bshad ni giug pa’i thogs/ phye’ gyis bshi dag nas bar chod brtshams/ deli tsham tsham ldam khye’u bshi yang/ mgams pa’i ’khrul chen ru bshi sprul/ shar nas zo bo dbu dgu byung/ byang na kha ma dbu dgu byung/ nub na ru tso dbu dgu byung/ bha nas zo po dbu dgu byung/ lrig pa’i dbu dang.
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1. dbzhugs/ g-yung drung sems dpal stong dang lnga brgya dang/ 'khor bcas khri thang 'byams pa'i gling/ 'gongs khyer lhun grub 'dus pa byon/ phyag dang rim 'gro bsu ba byis/ mihar ni shod pa ge 'egs [sic] pa ru/ sras bu rma lo gnyul lo yis/ nyi zla gnyis kyi gur yang phub/ gsang ba (ndo sdu) yid kyi khye'u chung yis/ pad ma rin kyi gyan yang blo/ rgyal po 'bar ba'i agron ma'i/ gsol zas rom chog bgya dang ldan/ nor bu gzi 'bar phul/ kye ma ston pa thugs rje can/ rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i gshen rab ma bo agron mali mchod/ rgyal phran khri shang nad kyi zin/ nad de ci kyang ma sos par/ gya ma mo bon bron phrug/ ha da dang/ damg mi tshu ched sdiig la gnas pa 'di/ ci'i rgyu dang ci'i rkyen/ ston pa'i agron ma bdag la bshad du gsal/ ces zhus/ ston [74] pa bka' byral pa/ sgrung thse sngag ma rgyal bu de/ thse stod dpon bez bsad byas/ tshe smad ggo rgyal ye mkhyen la/ srog gcod spang bai ston pa blangs/ dge bcu tshad mar spyod pa yis/ 'dir ni rgyal bur skyes pa'o/ thse thung sgon gyi srog bcas ram smin yin/ gya ma mo bon had da rnas

