The Life and Identity of mNga' ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487-1542) – the Outstanding Master from Mustang, the “Ordinary Bodily Being”

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The Great Pundit of mNga' ris, Padma dbang rgyal rdo rje (Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal Dorjé, 1487–1542) passed away more than five hundred years ago. But he remains well-known and recognizable in the Tibetan religious world until today. His oeuvre Ascertaining the Three Vows (sDom pa gsum rnam par nges pa) is included in the monastic curriculum of many rNying ma pa institutions.¹ mNga' ris Paṇ chen stood at the source of the cult of Tsi'u dmar po (Tsiu Marpo), a protective deity and the oracle residing at bSam yas (Samyé) monastery.² Also, he had a prominent role in the transmission lineages of various treasure cycles (gter skor) in the Dolpo area and in the lineage of the Mahākāruṇīka’s [Avalokiteśvara, the Great Compassionate One’s] practice according to the system of Songtsen Campo (thugs rje chen po'i rgyal lugs).³ The importance of his figure in the transmission of the Northern Treasures has been well-addressed in the earlier scholarship.⁴ After all, it was mNga' ris Paṇ chen who initially inspired his younger brother Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (Lekden Düdjom Dorjé, 1512–ca. 1580) to seek teachings from Shākya bzang po (Śākya Zangpo, fl. 15th–16th cent). The former was eventually recognized as a reincarnation of rGod [kyi] ldem ['phru] can dNgos grub rgyal mtshan (Gödem Truchen Ngödrup Gyaltsen, 1337–1408/1409)⁵ and hold the title of the 2nd Rig 'dzin (Rikdzin), a lineage of incarnation that will finally settle at rDo rje brag (Dorjé Drak, 29°19'41.27"N,

¹ See Smith 2001, p. 17  
² See Akester 2016, p. 316, fn. 43.  
³ See Ehrhard 2000 and 2013a.  
⁵ Jay Valentine provides a case study on the formation and the passage of authority within an incarnation lineage and serves as an excellent source on Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje and Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las. For the account of mNga' ris Paṇ chen urging Legs ldan rdo rje to go and meet Shākya bzang po, see ibid., pp. 139-140.

91° 6'27.93"E), the headquarters of the Northern Treasures.\(^6\) Thus, mNga’ ris Pañ chen had a crucial role in the formation of the Northern Treasures and its passage from South-Western to Central Tibet. Nevertheless, his life, projects, and affiliations have not been studied in detail. This article is prepared in the hope to fill some gaps in knowledge on this remarkable spiritual master.\(^7\)

1. Introduction

What makes mNga’ ris Pañ chen truly distinguished amongst the great number of Tibetan spiritual figures of the 15-16th century, is that he was a learned scholar, a tantric practitioner, a gter ston, and a righteous monk who attained according to tradition mundane and supramundane siddhis, along with the status of a vidyādhara – and all of that he managed to combine in one lifetime.\(^8\) According to Gene Smith, it is unusual to hear of an ordained gter ston, as most of them ought to have a female partner.\(^9\) This signifies that mNga’ ris Pañ chen possessed the utmost expertise in combining the three kinds of vows – that of the prātimokṣa, the bodhisattvayaṇa, and the tantrayāna.

mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal was born at the end of the 15th century in Mustang to ‘Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (Ja-myang Rinchen Gyaltsetn, 1445/1473–1558).\(^10\) The former was a sprul sku of Mar pa Lo tṣa ba Chos kyi blo gros (Marpa Lotsāwa Chökyi Lödro, 1012-1097) and a direct prodigy to the Gung thang ruling family owing to the fervid temperament of his father Chos rgyal Nor bu Ide (Chögyal Norbu Dé, 1450-1484) who was involved into an extramarital affair with ‘Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan’s mother.\(^11\) When Padma dbang rgyal was born, the power was in the hands of A seng rdo rje brtan pa (Aséng Dorjé Tenpa, d. ca. 1496) and bDe legs rgya mtsho (Délek Gyatso, d. ca. 1500), the brothers of one of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s primary spiritual masters, Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun

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\(^6\) Jakob Dalton meticulously documented the efforts of Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las in raising rDo rje brag to prominence, and the conflict that evolved around the recognition of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s sprul sku (see Dalton 2016, pp. 78-96).

