

ALTAN QAYAN (1507-1582) OF THE TŪMED MONGOLS  
AND THE STAG LUNG ABBOT  
KUN DGA' BKRA SHIS RGYAL MTSHAN (1575-1635)\*

Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp  
Harvard University

Gray Tuttle  
Columbia University

This article introduces new sources on Altan Khan's encounters with the Stag lung abbot Kun dga' bkra shis, simultaneous with his better-known meeting with Bsod nams rgya mtsho, to whom he gave the title Dalai Lama. Tāranātha's 1601 biography of his teacher Kun dga' bkra shis and that written in 1609 by the Stag lung hierarch's heir to leadership, Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1571-1626), detail the invitation Altan Qayan of the Tūmed Mongols extended to Kun dga' bkra shis in 1576 and its aftermath.

This narrative starts with an ethnic Tibetan, born in Kha rag on the Dbus-Gtsang border and better known as Tāranātha<sup>1</sup>, Kun dga' snying po bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1575-1635)<sup>2</sup>, as his name in religion reads in full, who recorded aspects of the religious legacy that his Indian teachers had transmitted to him in a work titled the *Seven Instruction Lineages*.<sup>3</sup> This precocious

\* Written in celebration of our fellow traveler E. Sperling and of his efforts to unravel portions of the complex history of the Tibetan people, this paper to some extent weaves a further pattern on his well known essay on Tibetan-Mongol relations during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries [see below n. 22]. We wish him many more years of following our common passion.

1 The otherwise elusive Indian Paṇḍita Jvālanātha had apparently given him this “nickname” during one of Tāranātha's visionary experiences; see his undated *Gsang ba'i rnam thar chung zad rgyas pa, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 2/45, Mes po'i shul bzhang, vol. 44, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 268. In the early 1590s, he received a letter, written in Sanskrit, from a south Indian king by the name Palabhadra in which he was apparently addressed as Tāra guru; see *Rgyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa'i rtogs brjod [stod cha]*, *Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 1/45, Mes po'i shul bzhang, vol. 43, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 107.

2 Still in need of confirmation, the possibly exact date of his passing, “the twenty-eighth day of the nag-month of the wood-female-pig year”, is given in Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa's (1920-1975) *Jo nang chos 'byung zla ba'i sgron me*, ed. Btsan lha Ngag dbang tshul khriims and She Wanzhi (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992), 59, and, probably not independently, in Re sa Dkon mchog rgya mtsho, “Jo nang kun mkhyen tā ra nā tha'i rtogs brjod nyung ngu,” *Bod ljongs nang bstan* 1 (1998), 33. This would correspond to May 15, 1635. In this essay, all dates are calculated with the aid of the *Tabellen* in D. Schuh, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Kalenderrechnung*, Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Supplement Band 16 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973).

3 *Bka' babs bdun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i khungs lta bu'i gtam, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 33/45, Mes po'i shul bzhang, vol. 75, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 370 ff. [= D. Templeman, ed. and tr., *The Seven Instruction Lineages. Bka' babs bdun ldan* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983), 75 ff.]. See also his undated translation-cum-paraphrase of the \**Vajrasū-marga* by \*Māhasūkhavajra, \*Śāntiguṇṇa and others in [*Bka' babs bdun*

treatise deals with seven important lineages along which tantric lore and teachings had been handed down in India and Nepal, and subsequently transmitted to the Tibetan cultural area. He had completed this work in Rnam rgyal rab brtan, in 1599, when he was “close to twenty-five.” At this time, Tāranātha stood on the cusp of transitioning to become a famous and prolific scholar of truly astonishing breadth and genius, who belonged to the Jo nang pa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Rnam rgyal rab brtan is variously called a hermitage (*dben sa*) or a religious citadel (*chos rdzong*) and it was located on the grounds of Stag lung, the mother monastery of the Bka’ brgyud pa school’s Stag lung sect. Earlier, in 1573, Kun dga’ bkra shis rgyal mtshan [we will henceforth refer to him as Kun dga’ bkra shis], Stag lung’s sixteenth abbot, had embarked on a project to enlarge his monastery and Rnam rgyal rab brtan was part of this grand plan. Towards its realization, he had hired numerous Tibetan and Newar artisans and craftsmen, but it was a long drawn-out process and Rnam rgyal rab brtan was still being refurbished and refurbished in the late 1590s.

To be sure, the south Indian Buddhaguptanātha (?1520-?1600) and several other visitors from the Indian subcontinent, including Nirvāṇasrī and Purnavajra, were the main sources of inspiration and information for Tāranātha’s *Seven Instruction Lineages*.<sup>4</sup> During their stay with him, they had related orally much of the subcontinent’s religious lore to which they had been privy and this ultimately served to inform a variety of his studies, including his celebrated religious history of the Buddhism of India of 1609, for which he was to gain great fame. In late 1590, he had met and received in his hermitage of Byang chub chen po the itinerant yogi Buddhaguptanātha. The latter apparently enjoyed simplicity, for Tāranātha pointedly remarks that Buddhaguptanātha had been averse to staying with the local landed aristocracy.<sup>5</sup> He does

---

*dang ldan pa’i man ngag gi gzhung*] *Rdo rje lam bzang po, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha’i gsung ’bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 20/45, Mes po’i shul bzhag, vol. 62, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib ’jug khang (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 217-229. A similar, undated work that was indirectly composed by him consists of notes taken by his student Ye shes rgya mtsho on six such transmissions; see *Bka’ babs drug ldan gyi khrid yig ’phags yul grub pa’i zhal lung, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha’i gsung ’bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 39/45, Mes po’i shul bzhag, vol. 81, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib ’jug khang (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 102-178.

4 For much of what follows, see the first part of his autobiography that extends to the year 1604, *Rgyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa’i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa’i rtogs brjod* [*stod cha*], 124-133. Finally, for Tāranātha’s connections with various Indic travelers, see Lobsang Shastri, “Activities of Indian Paṇḍitas in Tibet from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies I. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed. H. Bleezer et al. (Brill: Leiden 2000), 136-140, and now also D. Templeman, “‘South of the Border’: Tāranātha’s Perceptions of India,” *The Tibet Journal* [*The Earth Ox Papers*] XXXIV-XXXV (2009-10) ed. R. Vitali, 231-242. And for Buddhaguptanātha, see D. Templeman, “Buddhaguptanātha: A Late Indian Siddha in Tibet,” *Tibetan Studies*, ed. H. Krasser et al., vol. II (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 955-965.

5 See his biography of Buddhaguptanātha of circa 1601 in *Grub chen buddha gupta’i rnam thar rje btsun nyid kyi zhal lung las gzan du rang rtog dri mas ma sbags pa’i yi ge yang dag pa, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha’i gsung ’bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 34/45, Mes po’i shul bzhag, vol. 76, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib ’jug khang (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 119 ff. See also *Rgyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa’i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa’i rtogs brjod* [*stod cha*], 72-74.

not divulge how long he had hosted the aged master, but he did record that he had received a very considerable number of instructions and initiations from him. Buddhaguptanātha ended up living in the south Tibetan town of Skyid grong for some three months, then went for pilgrimage to the Kathmandu Valley, and that done, left for the subcontinent proper. Tāranātha writes at the end of his narrative proper, that he was still alive and well when he was writing his master's biography: "I heard it said that he presently lives in a place near Devikoṭa." After a little less than six years, Tāranātha met a certain Nirvāṇaśrī in early October of 1596 and this yogi from India's eastern regions stayed with him for about one and half months. During this time, he was able to help Tāranātha understand some unidentified historical and doctrinal details that had remained unclear or incomplete from what Buddhaguptanātha had told him earlier.<sup>6</sup> Tāranātha adds that this visit "came to be of exceedingly great benefit" (*shin tu thogs che bar byung*).

Subsequently, two Bengali paṇḍitas, Gang ba kun dga', that is, Purṇānanda, and Byams pa kun dga', that is, Prayamānanda/Pryamānanda (*sic*)<sup>7</sup>, then paid him a visit and they had many unspecified conversations about various topics, including of course religion. Tāranātha points out, no doubt with some satisfaction, that they were quite delighted at how knowledgeable he was and also appeared to have used the term *paṇḍita* for him! In 1598, they met again, in Byang chub chen po, and conversed "day and night" for some ten days; he writes that:

de dag grub mtha' nang par 'dug kyang pha mes kyi chos rig la yang zhen che bar  
'dug cing phyi rol pa'i lha gcig gnyis bsten gyin 'dug pas dbang chos sogs ni ma  
zhus / rig pa'i gnas thams cad la shin tu mkhas par 'dug pas dogs gcod mang du  
bgyis shing bstan bcos than thun 'dra bsgyur / bha ra ta dang rā ma ya na la sogs  
pa'i lo rgyus kyang mang du thos /

Although they were of the insider [Buddhist] philosophical persuasion, they were also quite attached to the Vedic religion of their paternal ancestors, and since they relied on two unique external [non-Buddhist] deities, I did not request empowerments and religious instruction of them. Since they had quite an expertise in all the domains of knowledge, I effected multiple eliminations of doubts and translated a few tracts. I heard a great deal about the chronicles (*lo rgyus*) of the [*Mahā*]bharata, the *Rāmāyana*, etc. as well.

