

THE THIRTEENTH DALAI LAMA ON WARFARE, WEAPONS, AND THE RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

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One of the recurrent themes of Professor Sperling's lectures on the different aspects of Tibetan history highlighted the existence of mechanisms for sanctioning violence in every religion, including Buddhism. Today this religion is considered the paradigm of a nonviolent and pacifist mindset, particularly in its Tibetan manifestation. Similarly, Tibet's spiritual leader, the XIV Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, symbolizes the commitment of Tibetan Buddhism to nonviolence, both on account of his Nobel Peace Prize and as a constant champion of the Tibetan cause of "true autonomy" within the People's Republic of China through *ahimsā*. However, throughout its history, even Tibetan Buddhism has not been immune from the use of violence or warfare, activities that are in conflict with the fundamental Buddhist precept of abstaining from killing any living being.¹ Moreover, these activities were both perpetrated and endorsed in various ways by the higher echelons of the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy.

One of the most well known examples of religiously sanctioned assassination in Tibet is the murder of King Glang Darma by the monk Lha lhung dPal kyi rdo rje in 842,² but a number of other episodes in virtually every century of Tibetan history have entailed inter-sectarian violence, aggression with the aim of annexing other territories, and even the targeted assassination of enemies.³ In particular, Elliot Sperling remarked on one such episode of violence in his article

1 The five precepts (Skt. *pañca-sīla*) apply to all Buddhists, including lay people, and the abstention from killing is the first of the list (the others being abstention from stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication).

2 On the justification of this episode in the eyes of Tibetan historiographers, see Meinert (2006) and Schlieter (2006).

3 Examples of inter-sectarian violence are the most numerous in Tibetan history, and they include, to name the most well known episodes, the sack and arson of the monastery of 'Bri gung by the Sa skya pa in 1268 and the wars between the dGe lugs pa and the gTsang pa sde srid in the 16th and 17th century, which culminated

entitled “‘Orientalism’ and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition”,⁴ in which he focused on the rationale employed by the V Dalai Lama to justify the elimination, perpetrated by his ally’s troops under orders from the Great Fifth himself, of enemies of his newly established government, the dGa’ ldan pho brang. In that article, Sperling showed that scholars often neglect such violent episodes of Tibetan history and instead present an image of Tibet that is consistent with the current Dalai Lama’s emphasis on nonviolence, depicting “Tibetan Buddhism to the present-day world as an eternal store of teachings on nonviolence and peace”.⁵ Contrary to this romanticized idea, Sperling proceeded to also illustrate that some Dalai Lamas, although teaching kindness and compassion, had no compunction about resorting to violent means when necessary, particularly if they deemed such measures as the lesser among evils or as a last resort to protect their religion.

In this article I would like to reprise this thread by looking at a set of four documents by the XIII Dalai Lama Thub bstan rgya mtsho (1876-1933) that memorialize four different government ordinances decreed in 1916. The first three concern the issue of three different manuals to be supplied to the bureau of the Tibetan Army: a catalogue of weapons produced in Tibet; an inventory of other variously acquired weapons, and a list of weapons obtained from the United Kingdom. The fourth ordinance, seemingly of more substance when judging it by the title, but scarce in detailed information when looking at the text itself, concerns the taxation of goods to fund the supply of weapons and uniforms for the Tibetan Army.

The significance of these texts is not in the content of the ordinances themselves, which is generic and uninformative on the particulars of their implementation, but rather in the window these documents open on the logic progression employed by the XIII Dalai Lama in order to arrive at his conclusions. In these writings it is possible to discern the XIII Dalai Lama’s considerations and methods of reasoning regarding the necessity for Tibet to arm itself, to be able to engage in self-defense, to successfully compete with foreign nations, and to implement a reliable taxation system capable of providing for an efficient military.

The XIII Dalai Lama Thub bstan rgya mtsho’s more combative stance on the necessity to defend the territorial integrity of Tibet is well known, especially through his famous political testament.⁶ However, these documents provide a rare insight into his decision-making process

in the forceful conversion and near annihilation of numerous perceived enemies of the dGe lugs pa orthodoxy, including the Bon po and the Jo nang pa sects. Aggression against other territories is most egregiously exemplified by the military campaign against Ladakh in 1679-1683, which was approved by the dGa’ ldan pho brang and commanded by a lama from bKra shis lhun po, dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang dpal bzang po. As for targeted assassinations, these were, in Tibet as everywhere else in the world, one of the most effective tools to get rid of political rivals and were used in multiple instances, likely including the occasion of the juvenile deaths of the series of Dalai Lamas from the IX to the XII, who were all probably disposed of by their regents, high dGe lugs pa hierarchs loath to lose their share of power on the coming of age of the Dalai Lama.

4 See Sperling (2001).

5 See Sperling (2001: 320).

6 This speech, given at Rwa sgreng in 1932, the year before his death, exhorted Tibetans to be wary of foreign powers and to remain united in the face of adversities. It is translated in its entirety in Bell (1987: 426-432).

on an important set of plans for the future of Tibet as a state on the verge of modernization and self-reliance. Unfortunately for the ability of Tibet to engage in self-defense, by the mid-1920s Thub bstan rgya mtsho succumbed to the pressures of ecclesiastical vested interests within the dGe lugs pa hierarchy and reneged on his support for the military.⁷ Nonetheless, these brief texts provide an insight into his reading of the world around him and of Tibet's position vis-à-vis its neighbors in a period when the Dalai Lama was still focused on the necessity to prevent, or, in the worst-case scenario, to react appropriately to foreign aggressions such as those of 1904 and 1910-1912. In addition, they illustrate an alternative avenue of dissent against the predominant brand of Buddhist modernism extolled by the current Dalai Lama, and show that Tibetans, including high lamas, have historically thought in terms of decisive action against impending danger, rather than resigning themselves to passive but virtuous acceptance of the situation.

The texts selected refer to decisions taken in 1916, the Fire-Dragon year. They are all brief, between one and two folios each, written in a terse language sometimes marred by spelling idiosyncrasies. A common trait to all these texts is the importance of precedent, i.e. of the existence of a previous similar occasion in which a certain solution was employed, thus justifying the use of the same solution in the current situation. There are two types of precedents employed in the logic of the XIII Dalai Lama. They may be categorized into "historical" and "traditional" or "customary" precedents.⁸ The former type consists of examples provided by historical figures, such as the V Dalai Lama and Gushri Khan, personages whose decisions in regard to warfare and government logistics are considered worthy of imitation. The latter type employs references to traditionally accepted sources of wisdom such as the sutras and other major Buddhist canonical texts, as well as the *Sa skya legs bshad*, the popular and standard repository of proverbial acumen in Tibet.

As it is customary, all texts open with a poetic preamble that sets the tone for what is to follow by entreating the appropriate deities. Thus, in addition to prayers to Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, it is notable that the three texts concerning the Tibetan Army's supply of weapons invoke wrathful protectors of Buddhism (Mahākāla, Heruka, Beg tse, Yama) and employ consequently fierce language, beseeching these deities' help in destroying the enemy and protecting the dGa' ldan pho brang. In the same way, the text on the use of taxation for the army's supplies invokes Vaiśravaṇa, the protector of Buddhism regarded as the deity of wealth.

7 For a detailed account of the series of junctures that spurred rivalry between the faction supporting a stronger military, headed by Tsha rong, and the faction of monks and monastic officials who saw a danger in the growth of the Tibetan Army and strongly opposed it, see Goldstein (1989: 89-138). Eventually the XIII Dalai Lama's views on the Tibetan Army became ambivalent, and fearing that this institution could pose a political threat to his own power, in 1925 he elected to weaken the Army.

8 The use of historical precedent by the XIII Dalai Lama is well documented by his request to the IX Pan chen Lama to pay one-fourth of the military expenses for the war against China during the period of the Dalai Lama's exile. This request was based on a payment to the dGa' ldan pho brang by the VII Pan chen Lama, who covered one-fourth of the expenses of the 1791 war with Nepal. As is well known, the demand for this payment, in addition to subsequent requests to increase the levies paid by Tashilhunpo, caused a major rift between the two religious leaders and the flight of the IX Pan chen Lama from Tashilhunpo and into China, an event that still has repercussions today. On this conflict see Goldstein (1989: 110-120) and especially Jagou (2004: 65-107).

Finally, all the texts mention specific events that the Dalai Lama himself experienced and that precipitated the resolution set down by the ordinance. These include the attempted subjugation of Tibet by foreign enemies (mentioned in generic terms, and thus likely referring both to the British sortie of 1904 and the Chinese invasion of 1910), the inability of the Tibetan Army to oppose them with the means at its disposal, the damage inflicted by Tibetan forces to the Chinese troops in the Water-Mouse year (1912) and the acquisition of 5,000 pieces of artillery from the British government at the conclusion of the negotiations of the Simla convention of 1914.⁹

In sum, these texts provide a useful window into the thought process of the XIII Dalai Lama at this point in time. For this reason, they are valuable in challenging the widespread perception that the Tibetan historical experience has been perpetually oriented toward a peaceful stance, and that religious hierarchs, and especially the Dalai Lamas, never compromised their religious integrity by endorsing or even considering forceful actions, including violent responses to external threats. This false assumption, common both among westerners and Tibetans, is fostered by enmeshed relationships between Tibetans and western acolytes enamored with the idea of Tibet as a repository of sacred, secret, and universal knowledge, as well as adamant hopefuls for a pacifist solution to the impasse of occupied Tibet.¹⁰ However, not only does this idea clash with historical reality, but it also contributes to stultify a more assertive Tibetan response to the current situation vis-à-vis the Chinese occupation. The passive acceptance on the part of the Tibetans of this pacifist narrative sets a counterproductive and potentially damaging precedent for the interests of Tibetan territorial integrity and independence.

TEXT 1

The first text memorializes the issue of a manual on weapons produced in Tibet, likely an inventory of sorts,¹¹ to be provided to the commanding officers at the bureau of the Tibetan Army (*bod ljongs dmag sgar spyi khyab las khung*). This is possibly the most significant of the four texts, since its treatment of the material offers more specific details, both in the introductory poetic invocation and in the narrative section providing the historical background for the ordinance. In the invocation, it is especially notable that the six-armed Mahākāla, a wrathful protector of Buddhism known for conferring supramundane powers to rulers initiated into his

9 The British government apparently sold the rifles together with half a million rounds of ammunition. See Goldstein (1989: 77).