\(^7\) I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Alexander Schiller for proofreading this article and for providing me with the digital input of mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal’s autobiography.

\(^8\) This unique combination was also noted and admired by his biographer Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las (See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 310.6-311.1).


\(^10\) Karl-Heinz Everding provided solid arguments why ‘Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan’s year of birth should be taken as 1473 (see Everding 2000, p. 548, fn. 410).

\(^11\) See Everding 2004, p. 269
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After bDe legs rgyal mtshan grags pa mtha’ yas (Gönpo Gyaltsen Drakpa Thayé), the uncle of Glo bo mKhan chen. As for mNga’ ris Pa’chen’s maternal descend, he was an ancestor of Brom ston Lo tsā ba rGyal ba’i ‘byung gnas (Dromtön Lotsāwa Gyalvé Jüngné, 1008/1017-1064/1076). Padma dbang rgyal left from Mustang in the direction of Central Tibet in his forty-second year, in 1528. He passed away in 1542 in ‘On (the Ön valley), south of Lhasa, and never came to visit his homeland again.

It is necessary to remark on the protagonist’s full name, mNga’ ris Pa’chen Padma dbang rgyal rdo rje Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang. “mNga’ ris” designates a geographical area. Before the 18th century, the native homeland of Padma dbang rgyal, Glo bo (Lowo), was a part of mNga’ ris. Thus, the first part of his title refers to his origin. “Pa’chen” is an abbreviation for pandita chen po, the great pundit. Thus, “mNga’ ris Pa’chen” is a respectful title under which Padma dbang rgyal is renowned: the Great Pundit of mNga’ ris. “Padma” is his gotra (rigs), and “Dbang rgyal rdo rje” is the name he was given at birth. As for “Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang,” mNga’ ris Pa’chen received this name upon taking his bhikṣu ordination.

2. The Homeland of mNga’ ris Pa’chen

Most of the biographies on mNga’ ris Pa’chen, such as his well-known hagiography by Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las (Rikdzin Pema Trinlé, 1641–1718), speaks of a certain lHun grub chos sdings (Lhündrup Chöding) of Glo bo Ma thang (Lowo Mathang) as his birthplace.

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12 For the translation of his autobiography and a catalogue of his collected works, see Kramer 2008.
13 See A Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 2v3.
14 According to Jackson 1984 (p. 5 and p. 10, fn. 21), Glo bo was a part of eastern, or Lower Ngari (mNga’ ris smad). At the same time, a prophecy relating to mNga’ ris Pa’chen speaks of Upper Ngari (mNga’ ris stod) as his native place. Cf. The Biography of Ngari Pa’chen by the Fifth Dalai Lama, p. 166.
15 Valentine 2020, p. 130 suggests another possible explanation why Padma dbang rgyal was renowned under the name “the Great Pundit of Ngari” (mNga’ ris Pa’chen). He was a direct descendant of the lineage of the ruling family of Gungthang, “the seat of power of the entire region of mNga’ ris” (Valentine 2020, p. 130). This suggestion is bolstered by the fact that bSod nams lhun grub, a native of Glo bo who directly belonged to its ruling family, was famous under the title Glo bo mkhan chen, the “Great Scholar of Lowo” (and not of mNga’ ris). In addition, some biographical accounts report that mNga’ ris Pa’chen belongs to the “royal lineage of Gung thang in mNga’ ris” (mnga’ ris gung thang rgyal po’i gdung, see The Historical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 233.2).
16 See The Biography of Ngari Pa’chen by Pema Trinlé, p. 305.6
17 See ibid., p. 315.6.
18 Ibid., p. 315.1: khrungs yul ni glo bo ma thang gi lhun grub chos sdings.
Should an inquisitive reader try to locate this place, he or she will be highly disappointed because modern maps do not provide information on any locality in Mustang that goes by this name.