One result of having listened to tales from the latter two was that he had concrete visions of their main protagonists, Hanuman, as a monkey as large as the mountain at which his retreat was built, and Bhīma. Hanuman is of course one of the central characters of the *Rāmāyana* and, among many other things, is known to have moved a mountain, and the *Mahābharata*'s Bhīma was the second of the five Paṇḍava brothers, who is well-known for his strength and military prowess.

6 He also mentions them in this vein in his biography of Buddhānāthagupta where he calls them this man's spiritual brothers (*mched grogs*); see *Grub chen buddha gupta'i rnam thar rje btsun nyid kyi zhal lung las gzhan du rang rtoḡ dri mas ma sbags pa'i yi ge yang dag pa*, 123.

7 The reading "Pryamānanda" is found in the Rtag bstan phun tshogs gling xylograph of the autobiography; see *Collected Works*, vol. 1 (Leh: C. Namgyal and Tsewang Taru, 1982), 137. Whether or not either Sanskrit name translates Tibetan *byams pa kun dga'* is moot. Indeed, *pryama/ā* is a virtual ghost word and Tāranātha may very well have originally intended \*Priyānanda. Tibetan *byams pa* renders among several other Sanskrit terms the more common *maitri*.

A native of India's western regions, Purnavajra arrived at his residence of Bsam sdings around the middle of 1597.<sup>8</sup> The year before, the ruler of Rgyal mkhar rtse – his name seems to have been Nam mkha' lhun grub - and his wife gifted Tāranātha a place for meditation (*sgrub sde*) in Bsam sdings as well an estate for its maintenance. Tāranātha, who was staying there as well, was able to ask him many questions, the nature of which he, again, unfortunately does not specify. He writes in his autobiography that before the completion of the *Seven Instruction Lineages*, Kun dga' bkra shis, his beloved master and “abbot”, who had ordained him a novice and a monk, had given him the oral transmission (*lung*) of what had remained of an earlier, unfinished transmission of Phag mo gru Rdo rje rgyal po's (1110-1170) collected writings as well as the same for most of Rje Ri bo che's writings – Rje Ri bo che is to be identified as Sangs rgyas dbon Grags pa dpal (1251-1296), who founded the Stag lung monastery of Khams Ri bo che in 1276.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, young Tāranātha left for Rnam rgyal rab brtan where he also met one whom he simply calls the Sprul pa'i sku or “the Re-embodiment” – he seems to have been the great artist Sman thang pa Blo bzang rgya mtsho.<sup>10</sup>

Tāranātha was a regular visitor of Stag lung and, as we now know, wrote several important studies at or near this institution. For example, when he was staying in Rnam rgyal rab brtan, he also composed a very large, two-volume commentary on his very own versified study of a praise of the tantric deity Cakrasaṃvara.<sup>11</sup> He completed this tract on May 25/26 or June 24/25, 1597<sup>12</sup>, and registers its title immediately after what he calls his *Bka' babs bdun ldan gyi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*. Indeed, the monastery and Kun dga' bkra shis occupied special places in his life as well as in the lives of, for example, Jo nang Kun dga' grol mchog (1507-1566), Tāranātha's pre-embodiment, and those of his teachers Jo nang Kun dga' dpal bzang po (1513-1595), the erstwhile abbot of Jo nang monastery, and Byams pa lhun grub, to name but a few. Kun dga' grol mchog, too, had been a frequent visitor of Stag lung and had served in the capacity of “confessor” when Rnam rgyal bkra shis (1524-1563), the fifteenth abbot of Stag lung, was ordained a monk in 1542 and, similarly, he was also at Stag lung giving instructions

8 Inspired by Purnavajra, he wrote his versified praise of the tantric deity Cakrasaṃvara sometime between eighth and tenth day of the *sa ga* (\**vaiśākha*) month, April 24/25-16/27, of 1597; see his *Bde mchog bstod chen Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vols. 17/45, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vols. 59, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 1-30.

9 *Rgyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa'i rtogs brjod [stod cha]*, 161-2.

10 For various painters called Sprul sku Sman thang pa, see D.P. Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1996), index, 443.

11 See his *Bde mchog bstod chen gyi rang 'grel phan bde'i rgya mtsho* [Stod/Smad cha], *Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vols. 17-8/45, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vols. 59-60, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008). The versified praise is found in vol. 17/45 [59] as a preface to this work (on pp. 1-30).

12 The colophon of the text states that he completed it on the tenth day of the *snron* (*jyaiṣṭha*) luni-solar month [= month no. 5], whereas the autobiography dates its completion to the tenth day of the *sa ga* (*vaiśākha*) luni-solar month [= month no. 4]! For the latter, see *Rgyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa'i rtogs brjod [stod cha]*, 128.

to his successor Kun dga' bkra shis and had even served as his “abbot” when the latter received his lay person's and novitiate vows in 1543. There is indeed plenty of evidence to suggest that Kun dga' bkra shis had a special interest in doctrines associated with the Jo nang school, ideas that were to play such crucial roles in Tāranātha's intellectual development. Indeed, on August 23 or 24, 1582, the seven year old Tāranātha had journeyed to Chos lung Byang rtse, the institution Kun dga' grol mchog had founded near Jo nang monastery, where he received his first ordination as a novice from Kun dga' bkra shis, who had come to this institution for this purpose. This was the beginning of a relationship that was to last some twenty-three years.

It was at the age of twenty-six, some four years before Kun dga' bkra shis' passing on March 19, 1605, that Tāranātha paid his ultimate respects to his master by writing the story of his life.<sup>13</sup> In many respects, this work adds greater depth and detail to some of the narratives we encounter in the biographical study of Kun dga' bkra shis that was written by Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1571-1626), his successor and the seventeenth abbot of Stag lung, who included it in his large 1609 history of the Stag lung sect.<sup>14</sup> There is no evidence that Ngag dbang rnam rgyal used Tāranātha's earlier biography and this would explain why they differ in many places where details are concerned. Needless to say, these biographies surely deserve an in-depth study on their own terms, but this would obviously fall beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we will focus on their narratives of the invitation Altan Qayan<sup>15</sup> of the Tümed Mongols extended to him in 1576 and its aftermath. In so doing, we will take as our point of departure the much better known account of the meeting of Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543-1588) – some contemporaries called him “the supreme re-embodiment (*sprul sku*)”, the “all-knowing re-embodiment of 'Bras spungs monastery”, or simply “the re-embodiment of 'Bras spungs” - and Altan Qayan. This meeting resulted in Bsod nams rgya mtsho being given the Dalai Lama title and marked the onset of the rise of the institution of the Dalai Lama, which Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) fully consolidated during his tenure as Dalai Lama V.

The usual Tibetan source for this is found in Bsod nams rgya mtsho's biography that was written, we can be sure, without much disinterest by Dalai Lama V in 1646.<sup>16</sup> This biography

13 See *Dpal ldan bla ma'i rnam thar 'phrin las rgya mtsho rnam par rgyas pa, Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 38/45, *Mes po'i shul bzhag*, vol. 80, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 72-149.

14 See *Stag lung chos 'byung*, ed. Thar gling Byams pa tshe ring, *Gangs can rig mdzod 22* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1992), 531-555. To be noted is that Ngag dbang rnam rgyal registers Tāranātha first among Kun dga' bkra shis rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po's disciples, and refers to him as 'Jam mgon Mchog gi sprul pa'i sku [Kun dga' snying po]. This suggests that Tāranātha was already a famous scholar at this time, which is the implication of the epithet 'Jam mgon.

15 We follow his biography—see below n. 20—in designating him Qayan instead of simply Qan. The Tibetan sources that we have used for this paper call him, when using a Mongol loanword, Khan, Khān, and Gan, where only Khān might be a reflex of Qayan rather than of Qan.

16 See his *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta* (Dolanji: Tashi Dorje, 1982), 1-217 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, vol. 11 (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009), 1-160], and also Z. Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, Serie Orientale Roma XL (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 86-98, and especially the analysis in Satō Hisashi,

is itself based on several others sources that are no longer, or not yet, available to a present-day reader; these are<sup>17</sup>:

1. Sprul sku 'Phreng kha ba Dpal ldan blo gros bzang po's *Rnam thar lha'i rgyal po zhus pa'i skal ldan shing rta*, up to the year 1570.<sup>18</sup>
2. Sprul sku 'Phreng kha ba Dpal ldan blo gros bzang po's biography-in-verse up to Bsod nams rgya mtsho's fifteenth [= fourteenth] year.
3. Bsod nams ye shes dbang po's (1556-1592) itineraries (*lam yig*) in verse and prose of Bsod nams rgya mtsho's voyage to Mdo khams.
4. Mkhar nag Lo tsā ba Dpal 'byor rgya mtsho's complete biography of Bsod nams rgya mtsho.
5. Gzhu khang Rab 'byams pa Dge legs lhun grub's *Rnam thar dad pa'i go 'byed*.