10 On the notion that Tibetans in exile have accommodated the often-fanciful ideas of outsiders about their culture and society, see Donald Lopez (1998), who showed that Tibetans see themselves in a mirror reflecting Western imagination of Tibet and tend to fit and imitate that mirror image, consequently losing their more composite, less unitary, more contradictory, and ultimately more human, rather than super-human, identity.

11 Documents stored at the Tibetan Army headquarters included proposals and petitions approved by the XIII Dalai Lama, registers of soldiers, manuals of rules and “four thick registers of weapons and other items of military equipment deposited at Dorjeling armory”; see Wangdue (2012, vol. I: 38).

esoteric rites,¹² is petitioned with a remarkably strong prayer. This is worded in such a way that rather than inviting the deity to protect Buddhism, it asks the god to annihilate the enemy. The language includes expressions such as entreaties to “devastate the evil forces” (*log 'dren rngam*) and “leave only the names of the hosts of unsuitable demons” (*ma rung bdud sde ming gi lhag mar mdzod*), as well as a quatrain which directly requests the deity to produce “warfare with shields and machine guns piercing holes that cause crumbling into thousands of pieces and fragments, entangling the bodies of the enemy from far away” (*phas rgol lus kyi 'khri shing rgyang ma nas / dum bu tshal pa stong du lung 'gyur ba'i / 'bigs byed me yi 'phrul 'khor go cha'i mtshon*). Such directly vehement and graphic expressions are not of the kind that is usually associated with a Dalai Lama today, but they are strong testimonials to the full ability of Tibetan Buddhism to endorse violence when deemed necessary, an ability that the current trend toward Buddhist modernism and its universal values preferred by the XIV Dalai Lama has restricted, contributing to the creation of a Tibetan identity matching the image created by western fantasy, as shown in Donald Lopez’s terse analysis.¹³ However, this image is not faithful to the reality of Tibet as a country inhabited by people subject to the same desires, aspirations, flaws, and impulses as the rest of humanity. The final stanza of the poetic invocation expresses the XIII Dalai Lama’s conviction that when the ability of Tibet to produce its own weapons will be known to its enemies, it will contribute to their defeat by inducing fear, presumably driven by an awareness of Tibet’s superiority.¹⁴ The direct wording of the invocation is matched by an equally straightforward narrative section, which provides a historical background to the situation that rendered the ordinance necessary. This core section of the text starts with the statement that the administration of the dGa’ ldan pho brang is “the main essence of service” (*srid zhu bsgrub bya'i don gyi gtso bo*) and proceeds to prove it by presenting a condensed history of military governance in Tibet from the time of the V Dalai Lama to the period of writing. The V Dalai Lama is portrayed as an example to emulate, and his “pursuing the pinnacle of cyclic existence by hoisting the white silk military banner” (*ru mtshon dar dkar 'phyar ba*

12 On Mahākāla and the historical consequences of the belief that initiation into his rites bestowed powers that could be used toward political goals, see Franke (1981) and Sperling (1991, 1994 and 2004).

13 See n. 10 above.

14 The program to produce weapons directly in Tibet had to be implemented when it became clear that the British government, considered as an ally by the Dalai Lama after his exile in India in the years 1910-1912, was opposed to selling weapons to Tibet. In 1915 Zla bzang dgra 'dul Tsha rong, the commander in chief of the Tibetan Army and a protégé of the Dalai Lama, asked Charles Bell, the British Political Officer in Sikkim, for a supply of machine guns and for the loan of three or four mechanics who could teach Tibetans how to build their own ammunition. In spite of Bell’s support for these requests, London instructed the government of India to refuse to offer guns for purchase. As a consequence of this refusal, Tsha rong then attempted to buy older model guns through private Calcutta gunsmiths, but even this attempt met with the disapproval of the government in Delhi. Tibet continued to press, unsuccessfully, for Britain to sell them more weapons, and it finally had to resort to building its own. A factory was established at Grib, just to the south of the gTsang po. On the history of this factory see Wangdue (2012, vol. I: 46). On the numerous attempts by Tsha rong and the Dalai Lama to purchase British weapons see Goldstein (1989: 77-83) and Bell (1996: 174-175 and 1987: 144). Charles Bell finally convinced the British government to sell more weapons and ammunitions to the Tibetans only in 1921, and a total of three shipments of such materials were sent to Tibet between 1921 and 1931. See Goldstein (1989: 120).

srid rtser bsnyegs) is not seen as detrimental, but rather as commendable. His willingness to “employ warfare with machinery, artillery fire and the arrows of skilled archers” (*dpag chen mda’ dang ’phrul sgyogs me yi mtshon*) is mentioned not as a problematic intention from a Buddhist viewpoint, but rather as a patriotically emboldening stance. As in the poetic section, the use of fierce language directly and graphically describing violent acts, and at the same time inciting to commit them, is remarkable, and includes expressions such as an incitement to “tear out the heart of the enemy from its casing to the throat” (*dgra snying shubs nas lkog mar thon*).

The chronological narrative proceeds with the mention of Gushri Khan and his role in chasing away the foes of the Dalai Lama’s government, a function that is also viewed with a benevolent eye, as it was responsible for introducing “the dominion of whichever omniscient Padmapani (i.e. Dalai Lama) and the benefits of self-government” on Tibet (*rang srid longs spyod dang bcas pa kun mkhyen phyag na pad mo gang nyid kyi chab ’og tu btsud pa’i skal bzang rmad byung gi dpal la sbyor par mdzad*). The XIII Dalai Lama then nonchalantly explains that the main reason for waging war in the past was to conquer whatever may be needed, and lists the sets of weapons and other supplies used for military operations of the dGa’ ldan pho brang, and stored in the armory called rDo rje gling,¹⁵ at the base of the Potala. These materials, including rather antiquated coats of mail, barding for horses, and lances, though unfit for modern warfare were deposited there and kept in use for a long time, as is demonstrated by several early 20th century photographs of Tibetan army soldiers in full medieval garb.¹⁶

The list of weapons stored in the armory by his predecessors leads the Dalai Lama to discuss the more recent situation, when foreign armies, having “greater experience and deception” (*sbyangs rtsal dran ’phrul che ba*) attempted to subjugate Tibet. Since the Tibetan army proved unable to successfully rival them with the weapons at its disposal, the Dalai Lama, inspired by a quatrain by Sa skya pandita on the importance of striving for perfection by practicing, suggests the creation of a factory capable to produce weapons directly in Tibet. The Dalai Lama assigns supervision of this factory to *Dā lama* bsTan ’dzin chos grags¹⁷ and Bhrum pa sras Tshe brtan dbang phyug,¹⁸ who employed knowledge acquired from masters of the craft and augmented by

15 A description of the rDo rje gling armory in Shol, which was still in use in the mid-20th century, may be found in Wangdue (2012, vol. I: 47).

16 It is to be noted that one of the reasons for keeping these ancient armors and weapons was that they were used at least once a year during the celebration of the Tibetan New Year or sMon lam chen mo, where soldiers would parade through Lhasa wearing traditional uniforms and weapons. See Wangdue (2012, vol. I: 15-16). Manufacturing details of these armor, and some photographs illustrating their use during pre-1951 Lhasa festivals, can be found in La Rocca (1999).

17 *Dā lama* is a title reserved for high monastic officials, and especially conferred to the most senior *drung yig chen mo* in the ecclesiastic office. This official does not appear in the British files of the so-called “Who’s Who in Tibet” compiled between 1907 and 1950. He is not the same person as bKa’ lon bsTan ’dzin chos grags, who was appointed to office by the Manchu ambans during the 1910-1912 occupation of Lhasa and who was disgraced and imprisoned by Zla bzang dgra ’dul Tsha rong in 1912. However, because he is mentioned in conjunction with ’Bhrum pa sras Tshe brtan dbang phyug, it seems possible he was the Joint Director of the Lhasa Arsenal together with him.

18 According to Petech (1973: 124-125) he was born ca. 1880 and appointed to government service in 1910. He belonged to the most prominent family of Dwags po, the Bhrum pa. According to the British

the use of modern foreign techniques for the production of new weapons that are “wondrous, especially ingenious and excellent” (*ngo mtshar khyad 'phrul phul byung gi mtshon cha*). Notwithstanding the Dalai Lama’s apparent enthusiasm for the project, evidenced by the use of these adjectives, the effort to produce weapons in Tibet did not prove as successful as Thub bstan rgya mtsho would have hoped. The bullets made in Tibet did not work well and actually turned themselves 90° during their trajectory, thus hitting flat on their target.¹⁹ The British gunsmiths consulted to evaluate the reasons for this failure apparently listed twenty-seven different manufacturing mistakes that affected the trajectory of the bullets. The road towards Tibet’s armament was still in its infancy, but the interest of the Dalai Lama in the matter is palpable in this text, as well as the absence, in his logical argument, of any qualms regarding his government’s use and endorsement of violence.

TEXT 2

Similarly to the first text, the second preamble (*'go brjod*) memorializes the production of an inventory of weapons. In this case, the arms catalogued were modern, automatic, and likely of Russian, Chinese or Japanese manufacture, since the text indicates that they were “produced mechanically by craftsmen of the four corners” (*mtha 'bzhi 'i bzo pos 'phrul stobs*). These weapons had been acquired through various means. Some were undoubtedly purchased by Tibetan officials, since apparently there was a fertile arms market in Tibet at the time and, according to Charles Bell, it was not unusual to see even Chinese soldiers and officials selling guns and munitions to the Tibetans. Moreover, it is known that Khri smon Nor bu dbang rgyal and Byams pa bstan dar bKa' blon, following classified orders received from the exiled Dalai Lama, arranged for local merchants to secretly buy weapons for them.²⁰ However, from this text it is apparent that

files of the “Who’s Who in Tibet” he was: “Master of the Horse (Chhik-pön Chhem-po) to the Dalai Lama and Joint Director of the Lhasa Arsenal” (1915: 20 and 1920: 11). I am grateful to Frank Drauschke for making this information available to me in advance of publication of his biographical dictionary of Tibetan officials in the first half of the 20th century.