“Lo” (Glo) or “Lowo” (Glo bo) is the name of the Lo Kingdom, an area that is called “Mustang” nowadays. At some point in time, the non-native non-Tibetan speakers started to refer to the whole territory of the Kingdom as “Mustang,” a corruption of its capital’s name “Mönthang” (sMon thang). Tibetan written sources interchangeably adopt two spellings of that name: sMon thang and sMan thang. For this reason, one might at first assume that “Mathang” (Ma thang) from mNga’ ris Paṇchen’s hagiography is also a corruption of “Mönthang” (sMon thang) and designates either the area of Mustang in general (as did the non-native speakers do) or its capital Mönthang in particular. This assumption is substantiated by the fact that “Lo Manthang” is one of the five modern administrative subdivisions of the Mustang region of Nepal. Furthermore, some modern maps name the capital of Mustang “Lo Manthang” which sounds very similar to Padma ’phrin las’s “Glo Ma thang” (Lo Mathang). However, a closer look will prove that the birthplace of mNga’ ris Paṇchen Padma dbang rgyal is not the capital of Mustang. It rather turns out to be an old spelling of what we see as “Marang” on modern maps.

Glo bo (Lowo) in Tibetan indigenous literature designates the Glo Kingdom, i.e. Mustang. Its natives sometimes refer to its villages and towns by putting “Lo” before each of their names: for example, the Drakmar village is on some occasions called “Lo Drakmar,” the Tsa-rang village “Lo Tsarang” and so forth. Thus it is not likely that Padma ’phrin las would refer to the whole territory of Glo as Glo Mathang. He is rather talking of a particular place in Glo, the Ma thang situated in Glo (Mustang). Even though it is common to find spelling mistakes in the names of toponyms in Tibetan indigenous literature, it is unlikely that Padma ’phrin las could have misspelled the name of sMon thang because this name refers to the capital of Mustang, a large-scale political and religious center that was often mentioned in all kinds of literature. Furthermore, the toponym “Mathang” is clearly differentiated from “Mönthang” in mNga’ ris Paṇchen Padma dbang rgyal’s autobiography, the primary source of the biography written by Padma ’phrin las. “Mathang” in Padma ’phrin las’s account is also not a name of a city or a village, for if that would have been the case, there would have been no need to provide a further elaboration “lHun grub chos sdings.”

Thus, lHun grub chos sdings had to be a notable landmark, but it

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19 See Jackson 1984, pp. 5-7 and Dhungel 2002, pp. 185-186.
21 *A Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 22r6: ma thang; fol. 23v2 and fol. 27v1: smon thang.
can’t be found on modern maps (as is the case with Mathang). The residents of modern Mustang whom I asked do not recall any ruins or any area by the same name. But lHun grub chos sdings was certainly a monastery, not a fortress. Firstly, its name has a religious connotation and secondly, mNga’ ris Paṇчен Padma dbang rgyal refers to it as “his [native] monastery” and Padma ‘phrin las as well states that this is a monastery.

Some locals, such as mKhan po Ngag dbang ’jigs med (Khenpo Ngawang Jigmé), a Sakya-affiliated modern researcher of Glo’s History, reports that lHun grub chos sdings stood south of Ghar monastery, on the western mountain ridge of the upper Marang valley en route to the Marang pass. This assumption is made on the ground that locals call this area “Omo Lhündrup.”

But apart from the similarity in the soundings of the names, this theory is not substantiated by any other arguments.

Fig. 1 — The ruins at “Omo Lhündrup”, 29° 6’51.52”N, 83°53’19.05”E (March 2020, © Dawa Sunduk)

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22 A Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 21v3: rang nyid kyi dgon pa lhun sdings. On another instance mNga’ ris Paṇchen refers to it as “lhun grub dpal gyi chos sde,” see The Wheel of the Sun and the Moon that Dispels the Darkness by Ngari Panchen, p. 209.6.


24 I am very grateful to Dawa Sunduk (Zla ba bsam grub) for sharing locations and local legends of Marang. All further photos were as well generously provided by Dawa Sunduk.
A comparatively recent publication from 2001 authored by a Sakya-affiliated mKhan po bKra shis bstan ‘dzin (Khenpo Tashi Tenzin), The Register of the Progressive Spreading of the Doctrine in the Land of Lowo, names the birthplace of mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal “lHun grub chos gling” (Lhündrup Chöling) and asserts it is located in Sag ra in Marang. Sag ra is labeled as “Saukre” on modern maps and lies in the upper part of the Marang valley, not so far from “Omo Lhündrup.”