Of these, only an incomplete manuscript of Mkhar nag Lo tsā ba's chronicle of the Dge lugs pa school is extant, and it includes a very brief, capsule biography of Bsod nams rgya mtsho and provides no details about the preliminaries to and the events that transpired during his stay at the Qayan's encampment.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps not entirely insignificant is the circumstance that he does not indicate pre-embodiments. A place called Mkhar nag is found in Rnga ba County in Khams, Sichuan Province, and it is quite possible that the *lo tsā ba*-translator hailed from this place. In his biography, Dalai Lama V adds that his sources did have conflicting chronologies (*lo tshigs*) of events, that he took the one given in 'Phreng kha ba's writings as his point of departure, and that he also relied upon the oral information given to him by his teachers, such as 'Khon ston Dpal 'byor lhun grub (1561-1637)<sup>20</sup>, Zhang mkhar Lo tsā ba 'Jam dpal rdo rje, and others.

In the entry for the year 1571 of the Dalai Lama V's work, "Altan Qayan" is variously written and/or designated as *al than rgyal po* and *al than chos kyi rgyal po*, the latter of which of course anticipates his "conversion" to Buddhism. And it is there related that the aging Qayan awoke to the Buddhist faith in 1571 through the influence of a certain 'Dzo dge [= Mdzod dge] A seng bla ma - we do not know the identity of this lama - though Mdzod dge is an area in what is now northern Rnga ba county [A ba xian], which itself is located in southern Amdo.<sup>21</sup> This was the

---

"Daisansedai darairama to arutanhan no kaishū no tame ni [The Meeting of the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Qan]," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 42 (1983), 79-109.

17 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 216-217 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe mying 'tshol bsdud phyogs sgrig khang, 160].

18 He was affiliated with 'Bras spungs - he calls the monastery the "divine realm (*zhing khams*) of Avalokiteśvara" - and appears to have been a disciple of Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542), who was posthumously recognized as Dalai Lama II, and the famous artist Sman bla Don grub. He wrote at least two short pieces on iconometry, an ornate *ka-'phreng* poem, and a work on technology, the *Bzo rig pa'i bstan bcos mdo rgyud gsal ba'i me long*. These were published in *Bde bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs kyi tshad kyi rab tu byed pa yid bzhin nor bu* (Leh: T. Sonam and D.L. Tashigang, 1985), 49-56, 56-58, 58-60, 61-83.

19 See his *Dga' ldan chos 'byung dpag bsam sdong po mkhas pa dgyes byed*, tbrc.org, no. W18611, 33b-35b.

20 For a brief study of this man, see J.I. Cabezón, "The Life and Lives of 'Khon ston dpal 'byor lhun grub," *The Tibet Journal [The Earth Ox Papers]* XXXIV-XXXV (2009-2010 [2010]), R. Vitali, ed., 209-230.

21 See also the relevant passages in K. Kollmar-Paulenz, *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur. Die Biographie des Altan qayan der Tümed-Mongolen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der religionspolitischen Beziehungen zwischen der Mongolei und Tibet im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert*, Asiatische Forschungen, Band 142 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 116-117, 266-267, n. 314, and J. Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*

very year in which he had also negotiated a richly rewarding peace with Ming China for the first time. Thereafter, sometime in 1574, the Qayan sent envoys to invite Bsod nams rgya mtsho, who considered the offer, but did not make definite arrangements at the time. The only envoy in this embassy to be mentioned by name was a certain minister (*blon po*) Na ga tse bo<sup>22</sup>, who does not appear in any of the other sources that we were able to use for this essay. Leaving his Dga'ldan pho brang residence in 'Bras spungs sometime in the eleventh luni-solar month of 1577, Bsod nams rgya mtsho met en route the Hor-Mongol chieftain (*dpon*) Karma dpal in the 'Dam gzhung area where they had previously met some twenty years ago in 1558<sup>23</sup>—the chieftain was no doubt given his name by a Karma Bka' brgyud pa hierarch and he thus figures, to little surprise, in *inter alia* the biographies of Rgyal tshab IV Grags pa don grub (1547-1613) and Karma pa IX Dbang phyug rdo rje (1556-1601/3).<sup>24</sup> He then in a rather leisurely fashion traveled onward until he arrived at the Qayan's encampment. The two men finally met on June 19, 1578, and the rest is relatively well known history.

Truth be told, whatever talents and charisma Bsod nams rgya mtsho may have had, it cannot really be said that these are in any way reflected by his pen, for his writings, very few as they are and collected in one volume, suggest that he was mainly keen on composing short manuals on ritual practice.<sup>25</sup> He himself does not seem to have left behind a record of his meeting with the Qayan, but his oeuvre does contain two short texts that are of marginal importance to this event. The first is a brief religious instruction to a Rgya le Chos mdzad Chos bzang 'phrin las, which he wrote in Rwa sgreng monastery while he was en route to Sog yul, "Mongolia", and the other, dated October 4, 1582, is a kind of versified obituary of Altan Qayan, which Bsod nams rgya mtsho composed when he was staying at Byams pa gling monastery in Chab mdo.<sup>26</sup> This was a bit after the fact, for the Qayan's passing appears to have taken place on January 13, 1582. Finally, he must have felt quite at home in the area. He traveled far and wide in Khams, Amdo,

---

(Leiden: Brill, 2003), 129-130, n. 204. For Mdzod dge and A Seng bla ma, see Lha mo'i ngag dbang sbyin pa, *Mdzod dge gling dkar stod kyi bzahag sdom pa'i lo rgyus srid zhi'i legs tshogs 'phel tshul bkra shis sgo mang 'byed pa'i rin chen gser gyi lde mig* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 80.

22 Ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 129, wrongly has *na gtso bo*. This man is not mentioned in Altan Qayan's biography, for which see above n. 20.

23 For this place and this Western Mongol (*hor stod*) chief, see E. Sperling, "Notes on References to 'Bri gung pa-Mongol Contact in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, vol. 2, Ihara Shōren and Yamaguchi Zuihō, eds., (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 741 ff.

24 See, for example, Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas and 'Be Lo tsā ba Tshe dbang kun khyab, *Sgrub brgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba [History of the Karma Bka' brgyud pa Sect]*, vol. 2 (New Delhi, 1972), 123, 158, 178. Karma Dpal resided well to the northeast of Lhasa in the 'Dam Ko khyim and Dkar po sgo areas.

25 See his *Gsung 'bum*, ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig dpe skrun khang, 2010).

26 *Gsung 'bum*, 353-354, 363-364. For the latter, see Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 202-203 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 149-150]. The passing of the Qayan is noted as follows: "He intuited with clarity that Altan Qayan had passed beyond the world." (*al than rgyal po 'jig rten pha rol tu gshegs pa mngon par mkhyen pas gzigs te /...*).

and what is now Inner Mongolia, and never returned or perhaps even really felt inclined to return to Central Tibet given the political situation in Central Tibet, with the Gelukpa under siege. One of his teachers in Central Tibet was Bod mkhar ba Maitri don grub (1526-1587)<sup>27</sup>, who, in 1572, had transmitted to him the Tshar tradition of the Sa skya pa “path-and-result” (*lam ’bras*) precepts that had been formulated by Bod mkhar ba’s own master Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502-1566). And Mi pham chos kyi rgya mtsho recorded in his 1596 biography of Bod mkhar ba, in an entry for the years 1586 to 1587, that the latter was visited by a series of auspicious, premonitory dreams in which Bsod nams rgya mtsho and Altan Qaγan played important parts.<sup>28</sup>

In late 1587, Bsod nams rgya mtsho was invited by the Qan of the Khar chin (< Mon. Qaračın) Mongols whom he then met at a place where, as we are told, there were still traces to be found of the old Yuan summer capital of Shang to (< Ch. Shangdu). There, in distant Inner Mongolia, he ultimately passed away on the twenty-sixth day of the *nag* (\**caitra*) month, that is, on April 22, 1588. We learn from the biography of Karma pa IX, who was present for this occasion, that funerary ceremonies were held in ’Bras spungs in 1589.<sup>29</sup>

Kun dga’ bkra shis and Bsod nams rgya mtsho did not have much to do with one another even though they moved in similar circles. Indeed the Stag lung pa abbot figures only once in the Dalai Lama V’s biography of Bsod nams rgya mtsho. There we read in an entry for the year 1582 that, earlier, when Bsod nams rgya mtsho was staying in Dga’ ldan chos ’khor gling, Kun dga’ bkra shis had paid him a visit.<sup>30</sup> The Stag lung abbot was somewhat despondent and at a loss, because things were not going very well with him and he was not having much success with his travels. But after Bsod nams rgya mtsho had publicly praised him and his Stag lung pedigree, things went much better “on account of having opened a gateway for his work” (*’phrin las kyi sgo phye bas*). It would thus appear that, at some unspecified time, Kun dga’ bkra shis had arrived at some sort of an impasse and that Bsod nams rgya mtsho was able somehow to comfort him and perhaps use whatever influence he may have had on the communities in the area. As we will see below, it may very well be that this particular meeting was noted in the relevant narrative of Kun dga’ bkra shis’ travels in Amdo and beyond in the biographies that we will discuss below.

27 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho’i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta*, 169 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying ’tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 123].