19 Bell briefly mentions this in his biography of the XIII Dalai Lama (1987: 236-237). Also, according to bSam pho bsTan 'dzin don grub, interviewed by M.C. Goldstein in 1981, “As for the guns they made, the shape was kind of the same as the 303 English carbine, but when they shot them, they didn’t work well. Instead of the point of the bullets hitting the target, in some cases the side of the bullets hit the target. While making the guns, a 303 English carbine and some bullets were sent to India to the British to show to the gun factory. They explained the problem we had saying, ‘This is the gun we are able to make in Tibet and these are the bullets that we have been able to make. Please advise us what is wrong, what mistakes we have made and tell us what advise (sic).’ That was sent to India for expert opinion from the British because at that time, Tibet had a good relation with the British. The British replied to the Tibetan government saying, ‘There are twenty-seven faults in the manufacturing of your guns. So it would be better if you stop producing the gun’. They simply said there were twenty-seven and did not mention this and this. So the government stopped making the 303 English carbine.”

See the website of the Tibetan Oral History Archive Project, Interview H0205: with Sambo, Tenzin Dondrub, part 2. <http://tibetoralhistoryarchive.org/resource.xqy?q=English%20carbine&uri=%2F1scoll%2Ftohap%2Floc.natlib.tohap.H0205.xml&index=1&segment=seg02>

20 See Bell, (1996: 193); Shakabpa (1984: 239).

some other weapons were gained as war loot during the clashes that erupted between Tibetans and the Chinese army in the wake of the collapse of the Manchu empire in October 1911.²¹

The Dalai Lama seems to have approved of this action, viewing the confiscation as “a sign of bravery” (*dpa’rtags*) of the Tibetan forces, which he likened, using a cliché formula, to an “army of gods” (*lha dmag*). In the same vein, he compared the Chinese soldiers to “black demons” (*nag po bdud*) and described their actions during the battles of the Water-Mouse year (1912) with the customary expressions indicating the destruction of the doctrine, doctrine holders and dominion. While this narrative abounds in standard Buddhist rhetoric, it lacks any kind of information on a tally of the damages inflicted.

In fact, rather than on historical data, the attention of the Dalai Lama in this preamble seems to be focused on showing that the efforts of the Chinese soldiers that invaded Tibet in the period between 1910 and 1912 were doomed from the start, because the karmic retribution of their actions caught up with them even before they could conclude them. The core of the text, both in the poetic introduction and in the narrative section, is devoted to asserting that the Chinese brought “self-destruction” (*rang nyid phung ba*) upon themselves from the moment in which they decided to engage “as an adversary with a mischievous mind”, (*ma rung yid kyis rgol bar*), and that their heinous actions will ripen into karmic results in this very lifetime. The Dalai Lama’s words of disapproval for the enemy also refer to the Chinese army’s “supporters” (*rjes brang*), likely to be identified with the monks of bsTan rgyas gling and of the gsal gling college of ’Bras spung, that famously sided with the Chinese during those years.²²

The overall style of this text is not as belligerent as the first one. The Dalai Lama seems to rejoice in the victory of the Tibetan forces and in the humiliation of the Chinese army, that “accepted defeat and surrendered sharp blades as weapons” (*lag cha’i mtshon rnon dor nas pham blangs*), and simply invites the wrathful guardian Beg tse, god of war and protector of the dGe lugs pa, to defend the government of the dGa’ ldan pho brang.

Finally, the XIII Dalai Lama provides in the text a partial list of the weapons²³ confiscated by the Tibetans. The list is noteworthy in view of the fact that it provides a small sample of the variety of neologisms that were being created in the Tibetan language in order to identify the various new types of foreign automatic weapons. These include words of possible foreign derivation, such as *me-mda’ U-u-shang*, *cu’u shang*, *ru shang*, *hri rtse lan gru*, and *’ber btang*. Responsibility for the compilation of an exact inventory of these rifles, to be kept at the Tibetan Army’s headquarters, rested with the chief commanding officer of the Tibetan Army, Tsha rong.²⁴

21 A photograph of a mountain gun captured from the Chinese at the battle of Jyekundo in 1916 is shown in Tsarong (2000: picture 9).

22 See Goldstein (1989: 63-64), Bell (1996: 120-121 and 1987: 347).

23 Apparently weapons of Russian and Japanese manufacture were fairly easy to find on the Asian markets, and could be purchased at a reasonable price; for example see Bell (1996: 221) and Shakabpa (1984: 239).

24 Though this figure is well known, it might be useful to provide a brief summary of his life here. His given name was gNang gang, and he was born in 1884 from a peasant family in Phan po. As a young

TEXT 3

The third preamble introduces the catalogue of weapons supplied by the British. It is the shortest and most succinctly worded of the three introductions to weapons inventories. It starts with prayers to Mañjuśrī and Yama, and enjoins the Dalai Lama himself, who is designated with a series of poetic and honorific attributes (*zhabs sen, zla ba gsar, phyi mtha'i yul skyong rje bo chen po*), to illustrate the best among the weapons (*mtshon cha'i nang nas ches rab mtshon*). Of the three introductions to weapons inventories, it is the one providing the least historical documentation. It includes only a single reference to the Simla convention (*rgya bod zhi ching*), and gives the names of the two well-known Tibetan officials appointed to represent Tibet there, bShad sgra dPal 'byor rdo rje and Khri smon pa Nor bu dbang rgyal. The purchase of 5000 automatic firearms from the British, which occurred at the conclusion of the convention, is also mentioned, and it is likely that these weapons were included in the catalogue in question.

It is only possible to speculate as to the reasons why Tibetan-made weapons, British weapons and weapons made in other foreign countries were stored and catalogued separately by the Tibetan administration. One reason that may be suggested is that the sorting was done according to quality, reliability, and modernity of the weapons. In fact, the bloodbath of Tibetan troops, inadequately armed with antiquated muskets at sGu ru on March 31, 1904, must have given a fairly adequate measure of the lethal power of British firearms.²⁵ On the contrary, Tibetan weapons, which included gingalls and matchlocks, as well as the aforementioned traditional swords, etc., performed poorly, and other foreign-made weapons seem to have been obsolete

boy he became the pupil of a monk official of the Tibetan government who was also an attendant of the Dalai Lama, and at the age of twelve he became part of the Dalai Lama's personal domestic staff. In 1904 he followed the Dalai Lama in his flight to Mongolia. He eventually became a favorite of the Dalai Lama, and was known as *spyang gsal* gNang gang (Bell consistently refers to him as "Clear Eye"). In 1910, when the Dalai Lama was fleeing Lhasa toward India with Chinese cavalymen in pursuit, he succeeded in holding the Chinese troops at ICags zam for two days with a small contingent, allowing the Dalai Lama to arrive safely at the Indian border. In 1912, on the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa, he was made senior commander in chief of the Tibetan Army. Soon after, he married both the widow and the daughter of the Tsha rong *bka'blon* he had put to death for collaboration with the Chinese, and acquired the Tsha rong family name. Later he was also charged with the responsibility of Mint Master and of *bka'blon*. In 1920, his proposal to increase the size of the army from 5,000 to 15,000 troops encountered open hostility from the less progressive government officials and especially from the three monastic seats of bKra shis lhun po, Se ra and dGa'ldan. The situation of tension and instability in Lhasa in those days is well described in Goldstein (1989: 94-104). Tsha rong, aware of the opposition to his ideas, attempted repeatedly to resign from all three of his posts, but without success. In 1925, his decision to amputate the leg of one of his soldiers as punishment for having murdered a policeman, led to his downfall. He was demoted from his role as *bka'blon* and never really regained his political power. A full English biography of his, written by his son, is in Tsarong (2000).

25 British soldiers in sGu ru were armed with Maxim guns, at the time the most advanced type of automatic rifle. According to colonel Younghusband, during the skirmish, which was over "in a few minutes", the British "only fired thirteen rounds per man" (1910: 176-179). Still, at the end of the confrontation there were hundreds of fatalities among the Tibetans and only a few among the British. The figures for the casualties of the battle at sGu ru vary widely, from "at least 300 Tibetans" in Richardson (1984: 86), to "over 500", as reported by Tibetan government records viewed by Shakabpa (1984: 213), and "nearly 500" according to a report the British telegraphed to the Adjutant General in India (*ibid.*). What is certain is that the number of Tibetan casualties was disproportionately higher than the British, testifying to the chilling power of the new weapons, unheard of in Tibet.

or possibly of inferior quality and reliability.²⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that British guns were seen as the superior standard in weaponry, and that, as a consequence, they were stored and catalogued separately from the others.

From the indications provided in the preamble, it seems that the catalogue itself classified the British-supplied armament depending on characteristics such as their price and size, as well as by providing descriptions of each different sample. The astonished appreciation of the XIII Dalai Lama for these British-made arms is evident in the description of their power and incalculable worth: “one artillery machine of meteoric iron, to which cannot be applied a measure of comparable value, can shoot many rounds simultaneously” (*gnam lcags sgyogs me'i 'phrul 'khor gcig gis skad mdel mang po gcig car du 'byin par nus pa zhe mtshungs rin thang gzhah gyis mi spyod pa*).

Notwithstanding the scarce amount of hard historical data, this text is useful as an illustration of the Dalai Lama's view on the chronological trajectory of Tibet vis-à-vis its neighbors. Part of this trajectory is highly predictable, illustrating a glorious past in the period when Buddhism was at its apex and a decline in recent times. The fading of Buddhism is amplified by the foreigners' ways, which are seen with suspicion and considered responsible for turning people, including important political figures, away from it (*sa 'dzin pa'i rje blon rnams kyang chos la dad snang nub pa'i phyi rgya'i lugs 'dzin*).

However, the text makes clear that the XIII Dalai Lama thought that his efforts to disseminate the Buddhist message had contributed to curtailing the loss of traditional religious values. Specifically, he believed that at the conclusion of the Simla convention the British envoys had offered political and economic help to Tibet, including the 5,000 automatic weapons, on account of their attraction to the morals and values of Buddhism. The XIII Dalai Lama thought that it was ultimately Buddhism, and specifically the success of his own preaching efforts, that turned the British into sympathetic counterparts.