Apart from the data given by Padma ‘phrin las, there is another description of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s birthplace provided by the Fifth Dalai Bla ma who cites the gter ma text Essential Summary of General Instructions (Spyi lung mdor bsdus snying po) in his own writings. It does not mention lHun grub chos sdings, but it does provide a descriptive account of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s native land as follows: it is situated to the south from the Yang ‘dul (Yangdül) [temple located on] the Peak of sPra dun (Pradün), to the north of the Naga Subjugation Temple [of] Ge gar, on a side of a great mountain that resembles a mighty elephant, on the bank of a forceful grand river and in the upper part of Ma thang valley. The words “south from Yang ‘dul spra dun temple” hint in the direction of Mustang. The sentence “north of the Naga Subjugation Temple” narrows the area down by talking of a certain “Naga Subjugation [Temple]” (Klu yi kha gnon) in Gegar. The legends report that the Ghar Monastery in Gegar was founded in the 8th century by Gu ru Rin po che (Guru Rinpoche, fl. 8th century) on a place where he subjugated the nagas. This monastery at times is referred to by the name of the area where it stands: the dGe dkar (Gekar), or dGes sgar (Gegar) monastery. On Google maps, we see it as “Ghar gompa.” The account provided by the Fifth Dalai Bla ma further says that the birthplace is in “the upper part of the so-called Ma thang [of] Glo bo.” Ghar monastery (i.e. the Ge gar klu yi kha gnon) is indeed located in the upper part of a valley called nowadays “Marang” and this might mean that Marang used to go by the name of “Mathang,” at least until the middle of the 17th century. Afterward, this name has at some point (perhaps even recently) been changed to “Marang” and the personal communication

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27 See ibid, vol. 4 (nga), p.174.5-6: yang ‘dul spra dun rise yi lho// ge gar klu yi kha non byang// ri rgyal glang chen ‘gying ‘dra’i ‘dab// chu chen drag po ‘bab pa’i ‘gram// glo bo ma thang zhe bya’i phur//
28 Alternative spelling is dGe sgar. The name dGe sgar means “White Virtue” (dGe dkar) and dGe sgar means “Encampment of Virtue.” Its foundation is closely connected to Padmasambhava, who, according to a legend, tamed demons here en route to Central Tibet. The temple is also believed to be the first place where a treasure-text (gter ma) was ever discovered, see Ehrhard 2013, p. 242, fn. 5; p. 247.
with the local villagers had confirmed that the names “Mathang” and “Marang” are used interchangeably. The rest of the account from the work of the Fifth Dalai Bla ma bolsters mKhan po bKra shis bstan ‘dzin’s statement that lHun grub chos sdings was situated in Sagra (or Saukre on the maps) because Sagra does stand on a bank of a river and on a mountainside. Although the modern-day Sagra actually lies to the east of Ghar monastery (not to the north), it could have happened that due to the continued land desiccation its inhabitants moved slightly to the south, and the main village in former times was located a few hundred meters further to the north of the modern-day Sagra (Saukre) village. This then would perfectly fit into the description given in the gter ma text that it is north of the dGe sgar (Ghar) temple. The communication with locals of Marang village had revealed that they think of Sagra as lying to the north of Ghar monastery and they do call sometimes the mountain to the east of the village “the Elephant’s Mountain” because it looks like an elephant to them.

Furthermore, the biography of 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan “vividly describes the shocks felt at Marang in upper Glo bo in 1505” and according to this account, his own residence and temple were not hardly affected. This leads us to the conclusion that the residence of Padma dbang rgyal’s father was located in Marang. To sum up, the descriptions of mNga' ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal’s birthplace found in the old and the new textual sources point out that it was at the Sagra (Saukre) village situated in the upper part of Marang valley. And so do the testimonies of Marang’s local inhabitants who have no doubts that the area to the north of their village, namely, the upper part of the Marang valley, is the place where 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan’s family was active. The Marang valley has several places associated with the deeds of mNga' ris Pañ chen and 'Jam dbyangs rin chen. For example, the local villagers know the place located in Marang where 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan in his childhood was met by a party of lamas who came from Central Tibet looking for Mar pa Lo tsā ba’s reincarnation. To the north of Marang village and to the south from Sagra we find a footprint attributed to mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal.