28 *Rje btsun rdo rje ’chang chen po mai tri don grub rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa dad pa’i spu long rab tu gyo ba, Lam ’bras slob bshad*, vol. 4 (Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1983-1985), 107-109. Bod mkhar ba is mentioned twice more in Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho’i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta*, 197, 208 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying ’tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 145, 154]; the first occurs in an entry for the year 1579, where we learn that he was among those individuals, including A seng Bla ma, who tried to persuade him to return to Central Tibet.

29 Si tu Paṅ chen and ’Be Lo tsā ba, *Sgrub brgyud karma kaṃ tshang brgyud pa rin po che’i rnam par thar pa rab byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, vol. 2, 201.

30 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho’i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta*, 203 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying ’tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 150]. We believe that both texts wrongly have *sngar ldan chos ’khor gling* – *sngar ldan* is indeed meaningless.

Bsod nams rgya mtsho's subsequent busy travel schedule may of course be interpreted as refractions of the politics of religion and its economic aspects. Aside from monasteries that belonged to his school of the Dge lugs pa and were built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many of the places that he visited had also been locales where his alleged precursors such as 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235-1280) and Byams chen Chos rje Shākya ye shes (1354-1436) had stayed at one time or another.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, something very similar can be observed when we examine the itinerary of Karma pa IV Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340-1383) when he journeyed to the distant Yuan court in the early 1360s, for we notice that he visited most of the places where especially his immediate predecessor Karma pa III Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339) had stayed, had taught, and had created bonds of religious affiliations.<sup>32</sup>

Dalai Lama V used two sources in support of his contention that there existed a special spiritual relationship between 'Phags pa and Byams chen Chos rje, on one hand, and Bsod nams rgya mtsho, on the other. The first was allegedly made by Paṅ chen Dge 'dun grub pa (1391-1474), himself posthumously recognized as Dalai Lama I, which Dalai Lama V had come across "in some" ('ga' zhig tu) unspecified study of his life<sup>33</sup>, and he recovered the other from Sprul sku 'Phreng kha ba's biographical sketch of Bsod nams rgya mtsho. The "unspecified study" of Dge 'dun grub's life cites "many early, reliable documents" (*sngon yig tshang khungs ma mang po*) in which it was stated that, when 'Phags pa met Qubilai Qayan, he had foretold him their future connection as one "a king who has 'gold' as his name" and himself as having the name of "made of water"; to be sure, these names point to Mongol *altan* and Tibetan *rgya mtsho*, as in Bsod nams rgya mtsho! And in the second, Dalai Lama V writes that the Sprul sku<sup>34</sup>:

...rje btsun sa skya pa chen po'i rnam 'phrul du bshad cing zhal gyis kyang bzhes  
pa yin par 'dug / 'phags pa rin po che ni glang ri thang pa dang se ston ri pa sogs  
kyi sku'i skye ba dang / sku tshe phyi ma thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgyal  
mtshan se ra byams chen chos rje sogs su 'khrungs pa'i rim pa 'dug ...

31 For the places where 'Phags pa stayed, see especially the colophons of his writings that are indicated in Ishihama Yumiko and Fukuda Yoichi, *A Study of the Grub mthaḥ of Tibetan Buddhism, vol. 4, On the Chapter on the History of Mongolian Buddhism of Thuḥu bkwan's Grub mthaḥ*, Studia Tibetica, No. 11 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1986), 52-72. For a study of Byams chen Chos rje's biography, which includes the places he had visited en route to and during his return voyage from the court of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1414), see Laba punzuo [Lhag pa phun tshogs], *Daci fawang shijia yeshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2012).

32 See, for example, the routes taken by them, including the ones of their earlier re-embodiment Karmapa II Karma Pakshi (1204/6-1283), when they traveled to China as delineated in their biographies that are contained, for example, in Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje's (1309-1364) *Deb ther dmar po*, ed. Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981), 87 ff.

33 We find nothing of the kind in Shen Weirong's excellent study of his life, *Leben und historische Bedeutung des ersten Dalai Lama dGe 'dun grub pa dpal bzang po (1391-1474). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der dGe lugs pa-Schule und der Institution der Dalai Lamas*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XLIX (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2002).

34 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 175-176 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 128-129]. See also the translation in *Yishi – sanshi dalai lama juan*, tr. Chen Qingying and Ma Lianlong (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2006), 224-225.

...had stated [ʔBsod nams rgya mtsho] to be an emanation (*rnam 'phrul*) of the great lord Sa skya pa, Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158) and this appears to have been acknowledged by him as well. The precious 'Phags pa was a re-birth (*sku'i skye ba*) of Glang ri thang pa Rdo rje seng ge (1054-1123) and Se ston Ri pa etc., and his later re-births (*sku tshe phyi ma*) appear to be a succession of such re-births (*'khrungs*) as the All-knowing Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375), Se ra Byams chen Chos rje, etc...

He goes on to say that there may indeed be some *prima facie* problems relating to the idea that Sa chen, Zhang 'Gro ba'i mgon po (1121-1193), and Mnga bdag Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192) appeared at the same time and that theirs was a re-birth sequence that did not follow from one life to another. Fortunately, a passage from scripture comes to the rescue. The Buddha himself had taught in the *Avatamsakasūtra*<sup>35</sup> that just as the single moon can reflect itself simultaneously in different pools of water, so there could also be simultaneous re-embodiments that have one single origin, in this case, Avalokiteśvara!

In contrast, the versified biography of Altan Qayan, which is the primary Mongol source for the events leading up to the meeting between him and Bsod nams rgya mtsho and the meeting itself, lists four envoys, including a certain Stag lung Nang so<sup>36</sup>, who had been sent to invite Bsod nams rgya mtsho sometime in 1574. Possibly a speaker of Central Tibetan, the Stag lung Nang so was perhaps connected in one way another with Stag lung monastery, although we cannot rule out the possibility that "Stag lung" was simply a toponym of an area in Amdo and that it would not therefore necessarily indicate such a connection with the Central Tibetan monastery. Indeed, Ngag dbang rnam rgyal nowhere mentions this office in his large history of the Stag lung tradition. The interpretation of the term *nang so* and the competence associated with this office are not easily determined. As an institution, the *nang so* appears to have had its origins during the Mongol occupation of Tibet, when, according to L. Petech, it designated something like the position of secretary in the hierarchy of the proxy government at Sa skya monastery.<sup>37</sup> Recently, Rin chen sgrol ma examined it as a title for a high, governing official as used in, but certainly not specific to, the Amdo region, but we should be aware that *nang so* can also indicate a place, an office, to which one can go.<sup>38</sup> Even though the text states that the party "went diligently and

35 Van der Kuijp thanks his student Ian MacCormack who kindly informed him of the relevant passage in the *Avatamsakasūtra*; see *Bka' 'gyur*, ed. Krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug lte gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang, vol. 35 (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006), 822.

36 See Kollmar-Paulenz, *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur. Die Biographie des Altan Qagan der Tümed-Mongolen*, 279-281, and Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 139-140, who has "1575", a confusion that is discussed by Kollmar-Paulenz.

37 See *Central Tibet and the Mongols: the Yüan Sa-Skya period of Tibetan history*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. LXV (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. 1990), 132.

38 See her "Lo rgyus dang 'brel nas mdo smad nang so'i skor rags tsam gleng ba," *Mtsho sngon mi rigs slob chen rig deb* 1 (2011), 35-49, and, more specifically for the office of the *nang so* in the Reb gong/Re skong region, her "Mdo smad reb gong rong bo nang so dang der 'brel yod kyi lo rgyus skor la gsar du dpyad pa," *Krung go'i bod rig pa* 1 (2010), 63-81. For an example of *nang so* used in the sense of an office or bureau, see Zhwa dmar IV Chos grags ye shes' (1453-1524) biography of 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481) of 1517 in *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa gzhon nu dpal gyi rnam par thar pa yon tan rin po che'i*

without delay”, we are also told that while en route the members found ample time to aid in the construction of a temple in Čabčiyal [Tib. Chab cha].<sup>39</sup> They then arrived, again “without delay”, in Central Tibet, which must have taken place in 1575. So, where was the urgency? It had taken them ten months in all to reach the Tibetan monk, which does not suggest that they really traveled as fast as we could have expected from the narrative! Upon their arrival, they were able to secure Bsod nams rgya mtsho’s agreement to make the long voyage and returned to the Qayan’s encampment in the fifth month of 1576. Thereupon, the Qayan and his relations prepared for the event and sent envoys, again including the Stag lung Nang so, back to Tibet in the eleventh month of the same year. This embassy arrived in Tibet in the sixth month of 1577 – seven months also seems to be an excessively long period of time and its veracity needs to be questioned - and the final arrangements for the meeting were settled. They then met in Čabčiyal for their famous and well known, historic meeting. According to the Qayan’s biography, they met a second time in Čabčiyal, in probably 1579. There we learn that Bsod nams rgya mtsho had recommended that the Mongol ruler take Mañjuśrī Qutuγtu as his representative while he was away.<sup>40</sup> Dalai Lama V obliquely mentions this event in an entry for the year 1579 in his biography of his predecessor, where he identifies this Qutuγtu as Stong ’khor II Yon tan rgya mtsho (1556-1587). The latter was born not far from Shigatse and from his biography, which is contained in the recently published capsule biographies of this series of re-embodiments, we learn that Bsod nams rgya mtsho had ordained him a monk in Čabčiyal’s Theg chen chos ’khor gling monastery and that he had told him to stay put as his representative for the land of the Sog po Mongols while he was away in Li thang.<sup>41</sup> Bsod nams rgya mtsho’s wherewithal that enabled him to decree that Yon tan rgya mtsho act as his stand-in resided of course precisely in the fact that the latter was his ordinand and that he had developed such extraordinary ties to the Qayan.