In one last note about this preamble, it should be mentioned that it proved to be the hardest to understand, possibly because of its extremely condensed language. The translation below represents my best attempt at the moment, but it is by no means certain, and certainly not elegant. Hopefully other interested scholars will be able to clarify and disentangle some of the thorniest passages.

TEXT 4

The fourth text varies slightly from the preceding ones because its stated intent is to introduce a manual establishing a change in the taxation system. However, since the reason to introduce the new levy structure was to create sufficient revenue to supply the army with weapons and uniforms, the subject of this preamble is pertinent to the former ones. Moreover, a number of discourses commenced in the first three texts are continued and expanded here. They include thoughts on the role of Tibet among its neighbors both in the past and at the time of writing, on the function of Buddhism in helping Tibet place itself in a new position as country engaged in “current affairs”,

²⁶ For example, the British at sGu ru seized two breechloaders of Russian make. See Shakabpa (1984: 213).

and on war in general. As for details of the inner workings of the new taxation system, none are to be found here. These, presumably, were contained in the booklet itself, that was composed by Tsha rong and entitled: “The treasury of the four classes, source of every wish and granting all desires”. As the commander in chief of the Tibetan Army, Tsha rong would have been well positioned to indicate how much extra revenue was needed by the overhauled Tibetan military he envisaged.

In lieu of practical details on the implementation of the new tax system, this preamble justifies the decision to execute such changes by referring to a variety of quotations from important Buddhist texts, such as the *Abhidharmakoṣa*, the *Puṇḍarīka* sutras, the *bKa' gdam glegs bam*, the *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra* and the *Prajñāparāmitā* in one thousand lines. The selections from these texts are used in two ways. On one hand they illustrate how Buddhism was mainly responsible for the historical influence Tibet exercised on its neighbors, and on the other they provide authoritative advice and practical examples of how the Tibetan government should operate vis-à-vis its enemies in the present situation.

Concerning Tibet's historical influence, the narrative outlined here asserts that the Dharma flourished in Tibet and spread to neighboring countries thanks to the compassion of Avalokiteśvara. The trajectory of Tibetan history is illustrated as a continuous stream of Buddhist influence from Tibet onto the countries along its borders, countries that paid homage to Tibet's rulers in return for partaking in Buddhist teachings. As the embodiment of Avalokiteśvara, the XIII Dalai Lama thought of himself as successfully renewing the protection of that bodhisattva on Tibetan plateau. Moreover, he saw himself as incarnating a golden *cakravartin*, (*chos srid gser gyi rtsibs stong 'bar ba phyag mtshan du bzhes pa*), the highest form of universal ruler, whose enemies spontaneously surrender to him (*mtha' bzhi'i rgol ngan rje 'bangs kyi mgo bo ngang gis smad par gyur*).²⁷

In hindsight this seems an overestimation, possibly driven by the fact that in 1916/17 Tibetan forces, also partially aided by the chaotic situation in China, were reconquering territories lost to the Chinese in Khams.²⁸ In addition, the British appeared to have turned a favorable eye on Tibet and were not considered to represent a danger.²⁹ Possibly prematurely emboldened by the Tibetan Army's recent successes, the Dalai Lama sets up to conclude his discourse with a series of quotations exhorting the Tibetan Army and Tibetans in general to gather their courage, sharpen their skills and train “to rid oneself of physical and mental fatigue” (*lus sems ngal ba ring*

27 According to the *Abhidharmakoṣa*, depending on the extent of the power and influence they wield over nonbelievers, there are four types of universal rulers. The highest one, or golden *cakravartin*, easily triumphs over non-believing rulers, who plead with him to govern their districts. The silver *cakravartin* begins a military advance against them, but receives full surrender before his attack. The *cakravartin* by the copper wheel also advances towards the nonbelievers, who prepare to defend themselves, but still submit to him before coming to war. Finally, the iron *cakravartin* is victorious over the nonbelievers only after having fought them. Interestingly, none of these *cakravartin* has to ever resort to killing. See L. De La Vallée Poussin (1926: 202).

28 See Goldstein (1989: 82-83), Tsarong (2000: 53).

29 The British had provided multiple and ample demonstrations of the fact that they were not interested in a physical occupation of the Tibetan territories. See, for example, Bell (1987: 114, 143-144 and 156). Also, in Text 3 above, the Dalai Lama explicitly describes Tibet's foreign counterparts at Simla as having turned toward “the virtuous direction” of Buddhism.

spang gi rtsal sbyong) in order to damage the enemy. He confidently asserts that in addition to the new, modern weapons, it is necessary that the Tibetans' general approach be geared toward courage and strength in order to fight foreign enemies. At this point in 1916, the XIII Dalai Lama's stance on Tibet's self-defense was still strong and confident.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

These four preambles provide a glimpse of the historical outlook of the Dalai Lama on the course of events that precipitated the situation in Tibet during his lifetime. He surveys Tibetan history from the origins of his government to the most recent events, showing admiration for the other strong Dalai Lama in Tibet, the Fifth, and evaluating his own efforts as a continuation of what the Great Fifth had started (text 1). However, he also illustrates a trajectory of decline in Tibetan history, a decline that he believes can be reversed by acting as a *cakravartin* (text 4) and by implementing reforms such as the ones introduced in these four texts. In fact, he views the meeting of British officials with Tibetan representatives at the Simla convention of 1914 as the first sign that he had already begun to stem such decline. These texts also show a certain admiring astonishment of the XIII Dalai Lama towards the new techniques in weaponry, as well as his sense of urgency in modernizing and equipping the Tibetan army. In addition, they show the decision-making process of the XIII Dalai Lama in the face of an adverse situation.

More importantly, a combined analysis of these four texts illustrates that the idea of equipping an army, fabricating weapons, excising taxes in order to finance the military, and ultimately waging war in order to defend the territorial integrity of Tibet and its religion was not problematic for the XIII Dalai Lama. On the contrary, he employed several major tenets of Buddhism, such as the law of Karma and the concept of *cakravartin*, to build and support his case.³⁰ Moreover, his invocations to wrathful guardian deities are emblematic of an established mechanism for protection from, and suppression of, the enemy. The existence of such a mechanism is not a new discovery, as there are multiple and well-known historical examples of its use, including the subjugation of local deities opposed to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet by Padmasambhava in the 8th century, and the invocation of Mahākāla as a powerful ally in battle.³¹ Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that such a mechanism, and the use of violence that it entails, was wholly unquestioned and constituted the natural reaction of the Dalai Lama to aggression from his neighbors, showing that Buddhism and violence are not, as it is often assumed today, two distinct and completely irreconcilable notions.³²

30 On the different Buddhist rationales that may be employed to justify war, see Demieville (2010: 38-43). Primary among these is the notion, also employed by the XIII Dalai Lama, that the Dharma should be protected from its enemies. On the discourses employed by the V Dalai Lama to justify war, see also Maher (2010).

31 On the invocations and rituals dedicated to Mahākāla during battles between the Tangut and the Mongols, see Sperling (2004, especially 10 and 16-19). On devotion to Mahākāla at the Yuan court and the employment of his powers to serve Mongol troops see also Sperling (1991 and 1994).

32 A number of viewpoints on the question of Buddhism and violence and the related issue of Buddhism and warfare are discussed in Zimmermann (2006) and Jerryson and Juergensmeyer (2010).

By attempting to show that “values and policies practiced by the Dalai Lamas cannot be wholly separated from their contemporary and historical milieu”,³³ it is hoped that this article may contribute to demystifying the current, highly romanticized, but fashionable view of Tibet, which asserts that the introduction of Buddhism on the plateau transformed Tibet from a country where warfare, prevarication and suffering were paramount to a “peaceful, colorful, cheerful realm of pleasant and meaningful living”.³⁴

The idea that Tibetans are pacifists just by virtue of being Buddhists has now become the common perception worldwide, but it does not solely reflect Tibet’s historical experience. Ultimately, the myth of Tibetan ultra-pacifism is not a Buddhist or even Tibetan Buddhist creation, but rather a modern invention, the fruit of the union of a universalistic Buddhist message and a penchant for distortion of Tibetan history in order to fit imaginary Western fantasies about Tibet.³⁵ Familiarization with the realities of their historical past would give Tibetans other options to confront the challenges they face today.

TEXT 1³⁶

*//me 'brug bod ljongs dmag sgar spyi khyab las khung³⁷ gi bod bzos
'khrul mda'i debs³⁸ kyi 'go brjod dag/ /*

Ohm swa sti/ blo

chen rgyal kun yab gcig smra ba'i lha / bzang po'i bskal par lung rtogs dri med
bstan / 'dzin mkhas snyan pa'i grags pas gsum khyab / 'jam dpal snying po'i zhabs
sen gtsug na bsnyen /zab gsal 'gyur med mi

bskyod rdo rje'i gtso / rigs lnga yab yum sems dpa' khro bo'i tshogs / lhan skyes
rab spangs gsang 'dus dkyil 'khor lhas / mchog thun dngos grub char chen deng
'dir bobs / thugs rje'i sgyu 'phrul sgeg cing

dpa' ba'i gzugs / ha ha'i gad bryangs³⁹ drag pos log 'dren rngams⁴⁰ // myur
mdzad mgon pos rnam bzhi'i 'phrin las khyis / ma rung bdud sde ming gi lhag mar
mdzod / phas rgol lus kyi 'khri shing rgyang ma nas / dum

33 See Sperling (2001:327).

34 Robert Thurman, as quoted in D. Maher (2010: 89, n.3).

35 On western fantasies about Tibet and the tendency of Tibetans in exile to accommodate them, see Lopez (1998, especially pp.183-187 and 200-201).

36 The text begins on p.699 of volume 4 of Lokesh Chandra's edition of the *Collected Works of Dalai Lama XIII*. Although the set is fairly easy to find, the quality of the print makes it hard to read, and this is the reason why a transliteration of the texts is provided here. The title of each text is given in italics; uncertain readings are followed by a question mark; spelling clarifications are given in footnote whenever possible. Underlined words represent instances in which Tibetan words are marked with a circle.