2. mdo'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud las/ bstan pa rnam gsun rgyes bshag mo'ad pali ke'u sde bcu cig pa'ol/ // [89] d
'brug rtša sngon po chibs sgye brgyud a/ myur mgyud rts gi 'jhrul lcags gis brgyud b/ klong 'gyu skad cig ci bzhin bar/ gnas chen ru bzhis 'gdan yang drangs/ shar nas 'gar gnas btsan po byon/ [68] byang na sgod gnas kham pa byon/ nub nas gnas rje rnamg po byon/ ho nas gnam gnas khyung run byon/ bar po so bgyad rhugs bzhis ru/ bka' rdags rnga dhang stung slang [sic] bzhis/ rtags bzhin mkha' na rnambs bsho byung/ sa gslug bsa res ngyal mtshan bzhis/ 'khor lo dpal byu'u dngang ngs/ pad ma bum pa ngyal mtshan gslug rin chen sna bdun gling dngang bgyod/ rhugs' bra' du char du bshis/ sgo bzhis mdzod la rlung bshad mdzad/ dge nas gnas chen ru bzhis yis/ [sic] 'phyo bsa dngang gis mdog/ ngog rtsa lding bsa skor lo dngang gnas rtsa dngang chen mtha' byu dngang/ gnam rtsa phyis gnos poche/ ston pa gshen rab byis par phul/ de tsho ston pa'i rnal nas ni/ bon ni sgo bzhis mdzod dngang lka/ chab dkar sngags ngyud phyi nang dngang/ chab nag srid ngyud che dngang/ dpon gnas lung ngyud che dngang/ [68] 'pham rtsa 'bum sde rnyas ngyal bus dge ba spyod pa la/ mo mas sde'i spyod 'khor ba yin/ ngyal po khyod ni sngag ma 'dus gshen skyes/ dma tug mi rnamgs ni la'd mo ba/ 'bgag ni 'dur gnas yin ches byas/ de rnamgs rnam smin yam du'o dir 'shogs/ de bsa sgrib pa dus 'dir sbyangs/ ces gzung/ ngyal po 'khor bza' gyis/ ston pa' dzhabs la phyag 'tshat te/ bder gshogs slogo gis dmchog pa bsham/ snying pa bzhi' dang chos bsdod pa byas/ 'khor ba dngang sprug snying po bzhi/ ris drug glod kyis tshim par byas/ bden [80] pa'i don yang btsan pa yin/ lhas dngang cho' phrub chen po byung/ ngyal po dmag mi ssum stong bzas/ mtha' la od bzhin mgon sngags rnyas/ ljug rten khamng ni bde la bchod/ slad nas ngyal po 'bar sgron sras/ dpou' lag ngyan bya ba dang/ dpou' lag nyan bya ba dang/ dpou' za thang ma shul du lus/ de la mtshan ldan khye'tsbyi yis/ [sic] gshen rab dag la slar dphu pat/ e ma yab cig gshen rab mdog/ ljug rten stong par gyur tsa' kyi/ 'gnyi ba lha ng med sngags rnyas nas/ ngyal bu 'lam dnal lus pa'di/ ci' rnyu dang ci' rkyen/ dbang dang ye shes thabs kyi sku/ sku gsum kha' la yab pa cig/ ces dzhis/ ston pas bka'}
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bsdzs dang/ gtsang ma mtho thogs zas don mdzod/ gzungs so dag la 'dzin shes gyis/ bdag sgo dag la ming yih thog/ go lam dag la don snyed mdzod/ oes brjod/ sgo bzhhi mdzod Inga gtan la 'phabs/ de nas gung la brag seng ge bgya [sic] bsod su/ bdu d ma tang ru rungs btul/ mtho rish khul smon rgyal bzhad rson/ rgyal po hos kya' gro don rdogs so/ de nas mgon btsun phyai phul [sic] du/ sngag ldan gyu rse bya bu ru/ ye shes lha'i ston pa la [- gshen la 'od dkar] / gro ba' du'ba'i bon rnaas zhis/ de nas shar lho nub byang phyogs bshis bu/ ston pas' brag ri sngon po sbs/ lha rla ke ru snyan kar la/ dto sgro spyad sgro rtsis sgron smon sgru dang / lho sgro sgron sgru zung gsum ma drug bkal/ rtag gshang dang slang bshis dang chas/ ggas chen bshis ru' dren ston byas/ yld kyi skye' chu dang gis [70] sna'dren byas/ sras bu zung gsum ya drug dang/ mo ma kun shes dang po dang/ bon gyis 'khor lo phyogs bzhis bsksor/ dto spyad 'bum sde gtan la 'phabs/ de nas 'dzam bu gling bshis ru/ skad sugs mi cig sum bgya drug bculas/ brtal pa/ dpo' rgyal sngun dus snga rgyas pa/ thogs brsags sgrub pa byang ba yin/ rgyal bu ming sring lus pa' di/ rgyal bu skye ba lnga bgya ru' tshams md sde pa sgyod pa [81] yin/ dus' dir rgyal bu skyes pa sk/ da rung lhag ma ma dag pas/ bsgag nyid mya ngan 'das tsam nas/ / thar pa'i go' phung bzod thod bo/ stung mo dpo' zang thang mo ni/ sngon nas bsgag dang mgol 'hor/ smon lam lhancig btab pa'i/ bsgag gis grols su phram[sic] pa yin/ / de phyir rgyal pos phub ba kgs/ oes gsum dpo' za thang mo ni/ / ston pa gshen zab kha bu bshes/ kho ma ne'u chung dang tu buus/ dga' ston bshis sras ba grol byas/ nor sbyin dang gis gyang yang blangs/ sras bu lung 'dren rgyud' dden

khrungs/ bu mo gshen za ne'u chung bitams/ mi nor sna dgu phyogs su byin/ gto sgro spyad sgru bshis ru' gshad/ de nas phyi rol tshad bshis ru/ lha rgyud gshen rgyud srid rgyud dang/ don rgyud rgyud sde bshi rnaas dang/ don mdo bchu bshis [82] 'khor lo bsksor/ lung 'dren rgyud' dren dag la gshad/ rgyal po dpo' [sic] gro don mthar phyin mo/ gshung drung lha'i bzhis/ mdo'dun pa rin po
bon skad 'gyur mi cigs pa se ne byangs/ slar yung/ 'od mo gling du byen/ bar po so bgyad mkhar duthams cad kru/dus/ gyeung drung ha'i bon/ mdo 'dus pa rin po che'i rgyud las/ s隆pa gchen ab mi bo dang/ rgyal po hos dang ba yid ring zhu don kyis mdo/ hos ra rgyal med khab tu bshes nas/ sas 'khrungs pa'i ke'u sde dgu pa'o// // [82,2]