29 Dawa Sunduk, oral communication in May 2020.
30 For the account of this earthquake that took place in June 1505 and the descriptions of this event by the locals including the father and the spiritual master of mNga' ris Pañ chen, see Jackson 2002.
mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin cites the verses from mNga' ris Pañchen’s biography describing how he reversed the flood and says that this event took place in Marang. North of Sagra we find a stūpa commemorating this event that happened in 1498 when Padma dbang rgyal was able to stop the horrible flood when he was only twelve years of age.

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\(32\) The Register of the Progressive Spreading of the Doctrine in the Land of Lowo, p. 230
The inhabitants of Marang also believe that mNga' ris Paṇchen used a cave below the valley for one of his manifold meditation retreats. They call it the “Oglungpa cave” (‘Og lung pa’i phug), a provisional name that literally means “a cave below the valley.”

Fig. 4 — The “Oglungpa” (‘Og lung pa) meditation cave of mNga’ ris Paṇchen (29° 6’51.40”N, 83°54’21.16”E)

To the north-west of Marang village, we find another cave that according to oral testimonies goes by the name of Golékha (sGo le kha). It is situated just across the river from the Sagra settlement, on a slope of a hill to the south of Ghar monastery.

Fig. 5 — Golékha cave (approximate coordinates: 29° 7’19.03”N, 83°53’21.09”E)
The autobiographical details confirm that this cave is located in Gegar. The biography by Padma 'phrin las describes how in 1513 mNga' ris Paṇchen had made a retreat on Avalokiteśvara from the Northern Treasures tradition in Golékha cave and had visions of three different forms of Mahākāla.

![The interior of the Golékha cave](image)

The question of the exact location of lHun grub chos sdings, namely whether this monastery was standing on the western or the eastern bank of the river in the upper part of Marang valley remains open. To the west is the “Omo Lhündrup” area with some minor ruins (see Fig. 1) and to the east, just above the Sagra village we also find ruins of something that could have been that of a monastery or a fortress.

According to the eyewitnesses, one of the ruined walls seems to have been painted red which indicates that this was a wall of a monastery.

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33 A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 19r7: dgun gyi dus su glo bo ge gar gyi/ sgo le khu yi phug tu spyan ras gzigs/ ‘gro ba kun sgrol (=grol) bsgrubs pas gur mgon gyi/ sku yi bkod pa lan grangs gsum du mthong.

The Sagra settlement is located on the eastern bank of the river and has ruins of residential houses to its north, whereas on the western bank (below the “Omo Lhündup” area, see Fig. 1), we find neither active settlements nor any signs of ruined settlements. Besides, the oral communication with local villagers revealed that they talk of the mountain to the east of the river just above Sagra (Fig. 7) as resembling an elephant. Given those facts, we could carefully assume that this speaks in favour of the eastern location of lHun grub chos sdings (Fig. 7). However, this remains mere speculation, and let us hope that in the future some new textual or archeological evidence will shed light on the long-vanished yet not forgotten witnesses of the spiritual greatness of Mustang’s masters from the past.

3. Tibetan sources on mNga’ ris Pañ chen

Tibetan indigenous sources provide very little first-hand early biographical information on mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal. He was doubtlessly an eminent and well-respected spiritual teacher, with numerous followers who settled around him in his new residence in Ön valley (‘On) in Central Tibet. Yet, unlike many other prominent lamas, Padma dbang rgyal’s biographies composed by his disciples seem to be non-existent. An explanation to this fact can be found in his

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35 The fact that a community of monks formed around mNga’ ris Pan chen’s residence is evident from his biography by Rig ’dzin Padma ‘phrin las (See ibid., p. 330.1, 332.4).
versified autobiographical writing, *A Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland* (*Lus can skye bo’i gtam rin chen phreng ba*). According to the author, when he was in his forty-first year, several close disciples (*bu chen*) approached him with a request of allowing them to write down his biographical “account of liberation” (*rnam thar*). But the protagonist refused the requests out of several concerns, such as the fear of breaking the secret oaths that he gave to his guru and the ḍākinīs, furthermore, of becoming proud and uprooting the virtuous qualities (*yon tan*) that “arise in secrecy.”^36^ The known Tibetan biographical sources on mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal can be summarized as follows.