37 Read: las khungs.

38 Read: deb. This word is consistently spelled “debs” throughout the four texts.

39 Read: gad rgyangs.

40 Read: rngam.

bu tshal pa stong du lhung 'gyur ba'i / /'bigs byed me yi 'phrul 'khor go cha'i
mtshon // sngon med rig pa'i rtsal gyi shugs las thon / da ni bskal pa'i rlung dang
'grogs pa'i mes // sog ma'i phung po bsreg par sla ba bzhin //

'jigs rung g.yul gyi cha lag gsar bskrun pa'i / gtam tsam gyis kyang dgra sde'i
tsi Tata 'gas // zhes bstod phyag gis dge legs bye ba'i 'jug sgo yangs por phye ste
/ de yang rgyal thabs 'phrin las rnam bzhis / gnam

bskos dga' ba brgya ldan pa'i lugs zung chab srid dbu rmog gi gdugs dkar btsan
po sa gsum gyi bla na mngon par 'degs pa ni / sri zhu⁴¹ bsgrub bya'i don gyi gtsa
bor song gshis / kun mkhyen lnga pa chen po kyang

[p.700] ru mtshon dar dkar 'phyar ba srid rtser bsnyegs / dpag chen mda' dang
'phrul sgyogs me yi mtshon/ ral gri'i 'od sngon 'phro la dpung rgyan du / spud pas
dgra snying shubs nas lkog mar thon / zhes ji skad bka' stsal ba zhin rgyal

khab chen po'i bstan srid bya bzhag la gzi ldan drag po yan lag bzhi ba'i g.yul
dpung stobs rtsal ngoms ches cher ldan pa zhig med du mi rung ba'i yan lag la
brten mi'i dbang po gau shrī bstan 'dzin chos kyi rgyal pos brlang por

spyod pa'i bod ljongs kyi rgol ngan mtha' dag cham la phabs te / rang srid longs
spyod dang bcas pa kun mkhyen phyag na pad mo gang nyid kyi chab 'og tu btsud
pa'i skal bzang rmad byung gi dpal la sbyor par mdzad cing / gnam

bskos dga' ba brgya ldan pa'i gzhung bstan chab srid kyi dbu brnyes pa nas
bzung gna' bo'i dus kyi mda' mtshon rgyu rnying shugs nus che ba gang ci'i
mkho rgu dbang du bsdu te pho brang chen po'i go mdzod rdo rje gling du bsdu
pa'i gsos

go'i rim pa/ drung 'khor gyi gyon khrab rta go dang bcas pa / dbus tsho chen
bzhi'i gzab 'phyor⁴² dang / thag ring du bgrod pa'i yang chas kyi go cha / gzhung
skyong gi hor sog khams 'brog gi go cha / mdor na ral gri / mda' mdung

me mda' sogs mtshon cha / dkyil sgar gyi gur chen / yol gor / lding gur / lding
zangs sogs dang / bod rje mi dbang gi dus kyi dbang mda' dang / dzam grags zhes
pa rnam kyis gzhan sde rnam par gnong gnong pa'i yo

byad bstar chags pa byas snang yang / dus phyis phyi rgyal rnam pha rol g.yul
gyi dbang du bsdu ba'i sbyangs rtsal dran 'phrul che bas bod phyi bde gzar skabs
rang re nas 'phrul mda' sna tshogs kyi do zlar ji bzhin ma pher bas /

[p.701] slar yang 'gran zla dan 'gran zla'i phul du son ched/ ji skad du / legs
bshad las / dngos po gang dang gang la yang / goms na dka' ba ci yang med / ces
gsungs pa bzhin spyangs

pas mi 'grub pa'i shes bya rig pa'i gnas gang yang med gsis gzhung sa rang nas
bzo grwa gsar 'dzugs bskyang te / do dam tā bla ma bstan 'dzin chos grags dang /
chibs dpon bhrum pa sras tshe brtan dbang phyung ngo / gnyis

nas 'go 'doms kyis bzo ba'i slob dpon mkhas pa las lag rgyun bslab shes rim par
'phel ba skyes bu'i rtsol ba la cher ltos ma dgos pa'i phyi rgya'i lugs kyi bzo 'chun
rnam mang 'phrul 'khor gyi 'du byed las ngo mtshar khyad

'phrul phul byung gi mtshon cha sna tshogs bzo bskrun gyis gsar byung rnam
dang / da dung lag shes blo rtsa la je 'phel gyis 'thon 'gyur rigs rab tshes me 'brug
lo nas bzung slad rtsa 'dzin bde ba'i debs gzhung phas rgol snying rtsa

lkog mar 'byin ba'i gnam lcags shas rab kyi ral gri bstar chag⁴³ tu 'god pa la //

41 Read: srid zhu.

42 Read: gzab mchor.

43 Read: chags.

*Fire-Dragon year. Preamble to the book of Tibetan-made machine guns,
for the Tibetan Army commanding officers' bureau.*

Blessings!

[May] The great mind, all-victorious, only father, deity of speech (i.e. Mañjuśrī),
Teach the pure scriptures and realization [of the Dharma] in the good *kalpa*.
[He] encompasses the three: upholding, knowing and spreading the word;
[I] pay respect with the crown of the head [to] the feet of the essence of Mañjuśrī.⁴⁴

The profound, brilliant and unchanging, main figure of Akṣobhyavajra,
The assembly of the five Buddha families and their consorts, bodhisattvas and
fierce beings;
The deities of the mandala of Guhyasamāja spontaneously renounced;
Here today fell the heavy rain of supreme and ordinary realization.⁴⁵

Form of a hero mesmerizing through an illusory display of compassion;
With a fierce “Ha, ha” roar devastate the evil forces!
Six-armed Mahākāla, through the four kinds of activities,
Leave just the names of the hosts of unsuitable demons!

Produce, with the strength of an unprecedented power of understanding,
Warfare with weapons and machine guns piercing holes
That cause crumbling into thousands of pieces and fragments,
[And even] from a distance, entangle the bodies of the enemies!

Today, as it is easy to burn heaps of straw
With the fire and the wind of the *kalpa*,⁴⁶
By merely mentioning that we produced instruments of war,
Terror shatters the hearts of the hosts of enemies.

Thus, opening wide the gateway to millions of blessings through praise and
homage, and through the four kinds of activities⁴⁷ of the kingdom, concerning the
hoisting in evidence, on top of the three realms, of the sturdy white umbrella of
rank of the spiritual and temporal administration that possesses the hundred joys
mandated from heaven (i.e. the dGa' ldan pho brang), it is the main essence of
[public] service. Even the Omniscient Great Fifth

[p.700] “Pursued the pinnacle of cyclic existence by hoisting the white silk
military banner;
Warfare with machinery (*'phrul*), artillery fire and the arrows of skilled archers;
The glowing blue light of swords as ornament of the troops;
With [these] adornments, tear out the heart of the enemy from [its] casing to
the throat!”

44 The equivalence between Mañjuśrī and Tsong kha pa is evident in the Tibetan text, where the words “blo”, “bzang”, “grags” and “pa” are underlined with circles to emphasize the connection between the two. In the transliteration above, I have marked these words by underlining them.

45 The translation of this quatrain is far from certain. The image presented is that of a mandala of Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra, with the figure of the central deity surrounded by the five Buddhas with their consorts, as well as by bodhisattvas and other beings.

46 It is traditionally believed that the end of the current *kalpa* will be brought about by the conjunction of a fire fueled by a strong wind.

47 The four kinds of activities (*'phrin las rnam bzhi*) are: pacification (*zhi ba*), growth (*rgyas pa*), power (*dbang*) and subjugation (*drag po*).

Having thus spoken, accordingly, for the religious and political activities of the main government, depending on the attributes that are indispensable, [such as] having ever-greater sufficiently strong war troops with the four branches of fierceness [and] brilliance,⁴⁸ the lord of men, Gushrī [Khan], holder of the doctrine [and] *dharmarāja*, annihilated all the ill-intentioned foes of Tibet that acted aggressively. He applied [these war efforts] to the glory of the excellent fortune of introducing the dominion of whichever omniscient Padmapani (i.e. Dalai Lama) together with the benefits of self-government.

Starting from the founding of the government, teaching, and dominion of the [administration] that possesses the one hundred joys mandated from heaven (i.e. the dGa' ldan pho brang), the old cause for warfare with arrows in former times [was] subjugating everything needed with any superior force or ability. At rDo rje gling, the armory of the great palace, the series of well maintained armors that are stockpiled [include]: the coats of mail worn by lay government officials and the barding for the horses; the elaborate attire of the four great counties of dBus;⁴⁹ light armor, for travelling far; the armor of the nomads of Hor, Sog and Khams, who protect the government; in brief, swords, lances, rifles, etc., as weapons; [and as supplies] a large tent of the central camp; vessels, [other] canopies; large copper cauldrons, etc.

At the time of the lords of Tibet and [local] rulers,⁵⁰ it appears that instruments called “empowered arrows” (*dbang mda'*) and *dzam grags* were regularly made to completely suppress extraneous groups.⁵¹ Later, foreign enemies have had greater experience, as well as deception to subjugate [us] with warfare. Therefore, at [this] time of turmoil between Tibet and the foreign [world], because we have not been able to actually oppose [them] with various machine guns,

[p.701] again, in order to attain excellence over the enemy and (be a competitive) enemy, it is said thus, from the *Good sayings*: “In whatever [one applies to], if one practices it is not difficult at all”! In accordance with [this] saying, [since] there is not even one object of knowledge that cannot be accomplished through practice, the government estates themselves created and maintained factories [fabricating weapons].

The two leaders, the commissioner Dā lama bsTan 'dzin chos grags and the cavalry chief Bhrum pa sras Tshe brtan dbang phyug gradually increased the

48 In Tibetan literature the ideal army is traditionally described as possessing four branches, which are derived from the Indian treatises and include not only cavalry and infantry, but also elephant mounted troops and troops attacking from chariots. The latter two are evidently an impossibility in Tibet, because of its geography and terrain.

49 The Tibetan *dbus tsho chen bzhi* possibly represents an alternative form of dBus gTsang ru bzhi, “the four horns of Central Tibet”, namely the valleys of the sKyid chu (i.e. dBu ru skyid shod and g.Yas ru nam shod) and the region of Lho kha in dBus and the areas of gTsang ru lag shan 'khyed and g.Ye ru nang chu shung in gTsang.