At first glance, the fact that the envoys listed in these two accounts do not overlap seems unremarkable. However, Tāranātha’s and Ngag dbang rnam rgyal’s biographies of Kun dga’ bkra shis reveal some details that shed an interesting light on the sources that Dalai Lama V used for his version of this narrative.<sup>42</sup> Not mentioned in the available literature is the quite striking

---

*mchog tu rgyas pa’i ljon pa*, *Collected Works*, ed. Yangs pa can dgon ris med dpe rnying myur skyob khang, vol. 1 (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009), 557.

39 For the monastery, evidently called Theg chen chos ’khor gling, that was burned by the Ming Chinese in 1591, see Kollmar-Paulenz, *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur. Die Biographie des Altan Qagan der Tümed-Mongolen*, 280, n. 401.

40 Kollmar-Paulenz, *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur. Die Biographie des Altan Qagan der Tümed-Mongolen*, 310-311, and Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 170-171.

41 See respectively, the anonymous *Stong ’khor zhabs drung ’jam pa’i dbyangs rim byon gyi ’khrungs rabs rnam thar baiḍū rya’i me long*, *Stong ’khor zla ba rgyal mtshan sku phreng rim byon gyi rnam*, ’Jigs med bsam grub, ed. (Beijing: Krung go bod rig pa’i dpe skrun khang, 2005), 155-156, and Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho’i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta*, 197 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying ’tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 146].

42 What follows is based on Tāranātha, *Dpal ldan bla ma’i rnam thar ’phrin las rgya mtsho rnam par rgyas pa*, 110-121, and Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, *Stag lung chos ’byung*, 544-546. *Dpal ldan bla ma’i*

and inexplicable fact that the author of the Qayan's biography, and the same holds for Dalai Lama V's study of Bsod nams rgya mtsho, does not breathe a word about the invitation of Kun dga' bkra shis to the Mongol ruler's residence, let alone their actual meeting and his travels in the area. The one exception is the passage to which we referred in the above. Be this as it may, Kun dga' bkra shis' biographies relate details that will bring us closer to understanding how exactly the Central Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs came into contact with the Ordos and Tümed Mongols. In the first place, they have it that Altan Qayan's envoys arrived in Stag lung in 1576 and even appear to give us the name of this Stag lung Nang so, namely, Grags pa 'od zer. In addition, the narratives of Kun dga' bkra shis' two trips to Amdo are full of details that are not readily available in other sources, and these provide us with names of places and individuals in Amdo that suggest that the contact between Central Tibetans and Mongols may well have been mediated by the Tibetan Buddhist communities of uncertain ethnicity that were present in Amdo. In the hopes of making a small contribution towards closing the gaps in our understanding of the religious exchanges between Tibetans and Mongols in the late sixteenth century, we will now briefly summarize and discuss the relevant passages from Kun dga' bkra shis' biographies.

As stated, according to both sources, the year 1576 marks the first contact between the Qayan's envoys and Stag lung monastery in Central Tibet. This could very well mean that the envoys had paid a visit to Stag lung while they were en route to 'Bras spungs for the second time towards the end of 1576. In this year, these men and a certain Grags 'od pa, that is, Grags pa 'od zer, made "inconceivable" offerings of gold, silver, silk and cotton cloth, tea, horses, mules, and camels to Kun dga' bkra shis. This Grags pa 'od zer is styled "one who offered the silk arrow" (*mda' dar 'bul dpon*), where a *mda' dar*, as B. Gerke has shown, is an important auspicious symbol.<sup>43</sup> In Amdo, the *Mda' dar 'bul dpon* is actually the title of an official who is associated with the protocol, and in charge, of inviting and hosting important individuals. In other words, then, he seems to be the counterpart of the Central Tibetan *mgron gnyer/dpon*. Apparently, Kun dga' bkra shis agreed to come to meet the Qayan at this time, but, as fate would have it, he was unwell and was thus not able to leave Central Tibet until sometime in the beginning of the fourth *hor*-Mongol month, that is, sometime around the middle of April, of 1578, but not before, as tradition and custom dictated, he had said his prayers and requested blessings from the Jo bo statue in Lhasa's Jo khang temple. In any event, he thus followed not too closely on the heels of Bsod nams rgya mtsho, who had left Tibet for Amdo just a few months before. One cannot help but wonder what might have happened had he been able to leave immediately and thus arrive at the Qayan's encampment before Bsod nams rgya mtsho! Tāranātha writes that a veritable rain of flowers and rainbows accompanied his departure, causing the Mongol escorts to be rightfully amazed. Like Bsod nams rgya mtsho, though *apparently* on a much smaller scale, Kun dga' bkra shis was met en route by successive waves of Mongol welcoming parties.

---

*rnam thar 'phrin las rgya mtsho rnam par rgyas pa*, 132-136, and *Stag lung chos 'byung*, 549-551, detail Kun dga' bkra shis' second trip to the Amdo area from 1589 to 1593. In this essay, we will make sporadic reference to it but refrain from a full discussion.

43 See her *Long Lives and Untimely Deaths: Life-Span Concepts and Longevity Practices among Tibetan in the Darjeeling Hills, India* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 265-266.

According to Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, Kun dga' bkra shis and his party forded the 'Bri chu [Yangzi River] at the Sdang Pass (*sdang la*) through a display of his magical powers (*rdzu 'phrul gyi bkod pa*). We do not know where this pass may be found and Tāranātha himself is silent on the location of their river crossing. Having received an invitation from the Mongols at Tshwa kha in 'Bri, he was met by a Mongol *rgyal po*—king—Ngag dbang rnam rgyal calls him a *dpon po*—official—by the name of A rbal (< Mon. Abai)<sup>44</sup> at a place called Chagan u su (< Mon. Čayan usu), which in Tibetan would be Dkar chu, that is, “White Water”. Tshwa kha is located slightly north of Lake Tshwa kha and to the southwest of Lake Kokonor. The two men obviously felt very comfortable with one another and entered into an intimate “patron-priest” (*mchod yon*) relationship. Bsod nams rgya mtsho had met Lord (*no yon* < Mon. *noyan*) Abai during the lunar month (*\*caitra*), sometime between April 8 and May 6, of 1578, who had also honored him with many gifts when the Tibetan hierarch visited his camp.<sup>45</sup> Both recensions of Tāranātha's work follow this detail with the phrase: *swog yul du phebs tsam nyid nas dwangs /*, which makes little sense, for *dwangs* is not a verb. If we were instead to read *drangs*, then we could interpret this phrase as sentence meaning something on the order of: “When was he about to be taken/escorted to Sog-land.” This line is missing from Ngag dbang rnam rgyal's narrative. Then, residing on the shores of Dbu'i<sup>46</sup> tshwa Lake, Kun dga' bkra shis was met by a party of the Qayan's men who were charged with escorting him to their lord's encampment. The next leg of his journey took him to the area where Abai's family lived. There he was warmly received and “the offering of things passed beyond reckoning.” Here, Ngag dbang rnam rgyal's account appears to be a bit more specific, for he writes that Kun dga' bkra shis went to Mtshal dmar where Abai's encampment (*ru thog*) was located. Later, in 1589, he was to meet Abai's wife (*a rbal dpon mo*) in Chal phyi, an area that was apparently located not far from the source of the Yellow River in the Ba yan rlang ma range, between the Skya rengs and Sngon rengs lakes<sup>47</sup> in Yul shul prefecture, as well as Abai himself, and was also able to cure one of their sons (*rgyal bu*) who

44 The sources variously give his name as A rbal, A sbal, and even A dpal. For some notes on him in the immediately accessible secondary literature, see E. Sperling, “Tibetan Buddhism, Perceived and Imagined, along the Ming-Era Sino-Tibetan Frontier,” *Buddhism between Tibet and China*, M. Kapstein, ed. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 179, n. 50, suggests that he was a nephew of a Čing Batur, who himself was a nephew of Altan Qayan. Abai is mentioned several times in Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan's (1552-1624) *Sog bzlog bgyis tshul gyi lo rgyus*, *Collected Writings*, vol. II (New Delhi, 1975), 243-244. This work also demonstrates that there was a great deal of Tibetan-Hor and Sog po interaction during the second half of the sixteenth and the first decade of the seventeenth century.

45 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 187 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe nying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 138]. On this occasion, some three hundred horsemen led by Jo rog thu tha'i ji (< Mon. Joriyru Taiji) and Ching Bā dur (< Mon. Čing Bātur/Bayatur) paid him a visit.

46 Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, *Stag lung chos 'byung*, 545 has a slightly different hydronym, namely, Dwa'u tshwa Lake, where, to be sure, *tshwa* renders “salt” and *dwa'u'i* [and *dbu'i*] are self-evidently not Tibetan.