**A. Autobiographical Accounts (16th century)**

A1. mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal rdo rje. *Yongs rdzogs bstan pa’i mnga’ bdag nges pa don gyi pan chen mnga’ ris pa padma dbang rgyal rdo rje gras pa rgyal mthshan dpal bzang po’i rtogs pa brjod pa rin chen phreng ba.* (*Lus can ske bo’i gtam yang zer*). In Padma dbang rgyal, *gSung thor bu*, 48 fols. No date, no place. BDRC W3CN18537.

A2. mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal rdo rje. *gSang ba’i rnam thar rin po che’i rna rgyan.* (not available at present).


**B. Traditional Hagiographies (17th–19th century)**


B3. Ngag dbang blo gros, sTag sgang mkhas mchog alias Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th cent.). In *Gu bkra’i chos ’byung = bStan pa’i snying po gsang chen snga ’gyur nges don zab mo’i chos kyi byung ba gsal bar byed*

^36^ See *A Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 37v7-38r2.


C. Modern Hagiographies (20th–21st century)


The majority of the above-listed Tibetan biographical accounts and “stories of liberation” (rnam thar) available on mNga’ ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal rdo rje are either a paraphrase or a summary of the mid. 17th century’s biographies by Padma ’phrin las (B2) or by the Fifth Dalai Bla ma (B1), except for the History of the Nyingma School by bDud ’joms Rin po che (C1). At present, the most comprehensive account on mNga’ ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal is the biography in the recently published Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery (C2). All of these works largely rely on mNga’ ris

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37 This name was adopted according to Valentine 2020, p. 115, fn. 3. The author thanks Stéphane Arguillère who helped to identify the authorship.
Paṇchen’s autobiographical account *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland* (A1). At some points, the text of that autobiography seems to make no sense for the outside reader. On some occasions it looks as if the verses are comprised of just some keywords put together, naming places, persons, and treatises. On other occasions, the reader finds informal dialogues and descriptions of the author’s personal, intimate feelings. It seems as if mNga’ ris Paṇchen Padma dbang rgyal wrote the *Talk by the Ordinary Bodily Being* solely for himself. It was meant to serve as a sort of a diary, and he did not plan to share it with the wider public.

4. Padma ’phrin las’s Biography of mNga’ ris Paṇchen

The principal source for the summary of mNga’ ris Paṇchen’s biography is his hagiography composed by Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las in the second half of the 17th century, roughly one hundred and forty years after the protagonist’s passing. As mentioned above, this hagiography closely follows the versified autobiography by mNga’ ris Paṇchen that ends with Padma dbang rgyal’s forty-seventh year of age (1533). The hagiography of mNga’ ris Paṇchen Padma dbang rgyal is a part of Padma ’phrin las’s extensive composition on the biographies of masters that stay in the rNying ma pa’s transmission lineage of the Sūtra Empowerment, *bKa’ ma mdo dbang gi bla ma brgyud pa’i rnam thar* (*The Accounts of Eminent Masters*). Padma ’phrin las composed this work in about one and a half months in the Yang dben ’chi med Pho brang (Yangwen Chimé hall) of rDo rje brag monastery in the summer of 1681 at the age of forty-one.38 At that age, he had already received the transmission of the *Sūtra Empowerment* (*mdo dbang*) five times in his life.39 Both mNga’ ris brothers received the *Sūtra’s* lineage from their father, ’Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan, and later forwarded it to sKyi ston Tshe ring dbang po (Kyitön Tsering Wangpo).40 Padma ’phrin las traces the lineage of the *Sūtra*’s empowerment through Legs ldan rdo rje,41 who is the “original source” of the *Sūtra Empowerment’s* transmission.42 In the introductory sentences to Padma dbang rgyal’s biography, Padma ’phrin las states that “the transmission [of the *Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions*] should continue with the chief of the