50 The Tibetan expression: “*bod rje mi dbang gi dus*” seems merely to refer to generic lords and rulers of Tibet, and it is uncertain to which specific period of Tibetan history it may refer. The use of the term “*mi dbang*” might be interpreted to refer to Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas (1689-1747), the secular ruler of Central Tibet in the first half of the 18th century, to whom such epithet is often referred. However, the indications in the text are too vague to pinpoint with certainty this reference to him.

51 The name *dzam grags* designated a specific type of gun. See Wangdue, (2012, vol. I: 16, n.2 and 46).

knowledge [with] practice from the learned masters of the craft, having put together many kinds of disciplines and techniques of the foreigners' methods and machines, without need to consider much the effort of people, introduced new production of various weapons that are wondrous, especially ingenious and excellent.

Moreover, beginning from the year of the fire-dragon (1916), of the fifteenth sexagenary cycle, by increasing more and more the skills in craftsmanship, [our] potential became evident. Henceforth, a government manual of good protocol shall regularly register swords of the very best meteoric iron to take out the hearts, veins and throats of the enemy...

TEXT 2

Bod ljongs dmag spyi las khung gi spus sgrub zhus pa'i 'phrul mda'i debs⁵² kyi 'go brjod/

Ohm swa sti / dbang sngon zhun ma brtsegs pa'i lhun po

la/ rab dmar mtshams sprin ma dangs kyis 'khyud pa bzhin // chos kun bde chen dbyings su ro gcig pa'i / He ru ka dpal yab yum la phyag 'tshal / sher phyin dga' ma 'jigs rung srin mo'i gzugs/ snam mtha'i

ye shes las bshan bektse dang / yab yum lcam dral gri thogs dang bcas pas // dga' brgya'i chab srid yun du brtan par mdzod // ma rung yid kyis rgol bar brtsams pa'i las / rang nyid phung ba'i rgyur song rang rtags kyi /

[p.702] lag cha'i mtshon rnon dor nas pham blangs pa'i / gтам grags rgyal rnga phyogs kyi bu mos brdungs // zhes mchod par brjod de / gzhung bstan chab srid la log par 'khu ba'i rgya dmag rjes 'brang dang bcas nas chu srin gyi rgyal

mhsan lag tu thogs pa'i nag po bdud kyi rtsa lag snying gi gdon du ches cher brlams te / chu byi lo bstan pa bstan 'dzin chab srid dang bcas pa log can gyi rang dbang du gzhom par gzhug pa'i log smon gyi rig byed lus ngag

tu thon pa'i sgyor ngan snga phyir brtsams kyang byad ma rang gshed rang thog tu dbab pa'i byed pa po rang nyid kyi 'di phyi'i bde legs dang thar pa bla na med pa'i dge srog gi rtsa ba gcod pa tsam las ci yang byar med pa ma zad / tshe 'dir

yang phye ma leb me nang du lceb pa'i ngang tshul las ngan gyi myong 'bras mthor chos su smin te / gzhung sa chen po'i lha dmag gis tshar bcad phyir skrod skabs dgra bo'i lag cha dpa' rtags su blangs pa'i go mtshon gyi rigs rnam

dang / mangga lha sogs mtha' bzhi'i bzo pos (?) 'phrul stobs/snyobs kyis bskrun pa'i me mda' U 'u shang / cu'u shang / ru shang / hri rtse lan gru / 'ber btang / krob mda' sogs me mda' che chung sna tshogs gzhung gnas nas

spus sgrub bskyangs pa rnam phyogs gcig tu bsdus te / rab byung bco lnga pa'i me 'brug lor bod ljongs dmar⁵³ sgar yongs kyi spyi khyab che ba bka' blon tsha rong pas gtsos dmag spyi las khungs nas 'go 'doms zhabs 'degs

kyi slad phyi gyar mi 'byung pa'i rtsa 'dzin gyi debs⁵⁴ gzhung ngo mtshar mu tig gyi do shal dpa' bo'i mgul rgyan du bstar ba la //

52 Read: deb.

53 Read: dmag.

54 Read: deb.

*Preamble to the book of automatic weapons
acquired by the Tibetan military headquarters.*

Blessings!

On mount Meru, stacked with molten sapphires;
Similar to the embrace of radiant, intensely red sunset clouds;
I pay respect to glorious Heruka and his consort,
[that have] the same flavor as the realm of great bliss, all phenomena.

The shape of the ogress, frightening mother of Prajñāparāmitā;
From knowledge of the limits of appearance, the butcher Beg tse
And the sword-wielding deities, their consorts and retinue
Support forever the dominion of the hundred joys! (i.e the dGa' ldan pho brang)

The activity of starting as an adversary with a mischievous mind;
Became the cause of self-destruction.

[p.702] The drum of victory
Rings in all directions the news
That [the Chinese] accepted defeat and surrendered sharp blades as weapons;
Thus are the offering verses.

The Chinese army and its supporters,⁵⁵ who raged against the [Tibetan] government, teachings and dominion, were increasingly possessed as evil spirits of the mind, companions of the black demons that gather in their hand the crocodile victory banner.⁵⁶ [In] the water-mouse year (1912), the rebels participated freely in the destruction of the doctrine, doctrine holders and dominion; undertaking successive evil actions that occurred as physical and speech [activities] motivated by perverse aspirations. [These] very agents who precipitated self-destructive black magic on themselves, not only nothing can be done apart from cutting the root of the life-virtues of supreme happiness and liberation in this life and the future ones, [but], as it is a moth's natural inclination to seek death in the fire even in this life, the experience of [their] evil actions will ripen to results in this lifetime.

When the army of gods of the great [Tibetan] government annihilated and banished [the enemy], the kinds of weapons that were taken as a sign of courage [were] the weapons of the enemy, and armaments which are produced mechanically (*'phrul stobs*) by craftsmen of the four corners (*mtha' bzhi*), such as Magadha:⁵⁷ *me-mda'*

55 This may refer to the Blo gsal gling college of 'Bras spung, that during the fights to free Lhasa from Chinese occupation in 1911-1912 sided with Chinese troops, angering the Dalai Lama. Another monastery of the Lhasa area that supported Chinese troops was bsTan rgyas gling, whose monks had allowed refuge to Chinese troops within the grounds of their monastery, thus forcing the Tibetan soldiers to a lengthy siege of the complex. The XIII Dalai Lama ordered the destruction of bsTan rgyas gling soon after his return to Lhasa, in 1913. See Bell (1987: 64, 141) and Goldstein (1989: 63-64, 104). On bsTan rgyas gling see Ferrari (1958: 93, n. 67).

56 "The crocodile victory banner (Skt. *makaradhvaja*) refers to the ancient Indian practice of mounting on a pole the head and skin of a crocodile when going to battle in order to intimidate the enemy. See Beer (2003: 173).

57 In the text the name of this region is poorly spelled as "*Manggadha*".

U-u-shang,⁵⁸ *cu'u shang* (unidentified), *ru shang* (unidentified), *hri rtse lan gru*,⁵⁹ *'ber btang* (unidentified), pistols (*krob mda' = krom mda'*), etc.; guns of various sizes. The acquisition and preservation of [these] goods from the government is concentrated in a single direction.

In the fire-dragon year of the fifteenth sexagenary cycle (i.e. 1916), the great commanding officer of all the Tibetan regiments (*dmag sgar = dmar sgar*), the minister Tsha rong, in order to serve as leader chiefly from the military headquarters, has threaded as a necklace of pearls, an ornament of a hero's neck, a wondrous government manual of protocols that are not to be leaked...

TEXT 3

//Bod ljongs dmag spyi las khung gi dbyin ji rgyal khab nas phul ba'i 'phrul mda'i debs kyi 'go brjod/

[p.703] / Ohm swa sti / don dam rgyal kun mkhyen brtse'i bzhin lag gang / /khams gsum za bar nus pa'i rngams brjid can // 'jam dpal dus⁶⁰ dgra'i dbang po'i mthu stobs kyi / /bdud bgegs

log 'dren ma lus tshar gcod mdzod / /bka' nyan legs nyes shan 'byed las gshin rjes / /bstan dgra'i mgo po⁶¹ 'gems byed thod dbyug dang / /bdud zhags nag pos bstan 'dzin bsrung ba dang / /bstan dgra sgrol

ba'i zhal bzhes rtag tu dgongs // gangs can mgon po'i zhabs sen zla ba gsar / phyi mtha'i yul skyong rje bo chen pos kyang / /khengs pa bskyungs te ral pa'i cod pan kyi // rgyan du blangs nas mnangs chen nor rdzas dpyid //

mtshon cha'i nang nas ches rab mtshon / /gya noms⁶² mchod pa'i mdun bdar nas // dam pa'i zhing la bsod nams kyi // dge tshogs dpag med de yis thob / /rin dang tshad dang dpe'i dngos pos //gzhal min khyad nor

g.yul gyi chas // mi 'chol ri mo'i rgya bsdams kyi // debs ther sngon med mdzes rgyan spel // zhes shis brjod kyi dbyangs las drangs te // de yang * gong sa rnam 'dren chen po bka' drin mtshungs zla ma mchis pa gang gi thugs

bskyed rmad du byung ba'i gsang gsum gyi nus mthu ni dpag par dka' ba'i rang bzhin te // rgya gar gyi yul dang yul chen rnam su sngon tshe bad bar gshegs pa'i 'phrin las kyi 'od snang shar pa'i gnas rten khyad

'phags sha stag yin snang yang / dus phyis phal cher mun gling du gyur te sa 'dzin pa'i rje blon rnam kyang chos la dad snang nub pa'i phyi rgya'i⁶³ lugs 'dzin snying rje'i gnas su 'os pa 'ba' zhid yin rung // phyogs de

58 This is a list of weapons, but I am unable to translate all but a few of them. Dr. Alice Travers of the CNRS in Paris graciously helped me with many of them. For the time being, *me mda' U-u-shang* remains an unidentified type of firearm; Alice Travers was able to locate *U shang* as a name for a weapon but could not find more specific descriptions.