47 For these two lakes, located at some distance to the southwest of Lake Kokonor and the source of the Yellow River, see Wang Yao, “Huanghe yuan shang dahu – zhaling, eling mingcheng weizhi kaoshi [The Upper Source of the Yellow River – Skya rengs, Sngon rengs]” *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 3 (1979), 163-168.

had been struck by a very serious but unspecified illness (*bro tshabs chen po*).<sup>48</sup> But Ngag dbang rnam rgyal relates the latter detail somewhat differently, for it was Abai and his entourage who had greeted him in Chal phyi<sup>49</sup>:

*kho de gong srog rlung gi nad drag pos thebs te sman dpyad rim gro gang gis  
kyang ma phan par yod pa bya ba khrus dang rjes gnang kha yar gnang ba tsam  
gyis gsos/*

He, the king, had been struck with a severe *srog rlung* nervous disorder prior to their meeting. No medicine or ritual had been of any benefit, but he was cured by bathing and the giving of a few blessings.

He then left for the Qayan's encampment on the shore of Gu gu no'i mtsho/Khri shog rgyal mo mtsho [= Lake Kokonor] and his arrival there was marked with numerous auspicious signs and omens that had been preceded by his appearance in the Qayan's dreams. Kun dga' bkra shis proceeded to perform what his audience considered to be miracles as well as teach the basics of Buddhism. Ngag dbang rnam rgyal adds that he implanted the Qayan with the seed of awakening (*byang chub*), who in turn reciprocated by offering him uncountable "things". At this point, 'Bum skyabs dar of the Wa shul nation, located to the southeast of the lake, invited him and paid him his respects.<sup>50</sup> The invitation seems to have been prompted by his host being troubled, since Kun dga' bkra shis' visit involved him settling a dispute (*'khrugs pa bsdums pa*). Then, responding to the invitation of the patron-priest pair of Be thu/Bed thu Qayan<sup>51</sup> of the Or rus pa/Or dhus<sup>52</sup> (< Ordos) and one Karma bla ma – the latter is styled "the great son/disciple of the person from 'Dzam thang"<sup>53</sup> - in 1579, Kun dga' bkra shis travelled due north from the

48 Tāranātha, *Dpal ldan bla ma'i rnam thar 'phrin las rgya mtsho rnam par rgyas pa*, 134.

49 Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, *Stag lung chos 'byung*, 550, where he makes no mention of Abai's wife.

50 The Wa shul tribe is located in the region of Mang ra (< Chi. Mang la chuan) where [= Ch. Jenxiang], one of Altan Qayan's nine sons, was said to reside; see H. Serruys, "Pei-lou fong-sou: Les coutumes des esclaves septentrionaux de Siao Ta-heng suivi des Tables genealogiques," *Monumenta Serica* 10 (1945), 182 n. 30a. For a detailed study of the area, see Bla nag pa Ye shes bzang po, *Mang ra'i lo rgyus* (Hong Kong: Tianma tuanshu youxian gongsi, 2001), which even includes a brief bilingual Sog-Tibetan glossary on p. 283.

51 This is no doubt Bingtu (?-1588); see also *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 194 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 143], where his name is given as Bin du. A Be thu rgyal po chin rgyal is tentatively identified as King in Sperling, "Tibetan Buddhism, Perceived and Imagined, along the Ming-Era Sino-Tibetan Frontier," 179, n. 50. In an entry for the year 1588 in the biography of Karma pa IX, Abai and Bindu are recorded to have sent the Karma pa gifts and a "golden letter" (*gser yig*), an edict of sorts; see Si tu Paṅ chen and 'Be Lo tsā ba, *Sgrub brgyud karma kaṃ tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, vol. 2, 196.

52 The reading or *dhus* is given in Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, *Stag lung chos 'byung*, 545.

53 This 'Dzam thang pa should most probably be identified as the influential 'Dzam thang Chos rje II Rgyal ba seng ge (1509-1580), who also entertained patronage connections with several Ming courts and several Sog po chieftains including Abai, Be thu (< Bingtu), and others; see his biography in Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa, *Jo nang chos 'byung ba'i sgron me*, Dbyang can seng ge, ed. (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992), 127, which is also cited in Sperling, "Tibetan Buddhism, Perceived and Imagined, along the Ming-Era Sino-Tibetan Frontier," 165.

glacial slopes (*gangs kyi mgul*) of the Rma chen spom mountain range and magically traversed an area that had not been trodden before. But he did not meet with them. Priorities are priorities. En route, he was received by the Qayan himself at a place called Chu mig ring mo. Tāranātha styles Altan Qayan a *chos kyi rgyal po*, “religious king” at this juncture of his narrative, which just may indicate a nod in the direction of recognizing that in one of the earlier meetings of the Qayan and Bsod noms rgya mtsho, the latter had given the Qayan this title.

Like Bsod noms rgya mtsho, Kun dga' bkra shis was offered a title, namely that of “De bzhin gshegs pa [\*Tathāgata] Stag lung pa chen po” and a seal of office (*ja'sa ka'o ming*) (*ja'sa* < Mon. *jasay*; *ka'o ming* < Ch. gaoming, possibly: 高名 famed or 高明 superior) and a seal of office (*tham ka* < Mon. *tamy-a*) that was made of 85 *srang* units of silver, as well as many thousands of silver pieces. The silver seal stands in interesting contrast to the seal that was made of *srang* gold that evidently accompanied the title of “Dalai Lama Vajradhara”.<sup>54</sup> The De bzhin gshegs pa title was no doubt aimed at echoing the very same title that the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-24) had given Karma pa V De bzhin gshegs pa (1384-1415) in 1407. The name in religion he was given when he received his novice vows was Dharma shrī bhadra [\*Chos dpal bzang po] and this did not change when he was ordained a fully-fledged monk.

On this occasion, Bsod noms rgya mtsho and his disciples had also invited him to their encampment where he was greeted by a large assembly. Following this important meeting, Kun dga' bkra shis proceeded to a place called the New Stag lung Pass (*stag lung la gsar*), which is said to be located in the Tsong kha area near Kokonor. In this place, which will be discussed in more detail below, he was received by three local leaders, the spelling of their names of which our sources leave something to be desired:

Tāranātha: Zi ling nang so Drangs ti lnga mchod pa

Ngag dbang nam rgyal: Zi na nang so Bra ti nang so

Both sources: Chinese governor (*mi dpon*) of Zi ling [Xining]<sup>55</sup>

We would like to suggest the possibility that some or all of these local leaders might not have been Chinese or Tibetan, but rather Monguors, for reasons which we will detail below. For the purposes of simplicity, the local non-Chinese and non-Tibetan populace will be designated by their modern name, Monguors, to accommodate the variety of their ethnic origins, mainly Mongol and Shato Turk, though there are some Chinese and Tibetans among them, and to distinguish them from the Mongols reorganized under Dayan Qayan as the Six Tümen. The Monguors had moved into this region during the Yuan period, in the wake of the destruction left by the decades of warfare that had crisscrossed this territory since the twelfth century. Having for the most part peacefully acknowledged Ming sovereignty, these Monguors were left to rule themselves, independent of taxation or interference in internal affairs by the Ming government. It seems that

54 For the title and gifts he received from the Qayan, see *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod noms rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 188, 192-193 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 138-139, 142].

55 Tāranātha, *Dpal ldan bla ma'i rnam thar 'phrin las rgya mtsho rnam par rgyas pa*, 110-121; Ngag dbang nam rgyal, *Stag lung chos 'byung*, 545-6.

the Ming dynasty's attempts to control this region, which had started with their recognition of the local leaders, the establishing of a large garrison in Xining, and the attempt to colonize with Chinese farmers had failed to yield positive results by the end of the Ming. A census of the Chinese in the region from 1573 to 1620 records only 440 civilian families and 2,560 official and military families. These figures reflect the fact that this region was merely a military outpost—one whose garrison had indeed decreased by two thirds from the beginning of the Ming.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, rather than administering this region solely through Han Chinese officials, the Ming frequently granted authority to native leaders, often through Chinese military titles bestowed on the native chieftains (*tuguan*). The only evidence of a Chinese military title that we can decipher from the Tibetan is appended to another “Chinese official” (*rgya'i mi dpon*) called a *mchan chang*, a term that probably reflects Chinese *qianzhang*, “chiliarch”. Moreover, Schram notes that in the 20th century, the title *qianzhang* was used among the Monguors to designate the highest military commander of a village. Despite the fact that the titles were often only honorary, from the perspective of the local officials, their authority was confirmed and supported by the Ming dynasty, and they were its local representatives. In fact, the local sources demonstrate that, from the beginning of the Ming, the leadership of the Monguor clans maintained a continuous rule over their subjects, which was basically uninterrupted until well into the Qing dynasty.<sup>57</sup> Thus, it is likely that these local leaders, who did consider themselves officials of the Ming dynasty, were also involved in the contact between Central Tibetans and the Ordos and Tümed Mongols that took place in their territory in the sixteenth century. For this reason, it is legitimate to wonder whether the appellation of *rgya'i mi dpon* reflects the ethnic origin of the official or merely the state from which his authority was granted.