gchen ab so gshis mdo 'chad dus/ khyab pa gsas chen ru bzhis sprul/ kye ma s隆pa gchen ab nyid/ nged gsas chen ru bzhis bya ba yin/ nyi ma phyogs bzhis dpung gsas lags/ gchen ab mi bo/ di slar gyi/ bon mi 'dod pa dgu 'gyur lags/ gomtshon dmag gis dpung chos la/ nyi ma phyogs bzhis rgyal sde thul/ gling bzhis[99] nor la gyal gorg gyis/ oes smras/ gchen ab lan dbab pas/ kye ma khyab pa lag ring po// gsas bshis ma yin'ig ri'en skyongs/ 'khor ba zo chul gyunitar khor/ gchen ab mi ru ma 'gyur med/ drin chen ma la sdang ba de/ bdud men gshan la sa la yod/ nga ahe sdeong[82,1] spangs pas dmag dpun len/ 'dod chags spangs pas nor ming ken/ nga rgyal spungs pa sde m[100] len/ rgyal sa
Six Marriages and Many More Funerals

[sic] sde bzhi rang gi rang gi sde/ khyab pa smong pa'i bslug tshig zai/ ces gsung sras bzhi mo/ a od chud/ gshen rab phya'i sku 'sho tshe/ khyab pa lha'i bu 'dra spu/ btsun mo 'nams la bslug tshig smras/ gshen rab phya'i sku 'sho tshe/ ngo phya'i bu mgo tshig [sic] mor blang/ de gtog sgo dpyad sgro zhung la [100] strog/ du bu phya'i yul du'gro/ gshen rab mi bo 'dir dgon nges/ ces pas dpa'o [sic] zang thang mo slongs [sic] bsgyur nas/ gto sgro dpyad sgro zhung la bshugs/ gto bu spyad bus spar do zin/ yi ge dpa'o 'bru lus dang/ gto'i byang bu sum bsgya dang/ gto gyis byang bu dgu bkra zin/ gto spyad 'bum ste zhungs la srga/ dpa'o [sic] za thang mo khyab pas bsis/ bu ni bdu bu go bo chung/ yul ni bral ma khul 'od dang/ / sems can bzhod 'nams sogs bu byung/ mo ma sding nga sding lam smras/ bslu ba'i bong gyis bslu byas ste/ snga drol gshen la me tog 'hor/ phyi dri ying bsgab spu dri bsgyad/ bslu ba'i bdu bu gong chung gum/ dpa'o [sic] za de la mya re'nams smre/ de la gshen rab kyi smras/ dpa'o [sic] za thang mo smre cig/ bu 'di bdu kyi bsus [101]
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<td><strong>rgyal bzhad</strong></td>
<td>ni/ pad ma ral ga zangs las grub/ rin chen bzhi bka’i dpag tshad bdun/ hos za rgyal med du’i khab/ glo bu spyad bu ’khrungs pa’i/ [203,5]</td>
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**ne’u chung** | ni/ in tra ni li gyi las grub/ rin chen gser gyi sa gshi bka’/ kag ri dpag tshad bdun gyis bskor/ dpo [sic] za thang mo’i gling stc/ brsa [sic] ni lung ’dren[204] rgyud ’dren dang/ gshen za ne’u chung ’khrungs pa’o/ [204,1] |

| ![Image](image_url) | ![Image](image_url) |

| ![Image](image_url) | ![Image](image_url) |

**NB.** This text was mainly typed by Dan Martin and proof read by Kalsang Norbu and also by me. Kalsang Norbu is working on a critical edition of the mDo ’dus based on all three presently manuscripts available and also envisions translation. This comparative table will not anticipate on this work and merely attempts to render the text of the Khedup Gyatso Dolanji edition as accurately as possible. While gratefully acknowledging the work and generosity of the mentioned colleagues, I assume full responsibility for any mistakes in this rendering of the original manuscript.