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38 See the colophon to *The Accounts of the Eminent Masters*, p. 420.6: “thub bstan e wam lcog sgar gyi chos smra ba’i dge slong bya bral bu padma ’phrin las kyis rang lo zhe gcig pa lcags mo bya’i lo dbyar zla rwa sron gyi zla bar ’go btsams/ dbyar ’bring chu stod kyis nga ba’i dbang phyogs bzang po dang po’i tshes la yongs su tshang bar ’og min bla ma’i gdan sa thub bstan rdo rje brag gi yang dben ’chi med pho brang du [...]”
39 Ibid, fol. 419.1: “da lta rang lo zhe gcig pa phan la mdo dbang tshar lnga song ba sogs [...]”
40 See his biography in the *Accounts of Eminent Masters*, pp. 376–379.
41 See Dalton 2002, p. 171.
42 This remark made by the Fifth Dalai Bla ma can be found in Karmay 1988, p. 52.
The reason why the younger, not the older brother is the chief of the lineage, is perhaps due to the fact, that the autobiography of mNga' ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal neither explicitly mentions sKyi ston Tshe ring dbang po nor gives the date and place of this event. For this reason, Padma 'phrin las was unable to explicitly include mNga' ris Pañ chen into the lineage. Besides, Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje belongs to the direct reincarnation lineage (skyes rabs) of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem can, and thus he is of utmost importance for the Sūtra’s transmission lineage of Padma 'phrin las. Although Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje is the youngest son in his family, he is the “chief of the lineage” (brgyud pa’i gtso bo).

Thus, it wasn’t strictly necessary to include the biography of mNga’ ris Pañ chen in the collection. The author explains his decision in the two first sentences of the biography, saying that since mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal was one of Legs ldan’s main spiritual masters and that the former’s activity was of enormous benefit for the Dharma, he decided to write about Padma dbang rgyal, too.44 This stipulation sounds almost like an apology to justify the inclusion of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s biography into his Accounts of Eminent Masters.

That decision turned out to be of utmost significance and benefit for the future generations and researchers since the greatest part of consecutive biographers of mNga’ ris Pañ chen depended on Padma ’phrin las’s work that summarized the known textual sources on the life of this outstanding master that were available at that time. Some of those sources are lost to the present day,45 and the surviving autobiography in verses is a voluminous text that requires cumbersome work for its summarization, and ends in the forty-eight year of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s life, about eight years before his passing. We can thus be assured that Padma ’phrin las’s effort prevented some bits of knowledge from falling into oblivion, and his role in preserving knowledge on mNga’ ris Pañ chen can not be underestimated.

Padma ’phrin las cites four sources that he used for the compilation of mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal’s life: (1) the extensive versified autobiography, [A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being] the Precious Garland (rgyas par rnam thar rin chen ’phreng ba), (2) The Collected Works (bKa’ ’bum), (3) The Record of Teachings Received (gSan yig), as well as (4) the autobiographic, presumably versicular, Secret Account of Complete Liberation, The Precious Ornament for the Ears (gSang ba’i rnam thar Rin po che’i rna rgyan).46 Only the first text survived to the present day, the

44 See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 304.5-6.
45 See the paragraph below.
46 Cf. The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 332.5-6.
other three seem to have been lost at some point in the tumultuous events of Tibetan history.

Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las’s account of Padma dbang rgyal’s life takes about thirty large-sized pages, each page has six lines of text. About sixty-five percent of this work closely follows the above-mentioned autobiography in verses, with minor additions from the *Record of Teachings Received*. Padma 'phrin las makes a remark, that starting with the protagonist’s forty-seventh year of age (1534), the events in the autobiographical account are not given in full, so he will continue the hagiography by employing the *Secret Account* and Legs ldan rdo rje’s biography. Since other sources available to Padma 'phrin las (*The Secret Account*, *The Record of Teachings Received*, and *The Collected Works*) are not extant to this day, it is difficult to evaluate to which extent Padma 'phrin las utilized them. Likely, that the events describing the supposedly visionary meeting with Blo chen bSod rnam rnam rgyal (Lochen Sönam Namgyal, 1400–1475) at Byams pa gling (Jampaling) monastery, the clear visions, and the prophecies were borrowed from the autobiographical *Secret Account*. At the same time, it is reasonable to suggest that the events describing the invitation of 'Bri gung pa Rin chen phun tshogs (Rinchen Püntsok of Drikung, 1509–1557), the building of a residence in Ön, and the post-mortal arrangements were complemented from the *Biography of Lekden Dorjé* (*Rig ’dzin rje'i rnam thar*).