Aside from the secular and military grants of authority, the Ming also recognized the authority of religious figures over the local populace, as represented by the title *nang so*. As indicated, the institution of the *nang so* had its origins in Yuan times, when it designated the position of secretary in the Sa skya hierarchy.<sup>58</sup> However, by Ming times this usage had changed. At the beginning of the Ming, the title of *nang so* and an accompanying grant of territory was conferred upon some eighteen lamas in the Xining area. This position consisted of “the recognition of the chieftainship of the lama who brought in the tribe, and of the heritability of that chieftainship.”<sup>59</sup> The title Zi na nang so (sometimes Ji na nang so) occurs both in the fifth Dalai Lama's biography of the third Dalai Lama and in Louis Schram's *The Monguors of Kansu*. Among the waves of envoys sent to escort Bsod nams rgya mtsho to his famous meeting with Altan Khan in 1578, one group of a hundred horseman was led by Zi na gu shri. In contrast to all the other envoys, who are generally affiliated with different Mongol tumen such as the Ordos or Tümed, this figure is distinguished as being from China.<sup>60</sup> Again, we would suggest that this description

56 Schram, I 34.

57 See Schram, I 11, 17, 22, 50, 51, 129, II 34 35. Serruys 1955, 255, 265.

58 Petech, 132.

59 Schram, II 18.

60 DL5, 187 ln. 6.

(*Rgya nag nas*) reflects an administrative territorial origin, not an ethnic one. Schram seems to suggest the Zi na (he calls them Sina), a group who submitted to the Ming in 1380 and lived 60 li north of Xining, were Monguors. In addition, the local Chinese gazetteer indicates that the lama of this group had received the title *guo shi* (Mon. *gu shri*), as is found in the third Dalai Lama's biography. Schram also discussed the survival of a "Zina nang so" after the 1723 clash with the Qing, and the *Stag lung chos 'byung* demonstrates that such a title was already attested in the late Ming.<sup>61</sup> However the origin of this title seems to date back to the Sa skya influence in this region during the Mongol imperial period. The first Zi na *dpon po* (official) was Zi na *dge bshes*, and he acquired power through Bla ma 'Phags pa and the Mongol khan Se chen (Qubilai), under whom he served. Later, the Zi na Nang so was the leading official of the Sku 'bum tsho drug (the six Sku 'bum tsho ba) communities and later he ruled these communities together with the monastery. The Zi na *dpon po* chiefs received titles and seals from the Dalai Lamas, in addition to the those received from the Ming and Qing dynasties.<sup>62</sup>

As for the Bra ti nang so, this title seems to indicate the ruler of the area of the 'Ju lag (Ch. Datong) River, north of Xining. When the Dalai Lama VI—according to a Mongol tradition that originated in the Helanshan mountains—survived his deportation from Lhasa under Qing escort in 1706 - arrived in the Dpa' ris region of northeastern Amdo, he was welcomed by the Bra ti and the Bri' gung (Ch. Zhigong) *nang so* who controlled the "thirteen meditation centres (*sgom sde*) of the six *tsho* (community divisions) of Jakrung."<sup>63</sup> The Bra ti leaders had been consistent in their support of Tibetan Buddhism in this area, as demonstrated in the early 1600s by the fact that one of the two local leaders who came up with the idea for going to central Tibet to seek support for founding the important Monguor monastery of Dgon lung was Bra sti Sgar ba Nang so Shes rab grags.<sup>64</sup> In fact, this may even be the same person who welcomed the Stag lung leader to this area.

While the *Stag lung chos 'byung* provides no further details of the interactions between Kun dga' bkra shis and these local leaders, as mentioned above, the Mongol biography of Altan Khan does mention another *nang so*, the Stag lung nang so, who played a major role in arranging the meeting between Bsod nams ryga mtsho and Altan Khan. In relation to this Stag lung nang so, we would like to explore the place name with which he is most often

61 Schram, II 18. The origin of this group's name is apparently the locality of Editsa.

62 See Hor gtsang 'jigs med, *Mdo smad lo rgyus chen mo las sde tsho'i skor glegs bam gsum pa* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 2009), 516-548.

63 See as cited in M. Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: A Study of Pemalingpa (1450-1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706)* (Simla-Delhi: Indian Institute of Advanced Study-Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), 203.

64 See Thu'u bkwan (< Ch. Tuguan) Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma's (17-18) 1775 study of Dgon lung monastery, *Dgon lung dkar chag*, 1775, p. 6. See reprint in Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma. *Chos sde chen po dgon lung byams pa gling gi dkar chag* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988). Another figure with the same place-name designation as part of his name, Bra ti Zhabs drung Bstan pa 'od zer (Zhatai xianzhuong Danpa wose) established Bkra shis lung ri bo dge 'phel ri khrod in Dpa' ris/ Tianzhu county 1679 but the tribe moved away from area in the Republican period (1911-1949) probably due to pressures from other ethnic groups. *Tianzhu zangchuan fojiao siyuan gaikuang*, 209.

associated, Stag lung la gсар, the New Stag lung Pass. The *Stag lung chos 'byung* definitely indicates that this place is in Tsong kha near Kokonor. Given the association of this site with the Zi na nang so and the Xining official, we might place it somewhere to the northeast of Xining. This place name might designate the area over which this Stag lung nang so had been granted jurisdiction from the Ming authorities, like the other *nang so* in the region. In any case, the Stag lung master of offerings apparently resided in this locale. On both occasions of Kun dga' bkra bshis' visits to Amdo (in 1579/1580 and again in 1590/1591), the Stag lung master of offerings received him at Stag lung la gсар. If this Stag lung *nang so* did receive recognition from the Ming government for territory in this region, then his residence there would explain how Altan Qayan would have come into contact with the Stag lung sect during his raid on the Kokonor area in 1573.

Although there is no further evidence that the Stag lung sect maintained a presence in Amdo at this time, Kun dga' bkra shis did visit several places that may safely be assumed to have maintained active Tibetan Buddhist communities after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty. In Pag ras (Dpa' ris) Kun dga' bkra shis visited a monastic community "from before" (sngar gyi grwa rgyun). Although the *Stag lung chos 'byung* is not specific about the origins of this community, Kun dga' bkra shis did visit a set of temples established by the Sa skya. After receiving an invitation to the palace of Göden—Guyuk Qayan's younger brother whose Yuan relations with the Sa skya are so famous—he went to see the four temples established in the four directions around Lǎ ju (< Ch. Liangzhou) by Sa skya Paṇḍita.<sup>65</sup> In addition to these temples, this text mentions offerings coming from a Karma lha kang.

Two other prominent men of the region with whom both Central Tibetan lamas met were described as officials of China (*rgya'i mi dpon*) or ethnic Chinese officials. One intriguing figure with whom both Kun dga' bkras shis and Bsod nams rgya mtsho had relations was the great official with authority over thirteen myriarchies, Gan ju du thang (< Ch. Ganzhou dutong). This is confusing because it was only in the Qing dynasty that a banner commander-in-chief was called a *dutong* 都統, and as far as we know that system had not been imposed on the region yet. This full title is given in the fifth Dalai Lama's biography of his predecessor where it is also reported that about a hundred prisoners under the jurisdiction of the *du thang* were released and ordained as monks by Bsod nams rgya mtsho. The Stag lung abbot's account of this figure, spelled Kǎ chu dus thang, who he calls a Chinese official, is extremely brief, but because he is listed as part

65 Ngag dbang rnam rgyal 1992, 546. See Bhi kshu ma sho wa ti si rya's *Dkar chag rnam dag me long*, translated into Chinese by Wangqian Duanzhi in *Zhongguo zangxue*, 1988, no. 4: 109-116; Wangqian Duanzhi and Jiang Zengli, "Saban yu Liangzhou si da fo si" *Xizang yanjiu huixun* (*Newsletter on Tibetan Studies*), 1993, 9-13; Ma ni Zhabs drung, *Lan jus sde bzi'i rten rnam kyī dkar chag dang lam yig rab gsal sgron me*, 1884, described in: *Lan jus sde bzi sogs kyī dkar chag phyogs bsgrigs* (*Liang zhou si bu shi ji tian zhu si zhi*) 1988 (original Tibetan with Chinese translation); Su Bai, "The Yuan Dynasty's Remains of the Tibetan Buddhism in the Region of Wuwei [Liangzhou], Gansu (in Chinese)," *Zangchuan fojiao siyuan kaogu* [*Archaeological Studies on Monasteries of the Tibetan Buddhism* (sic)], Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1996, 275-291; Fan Baoling and Shui Tianchang, *Kuoduan yu Saban Liangzhou huitan*, Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1997; Cairang, "Sajia pai zai Anduo Zangqu de chuanbo gaishu," *Zangxue yanjiu luncong*, vol 5. (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1993), 56-71.

of the abbot's itinerary we can locate him along the lama's route between Dpa' ris and Liangzhou. A final "Chinese" official, Gu yeng tsong chi da'i ching is mentioned in connection with Kun dga' bkra shis's second visit to A mdo. From the name Daiqing (Tib. Da'i ching) we might guess that this is actually a Mongol serving the Ming dynasty, and the title *zongqi* (Tib. *tsong chi*) means battalion commander. Although Bsod nams rgya mtsho's biography also frequently mentions Chinese officials, there is never any mention of names or further titles that could illuminate these problems.