59 *Hri rtse lan gru* seems to be a compound uniting a Chinese term meaning “ten cartridges/bullets”, transcribed in Tibetan as *hri rtse*, and the Tibetan term “lan kru'u”, which indicated a weapon between the size of a pistol and a rifle, manufactured either in China or in Russia. I am indebted to Alice Travers for this suggestion.

60 Read: bdud.

61 Read: mgo bo.

62 Read: gya nom.

63 Read: phyi rgyal ba'i.

[p.704] dang de dag tu mgon po gang gi *zhabs sen gyi pad mo rnam par bkod
pa'i skal ba bzang du mdzad pa nyid tsam nas chen po dag gi snying la byin rlabs
bdud rtsi gsar pas bran pa lta bur dga' dad gus sgsum bang gis 'phel

bar gyur cing/ / de rjes chab srid 'phrin las kyi 'tsho 'dzin bka'i srid blon bshad
sgra ba dpal 'byor rdo rje dang / / bod ljongs dmag sgar yongs kyi spyi khyab
chung ba tha'i ji khri smon pa nor bu dbang rgyal can don gcod ser

skya rgya pod⁶⁴ zhi ching phebs mdun / /ji ltar mkha' la nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor shar
ba dang sa steng gi pad ma'i 'dab phreng dbang med du lhug par grol ba bzhi na
phyi rgya'i rje bo rnam kyang rgyal bstan dkar phyogs dar ba'i mtshan gzis

khyab pa'i mthus yid dge ba'i phyogs su dbang med du 'phrog pa'i mthu las gcig
tu rang ste rang lugs dang bstun pa'i srid 'byor gya noms pa'i dngos 'bul rgya cher
bstar khongs nas / /gnam lcags sgyogs me'i

'phrul 'khor gcig gis skad mdel mang po gcig car du 'byin par nus pa zhe mts-
hungs rin thang gzhal gyis mi spyod pa bcu phrag lnga brgya tham pa phul 'byor
rnam mngon rtogs rtsa 'dzin bde khyad rab tshes me 'brug lor

slad rtsa 'dzin sgrigs 'chug las byed rdo lag rgyud⁶⁵ du rgyal bstan chab srid nam
gnas par rkyen gang gis kyang gzhom shigs⁶⁶ bral ba'i debs⁶⁷ gzhi mtha' bzhi'i srid
gsum rnam par gnon pa chos chig gis phyed ba'i bod yul

rdor gdan gyi dbus ljongs 'dir sngon me das (?) gsum mngon par dga' ba'i mdzes
rgyan tshar du dngar ba bsgrigs ba la /

*Preamble to the book of automatic weapons given from the country of England,
[kept] in the bureau of the Tibetan commanding officer.*

[p.703] Blessings!

Whatever form and shape of wisdom and compassion is the ultimate reality of
the All-Victorious,

The one whose splendor can devour the three regions,

Mañjuśrī, enemy of the demons, through the effectiveness of [your] power,

Annihilate all obstructions and negative forces!

Yama, attendant who distinguishes good and evil,

Continuously think of [your] promise to liberate the enemies of the doctrine,

And to protect the doctrine holders with the demons by the black noose

And the skull-ornamented staff [that] destroys the head of the enemies of the doctrine!

Toe of the lord of the Land of Snows, new moon,

And supreme lord, king [up to] the borders,

Discarding arrogance, having received as an ornament of the crown of matted
hair

The glory of great riches and wealth,

Show the very best among the weapons!

Having presented offerings of excellence,

64 Read: bod.

65 Read: brgyud.

66 Read: gzhom gzhig.

67 Read: deb.

Obtain, through a measureless multitude of virtues,
Merits in the field that is holy.

Through concrete things such as price, size and samples,
The equipment of war, of incalculable exceptional value,
Was circulated [in] an unprecedented book, ornament of beauty,
Bound by a seal with an unmistakable pattern.
Thus I offered, from the speech of auspicious words.

Also, regarding the efficacy of the three secrets of magnificent aspiration of the sovereign great bodhisattva, whose kindness is incomparable, their nature is difficult to fathom. In the country of India and in the great countries, in the past, it seems there was a simply magnificent world that arose [from] the brilliance of the activities of the Tathāgata.

Recently, the majority became as lands of darkness, and also the ministers of the king [by] holding the traditions of the foreigners that vanish the faith in the Buddhist religion, deserve to be objects of pity only.

[p.704] In all those directions, the Full Benefactor, by simply acting as a worthy one who completely set the lotus of the toe, disseminated the three: joy, faith and devotion, through messengers; similar to giving blessings in the heart of the great ones with new nectar.

After that, the curator of political activities, the prime minister of the *bka'* [*shag*] bShad sgra dPal 'byor rdo rje⁶⁸ and the assistant (*chung*) commanding officer of the entire Tibetan army, Thai ji Khri smon pa Nor bu dbang rgyal,⁶⁹ commissioners of the clergy and laypeople, departed from the peace treaty [negotiations between] China and Tibet. At that time, just as in the sky the orb of the sun arises, and on earth, a garland of lotus petals effortlessly discloses in the four types of liberation, also the foreign leaders,

68 bShad sgra dPal 'byor rdo rje bKa' blon is most famous for having been the plenipotentiary representative of Tibet at the Simla convention. In one of his first appointments involving a foreign policy role he was sent to Darjeeling to assess the trade and border situation soon after the 1893 Trade Regulation pact between the British and the Qing empire. He soon became pro-British and sent to Lhasa reports that favored opening dialogue with the British. These reports were not well received in Lhasa and were to put him in a difficult condition in 1903, when advance British troops were making their way into Tibet. His advice to come to terms with the British was seen as threatening and he was imprisoned with the accusation of having received bribes from them during his sojourn in Darjeeling. On the return of the Dalai Lama from his exile in China and Mongolia, in 1907, he was appointed Blo chen in a triumvirate that also comprised Chang khyim and Zhol khang. He was then appointed full and sole plenipotentiary at the Simla convention. He died in 1923.

69 Khri smon Nor bu dbang rgyal bka' blon (1874-1945) participated in the Simla convention as an assistant of bShad sgra. Starting from 1911, when the Dalai Lama was still in exile in Kalimpong, he helped to secretly "set up a War Department and to prepare for military action" in Lhasa, on orders from the Dalai Lama himself. His contribution to this effort included having Tibetan merchants buy weapons in his behalf and secretly recruiting soldiers. See Shakabpa (1984: 239). Later, when it became apparent that the Chinese forces in Lhasa were about to capitulate, he organized the resistance and, together with Zla bzang dgra 'dul Tsha rong, arrested or executed a number of collaborators of the Chinese. He received the title of Tai ji soon after the return of the Dalai Lama from his Indian exile, and, on his return from the Simla convention, he was appointed bka' blon. Between 1923 and 1926 he was appointed governor of Khams, and he continued to be a powerful man both during the last years of the Dalai Lama's life and in the period immediately following his death. He was the uncle and mentor of Tsepon Shakabpa. Information on both bShad sgra bka' blon and Khri smon zhabs pad is variously drawn from Bell (1987,1996) Goldstein (1989), Richardson (1984), Shakabpa (1984).

by virtue of the encompassing splendor, symbol that spreads the virtue of the teachings of the Victorious One, thought of extensively applying the actual gift of excellent political and economic [resources] in accord with their own traditions and our own as one, because their mind was spontaneously captivated in the direction of virtue.

[Among the resources they offered is] One artillery machine of meteoric iron that can shoot many rounds simultaneously, to which cannot be applied a measure of comparable value. In total, 5,000 [of these] were offered and accepted. [Therefore were created,] good blueprints of clear understanding, in the year of the Fire-Dragon of the 15th cycle (1916). So that these blueprints, arranged [without] mistakes [for] employees [to] transfer from hand to hand, [may] remain as long as the teachings and dominion of the Victorious [One] and [may] not be destroyed by whatever circumstances, [this] book, in the country at the center of the vajra seat, Tibet, which opened the subjugation of the four border regions in the three worlds through the only Dharma, was well arranged and composed as an ornament of beauty that manifestly delights the three realms as never before...

TEXT 4

// *Bod ljongs dmag spyi las khung gi 'go dmag rnams kyi go cha dang / gyon bzo'i thebs 'bru dngul sogs*

[p.705] *'bab rigs debs kyi 'go brjod / Ohm swasti / ngag dbang zur phud lnag pa'i blo chen nor 'dzin bzang po'i gzahir / thub pa'i bstan skyong 'grol thugs rje'i rgya mtsho gting zab cing / 'jigs bral*

bdud sde phyer 'thag mthu stobs dbang phyug gsang ba'i bdag / phyogs las rnams rgyal⁷⁰ gang gi bka' drin bsam kyin lhag par dang / gdong lnga'i khri la rab tu brjid pa'i sku / dran pas srid zhi'i dbul ba drung 'byin pa'i

rin chen mang sprul rgyal chen nmam sras kyis / snod bcud phyag yang⁷¹ dpal gyis gtams par mdzod / kun khyab chab 'bangs yongs nas nor 'bru sogs / dus las mi yol sgrigs bcad dngos po'i dpya / rgya mtsho chel

chu phran kun 'dus ltar / 'du ba'i 'bab debs 'dod rgu'i gter 'di spel / zhes mchod par brjod cing dngos po nges par bstan pa'i dge legs kyi tshigs su bcad pas sngun bsus⁷² te / ji skad du / mdo sde pad ma dkar po

las / dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyis kyang 'dul byar ma 'gyur pa'i gnas / 'dre srin du mas gang ba'i mtha' 'khob kha ba can gyi zhing khams der ma 'ongs pa'i dus su dam pa'i chos nyi ma lta bu zhig rgyas par / 'dug

ste / mtha' 'khob de 'dul ba'i gnyen po ni 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug yin no // zhes gsungs pa ltar / 'phags pa'i thugs rje'i sgyu 'phrul gyis mi'i 'gro rgyud (?) spel / gser dngul nor 'bru longs

70 The underlined words form the full name and titles of the XIII Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang blo bzang Thub bstan rgya mtsho 'jigs bral dbang phyug phyogs las rnams rgyal, "the fearless *isvara* victorious in all directions Ngag dbang blo zang Thub bstan rgya mtsho". See, for example, Chuluun & Bulag (2013: 21). It should also be noticed that the first verse refers to Mañjuśrī (ngag dbang), the second to Avalokiteśvara (thugs rje'i rgya mtsho) and the third to Vaiśravaṇa (gsang ba'i bdag).