In conclusion, Kun dga' bkra shis' biography reveals the active involvement of specific Chinese state officials with Tibetan Buddhism, and suggests that Tibetan Buddhist—specifically Stag lung—clerics may have had some (possibly long term) relationship with these figures. Furthermore, the details available in this text allow us to link these Chinese officials to some Monguor leaders of this region as well. Why were such details omitted in the fifth Dalai Lama's account? Even more significant is the absence in his account of the Stag lung role in Tibeto-Mongol religious contact. Why was the role of the Stag lung Nang so carefully avoided in the standard Dge lugs pa sources on these events?

The Stag lung sect does seem to have been on at least neutral, if not friendly, terms with the Dge lugs pa prior to the Dge lugs pa's rise to power. Indications of this are, first, Bsod nams rgya mtsho's reception by a former abbot of Stag lung in 1558<sup>66</sup> and, second, the Dge lugs pa school's request for the mediation of Stag lung in 1610, when the fourth Dalai Lama's monastery was attacked by the Gtsang king.<sup>67</sup> It seems that the Stag lung role was simply eliminated from the narrative once Dge lugs pa ascendancy was secured.

## APPENDIX

### The Travels of Dalai Lama III Bsod nams rgya mtsho: Winter of 1578-1588

This chronology of Dalai Lama III's travels and the names of the important places and individuals he met after his historic meeting with Altan Qayan for the first time on June 19, 1578, is solely based Dalai Lama V's narrative of his life.<sup>68</sup>

1578 (winter) Left for the Ordos at the invitation of Prince Bin du [= Bingtū tayiji (?-1588), a son of Altan Qayan]. Constructed a new monastery in the Ordos named Phun tshogs gzhan phan sde. And then left for the governor's (du thang (< Ch. Dutang) in Gan cu (< Ch. Ganzhou) having been invited by the Chinese governor (*rgya'i mi dpon*) who controlled "the thirteen myriarchies" of this area<sup>69</sup> and a return to Theg chen chos 'khor gling.

66 Sperling 1992, 747.

67 Snellgrove and Richardson 1995, 193.

68 Dalai Lama V, *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*, 194-210 [= ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 143-157]. See also the Chinese translation in *Yishi – sanshi dalai lama juan*, tr. Chen Qingying and Ma Lianlong (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2006), 238-248.

69 See *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 148

- 1579 Meeting with the Prince of Nying shwa (< Ch. Ningxia) from China. Travels to Li thang and met Lord Abai en route. The Wanli Emperor (r.1572-1620) His financial secretary was given a title. Appointed Chos rje Brtson 'grus bzang po as the of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal gling in Hang nge.
- 1580 Meeting with the king of 'Jang sa tham. Beginning on the twelfth day of the fifth lunar month, the construction and consecration of the monastery of Thub bstan byams chen phyogs thams cad rnam par rgyal ba'i sde. In the eleventh lunar month, he left for Dmar [= Smar] khams.
- 1581 Invited by the Chab mdo community and met Rje drung Lha dbang chos kyi rgyal mtshan. Invited to Ldan chos 'khor gling by Chos rje Lung rigs pa.
- 1582 Stayed at the Gling thang Sgron ma temple. People of Dran thang gave him offerings.
- 1583 Left for Sku 'bum and established there a new college (*bshad grwa*). Then he went on to Bya khyung brag, Ri bo Dan tig, and Mdzo mo mkhar, the earlier residence of Byams chen Chos rje.
- 1584 'Phags pa Shing kun [= Lintao] where 'Phags pa had resided. Then to Tsong kha and Pag ras and on to Mtsho kha (Qinghai) where he was honored by the official 'Kho lo che. Met Lord Da yan (< Mo. Dayan) and left for the ?residence (*sde thog*) of the Ordos governor Se chen hong tha'i ji (< Mo. Sečen Huangtaizi).
- 1585 Constructed a new monastery and built up a religious community in the Ordos and named the monastery Phun tshogs dar rgyas gling. The Ju nang (< Mong. Jinong) King, Lord of the White Tent of the forty great Sog po tribes invited him and once again he constructed a new monastery and built up a religious community. The King handed over the reign to his son and took his vows.
- 1586 Invited by King Du ring, the eldest son of Altan Qayan. Went to Mtsho sngon po [= Kökeqota]. Met Na mo tai hong thai ji [< Mo. Namudai Huangtaizi] who had come from Cha dkar (< Mo. Čahar), possibly he Namudai sečen qayan, a grandson of Altan Qayan?
- 1587 Left for the left wing of the Tūmed Mongols and officiated at the funerary ceremonies of King Du ring. Met the Khar kha King Rdo rje and U reng Khan Jo 'khor No yon. Invited by a relative of Altan Qayan who was staying at the White Stūpa. Invited by the Qan of the Qarč'in and stayed in Shangdu where he passed way on April 22, 1588.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

##### Tibetan Sources

- Ma ni Zhabs drung, *Lan jus sde bzi'i rten rnam kyī dkar chag dang lam yig rab gsal sgron me*, 1884, described in: *Lan jus sde bzhi sogs kyī dkar chag phyogs bsgrigs (Liang zhou si bu shi ji tian zhu si zhi)*. Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang. 1988.
- Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. *Bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dngos grub rgya mtsho'i shing rta*. Tashi dorjee: Dolanji, H.P. 1982.

- Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, *Stag lung chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*. Gangs can rig mdzod, vol 22, Lhasa: Bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang. 1992.
- Hor gtsang 'jigs med, *Mdo smad lo rgyus chen mo las sde tsho'i skor glegs bam gsum pa* [*The third volume of The Greater History of Amdo*], Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives. 2009.
- Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma. *Chos sde chen po dgon lung byams pa gling gi dkar chag*. Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang. 1988 [1775].
- Wangqian Duanzhi and Jiang Zengli, "Saban yu Liangzhou si da fo si," *Xizang yanjiu huixun* (*Newsletter on Tibetan Studies*). 1993: 9-13.
- Yon tan rgya mtsho. *Yul mdo smad kyi ljongs su thub bstan rin po che ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar brjod pa Deb ther rgya mtsho: a history of the spread of Buddhism in Amdo*. Delhi: A lags 'Jam dbyangs and Wa shul Skal bzang Bstan pa, 1974.

### Non-Tibetan Sources

- Ahmad, Zahiruddin, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*. Serie Orientale Roma XL, Rome; Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970.
- Aris, Michael. *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: The Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706)*. London; New York: Kegan Paul, 1989.
- Bhi kshu ma sho wa ti si rya's *Dkar chag rnam dag me long*, translated into Chinese by Wangqian Duanzhi in *Zhongguo zangxue*, 1988, no. 4: 109-116.
- Cairang, "Sajia pai zai Anduo Zangqu de chuanbo gaishu," *Zangxue yanjiu luncong*, vol 5. Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1993: 56-71.
- Fan Baoling and Shui Tianchang, *Kuoduan yu Saban Liangzhou huitan*, Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1997.
- Jackson, D.P. *A History of Tibetan Painting*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.
- Petech, Luciano. *Central Tibet and the Mongols: the Yüan Sa-Skya period of Tibetan history*. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990.
- Richardson, Hugh. "The Karma-pa Sect: A Historiographical Note." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. (October 1958): 139-164; (April 1959): 1-18.
- Rock, Joseph. *The Amnye Ma-chhen range and adjacent regions; a monographic study*. Serie Orientale Roma, vol. XII, Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1956.
- Serruys, Henry. "Pei-lou fong-sou: Les coutumes des esclaves septentrionaux de Siao Ta-heng suivi des Tables genealogiques," *Monumenta Serica* 10 (1945): 117-208.
- Serruys, Henry. "The Mongols of Kansu during the Ming." *Mélanges Chinois et bouddhiques* 10 (1955): 215-346.
- Serruys, Henry. "Early Lamaism in Mongolia." *Oriens Extremus* 10 (October 1963) 1963: 181-216.
- Schram, Louis M. J. *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier: Part I. Their Origin, History, and Social Organization*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1954.

- Schram, Louis M. J. *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier: Part II. Their Religious Life*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1957.
- Schram, Louis M. J. *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier: Part III. Records of the Monguor Clans. History of the Monguors in Huangchung and the Chronicles of the Lu Family*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1961.
- Snellgrove, David and Hugh Richardson. *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Boston & London: Shambhala, 1995.
- Sperling, Elliot. "Notes on References to 'Bri-gung-pa — Mongol Contact in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries." In *Monograph series of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies. Occasional papers; 2*, edited by Ihara Shōren and Yamaguchi Zuihō. Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992.
- Su Bai, "[The Yuan Dynasty's Remains of the Tibetan Buddhism in the Region of Wuwei (= Liangzhou), Gansu] (in Chinese)," *Zangchuan fojiao siyuan kaogu* [*Archaeological Studies on Monasteries of the Tibetan Buddhism* (sic)], Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1996: 275-291.