71 Possibly to be read as: *phyang yar*.

72 Read: *sngun bsus*.

spyod kyi gter kha phyees / mi 'ug⁷³ dung⁷⁴ drug tu gyes pa sogs kyi skabs bsod
nams kyi skya rengs mdon par shar / mang bkur rgyal rgyud gnya' khri btsan po'i
dus rgyal bstan gyi dbu brnyes pa nas rgyal rabs rim par brgyud pa rnams

[p.706] dang / chos rgyal mes dpon rnam gsum gyi sku'i ring la mtha' bzhi bskor
ba'i rgyal po bzhis btud / skor gsum / ru bzhi / kham s gsum du dbye / phyis sgang
drug / chol kha gsum / khri skor bcu gsum du grags pa'i gangs can

gyi ljongs 'dir bstan pa'i nyi ma ches cher gsal bar gyur cing / lhag par bka'
gdams glegs bam rin po che las / spyir sems can yongs kyi mgon po ste // sgos
gangs ri'i yul du rgyal srid skyong / mi khyod kyi thugs rjes

su skyong ba / bdud sdig ho can gyis g.yo mi nus / zhes gsungs pa ltar / deng 'dir
dus gsum rgyal ba'i spyi gzugs sngon byon gong ma na rim las thugs bskyed dam
bca'i mthu dpung mgon par btsan pa rgyal dbang 'jig rten

gsum mgon sku phreng bcu gsum pa chen po gang nyid nas lha mi'i che rgu'i
gtsug gi lan bus btegs pa'i rin chen dang po'i khri 'phang mthon por zhabs sen
mandha ra ba'i phreng ba rnam par bkod cing / chos srid gser gyi rtsibs

stong 'bar ba phyag mtshan du bzhes pa nyid tsam nas mtha' bzhi'i rgol ngan rje
'bangs kyi mgo bo ngang gis smad par gyur pa ni / mdzod las / phas bsu rang 'gro
g.yul bshams dang / mtshon brtsams pas rgyal gnod pa med //

ces 'khor bsgyur g.yul las rgyal thabs las kyang che khyad par 'phags pa'i ngang
tshul dpag par dka' ba'i rnam thar lags shing / mtshan snyan nyin mor byed pa'i
dkyil 'khor gcig gis rtsod dus mun pa'i smag rum

ni ming gi lhag mar byas / rgyal bstan chab srid 'dab brgya'i phreng ba ni dus
gcig car du bshad / phan bde'i snang ba dam pas ni 'jig rten gyi kham kun tu
khyab par mdzad lags gshas / bka' drin rjes su dran pa'i

[p.707] sri zhu kho nar dmigs pa ni 'jam dbyangs sa pañ byis / gal te dgral gnod
'dod na / rang nyid yon tan ldan par bya / de yis dgra yang sems bsreg cing / rang
yang bsod nams 'phel

bar 'gyur / zhes pa'i don ltar / dbus gtsang rgya sbyong dpung dmag sngar yod
thog 'phar 'dzugs dang 'brel / mngon par 'byung ba'i mdo las / 'gro dang ldog
dang kun nas 'ongs gyur pa'i / bdud dpung ma lus

'jigs par byed pa ste / dpa' brtan 'byor pa'i dpung dang bcas pa yis / dmag dpon
rin chen dam pa / zhes dang / shes rab stong ba las / brtson 'grus brtul phod brtan
pa dang // stobs dang blo gros pha rol gnon //

'bad rtsol yon tan drug ldan pa / de la lha yang 'jigs pa skye // zhes pa ltar gyi
dpa' rtsal yon tan gyi gnas la lus sems ngal ba ring spang gi rtsal sbyong bstan don
snying bcang gis 'go byings tshang mas dam don hur /

bskyed zhus ste / go mtshon dang bcas pa gzhan sder rgol ba'i dpa' shugs thon
nges kyi lugs bsgyur thog / bod ljongs dmag sgar yongs kyi spyi khyab khang gsar
tshugs las khungs su 'go dmag rnams kyi go cha dang / gyon

bzo'i dmigs thebs 'bru dngul sogs 'bab rigs yi ger bkod de slad rtsa 'dzin bde
khyad rab byung bco lnga ba'i me 'brug lor gangs ljongs dmag sgar yongs kyi spyi
khyab che ba bka' blon tsha rong pas gtsos dmag spyi

las khungs nas zhabs 'degs su byas te / 'bab debs sde bzhi'i bang mdzod bsam
'phel 'dod rgu'i 'byung gnas 'god pa la //

73 Read: 'u.

74 Read: gdung.

*Preamble to the book on the kinds of taxation, such as grains and silver,
for the uniforms and armors of officers and soldiers of the bureau of the Tibetan Army.*

[p.705] Blessings!

On the basis of the good earth, great intellect, which has the five-knotted locks of hair, Mañjuśrī,
The ocean of compassion protecting and releasing the doctrine of Muni is profound;
The lord of the esoteric almighty power grinds to dust the hordes of demons without fear;
Considering the graciousness of whichever conqueror of all directions, have even more faith!

Body that is utterly splendid on the throne of Maheśvara,
Great king Vaiśravaṇa, producing many jewels
Which remove the presence of poverty from samsara and nirvana with mindfulness;
Fill up the world and its inhabitants with the glory of [your] activities!

Arranging and separating without delay the taxes on property
Such as wealth and grains, from all the dependents everywhere;
This booklet on taxation that is collected as the composite streams fall into the ocean,
[May it] augment the treasure with whatever one may desire!

Thus uttering the offering, I lead the way, with verses of good virtue that manifestly illustrate the wealth. As it is said, from the sutra class of the Puṇḍarīka: “Even all the Buddhas of the Three Times [may] dwell in a place that is unsuitable to the disciples. In the future, in the regions of Tibet, [up to the] borders that are filled with many demons and *rākṣasa*, the holy Dharma will be wide like the sun. As for the remedy that conquers the borderlands, it is the Almighty Ārya Avalokiteśvara.”

Through [his] miraculous display of noble compassion, the human race will proliferate. Reveal a treasure of possessions of gold, silver, wealth and grains! At the time of the spreading of the six clans [of Tibet], the dawn of virtue clearly arose. From the time of the founding of the teachings of the Victorious One, the time of gNya khri btsan po of the lineage of king Mang bkur,⁷⁵ to [the period] during the lineages of the successive royal dynasties and the lives of the three ancestral rulers,

[p.706] the Dharma kings,⁷⁶ the four kings who surrounded the four borders [of Tibet] payed tribute. In this Land of Snows divided into three areas, four ranges, and three realms; later on into the six ridges, three regions, and Thirteen Myriarchies, the sun of the doctrine became increasingly clear. Moreover, from the precious *bKa'gdam glegs bam*:

“In general, he is the lord of all the sentient beings;
In particular, in the country of the snowy mountains he protects the realm;
Those protected by your compassion,
Mara, the evildoer, cannot deceive.”

Similarly to this quote, today, from among the succession of High Ones appeared in the past, the embodiment of the Victorious of the Three Times, [with] the strength of the bodhisattva vow [and] evidently powerful; the king of the Victorious Ones, lord of the three worlds, the great thirteenth incarnation, fully arranged the garland

75 Tib. Mang po bkur ba; Skt. Mahāsammata.

76 This refers to the three great Buddhist kings of Tibet, Srong btsan sgam po (r. 620?-649), Khri srong lde brtsan (r. 755-797) and Ral pa can (r. 815-838).

of celestial *mandha ra*⁷⁷ flowers to the height of the golden throne that is supported by gods and noblemen with the braid at the top of their head. Just by taking as a scepter the radiance of the thousand spokes of the golden [wheel] of the political and religious [system], the heads of lords and subjects of [our] ill-intentioned enemies from the four borders regions were automatically bowed down. [Quoting] from the Abhidharmakośa:

“The enemy welcomes [the *cakravartin*] prepared for war,
and by commencing warfare, there is victory without injury”.⁷⁸

More than the kingdom [obtained] from the war of a *cakravartin*, complete liberation is difficult to fathom, its nature [being] especially noble. Through [his] fame, [as a] single orb that shines in the daytime, the darkness of the age of strife is only a name. As for the lotus garland of the dominion and the teachings of the Victorious One, it bloomed simultaneously. As for the excellent occurrence of welfare, indeed [its] ultimate nature pervades all the regions of the world.

[p.707] Therefore, [concerning] the concept of honoring solely the memory of a kindness received, ’Jam dbyangs Sa pañ said:

“If you wish to harm your enemies,
Collect your own skills;
Thus the enemy will burn [its] mind,
And you will increase your own merits”

[Thus], on top of the existing Chinese-trained troops of dBus and gTsang, additional forces [were created]. From the sutra of Perfect Renunciation (Skt.: *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*):

“The hosts of demons that came from everywhere,
With beings and their contrary, completely instilled terror,
But with an army having firm courage and wealth,
A precious army commander [will arise].”

Also, from the Prajñāparāmitā in one thousand lines:

“Diligence, steadfastness and bravery,
Power, intelligence, subjugation of the enemy.
Having the six attributes of exertion,
In such instance, also the gods originate fear.”

Similarly to this saying, as a basis of attributes of bravery, all the troops and their leaders, training to rid oneself of extensive physical and mental fatigue, taking to heart the intent stated, asked to make a great effort to be diligent. Along with their weapons, they transformed their approach toward courage and strength to combat extraneous forces.

For the purpose of creating a document on the kinds of taxation, such as contributions, grains and silver, aimed at [procuring] weapons and uniforms for the officers and soldiers in the office established in the new building of the commander in chief of the Tibetan Army, in the Fire-Snake year of the fifteenth sexagenary cycle, (1916), the *bka'blon* Tsha rong pa, supreme commander in chief of all the regiments of the Land of Snows, worked on an excellent manual from the main military headquarters. He composed “the treasury of the four-classes, source of every wish and granting all desires”...

77 Also spelled *man dā ra*. It is the name of a heavenly tree and its celestial flowers.

78 See Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1926: 202) and (1914: 27).

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