Padma 'phrin las makes some minor remarks based on some of mNga’ ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal’s works. For example, the reference to Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor (Namkhé Neljor) as a highly realized master who was “able to hover in the air, unhindered like a bird” originates from mNga’ ris Pan chen’s autobiographical narration in *bKa’ brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa’i ’chad thabs mun sel nyi zla’i ’khor lo.*

The verses comprise about one-third of the whole text. They are followed or preceded with a commentary by the author; all of them, except the concluding ones, are citations from bibliographical sources available to Padma 'phrin las. Thus, the concluding devotional verses were composed by the latter.

Roughly eighty percent of the entirety of verses employed by Padma 'phrin las derive from the autobiography, *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being*, a voluminous manuscript of ninety-six folios with six lines of text on each folio. In the first part, comprising about one-fourth of his entire work, Padma 'phrin las extensively cites the biographical verses, provides many details, including some subsidiary events, until

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47 See *The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé*, pp. 326.5-328.6. For translation, see Sukhanova 2021, pp. 117-118.
48 See *The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé*, p. 324.4.
49 See *The Wheel of the Sun and the Moon that Dispels the Darkness by Ngari Panchen*, fol. 213.5.
at some point\textsuperscript{50} he decided to give up the citations of verses and paraphrase them in prose. Interestingly, Padma 'phrin las abridges some of the years of the protagonist’s life to just one sentence, even though the events that happened in those years took mNga' ris Pa\textsuperscript{n}chen several pages to describe. For example, the thirty-eighth year of age that takes about two folios of autobiographical verses describing the events in Dolpo,\textsuperscript{51} is summarized into just one sentence: “he widely turned the Dharma wheel of the New and the Old [Schools].” Likewise, the thirty-ninth year of mNga' ris Pa\textsuperscript{n}chen Padma dbang rgyal’s life is condensed to one observation: “he did a lot of studies and contemplations.”\textsuperscript{52} The difficulty of an effort of trying to convey some ninety-six pages full of events in one work is thoroughly understandable; however, Padma 'phrin las skips some important events, such as, for example, mNga' ris Pa\textsuperscript{n}chen’s activities in Gungthang; the names of the persons and the teachings he received and transmitted prior his departure to Nepal. Another major omission concerns the meeting of mNga' ris Pa\textsuperscript{n}chen with the “heart disciple” (\textit{thugs sras}) of Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge (Gorampa Sönam Sengé, 1429–1489), Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (Künga Gyaltsen).\textsuperscript{53} Unfortunately, the scope of this work does not allow me to study the autobiography in full and in detail. However, even a cursory comparison of the autobiography to Padma 'phrin las’s biography shows that the emendations of names, places, and transmitted teachings seem to be substantial. This stands in contrast to the first third of the biography, where Padma 'phrin las largely cited the autobiographical verses. The reader can not help but have the feeling that even though the author was surely acquainted with the autobiography, he did not plan the scope and contents of the forthcoming biographical project. It almost seems that Padma 'phrin las underestimated the volume of the autobiography, and as if he suddenly realized that he has to substantially abridge its contents in the course of writing. For this reason, the autobiographical contents are not presented proportionally: while the episodes from the younger years of mNga' ris Pa\textsuperscript{n}chen Padma dbang rgyal’s life are cited thoroughly, many important events that took place later in his life were left out.

But even so, Padma 'phrin las’s work is undisputable well-structured, the sentences are unambiguous, and the citations are explicitly marked. The life events are ordered according to the protagonist’s age, similar to the autobiographical verses. Since the author provides his

\textsuperscript{50} See \textit{The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé}, p. 315.2.

\textsuperscript{51} Cf. \textit{A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland}, fols. 36v5-37r6. For a rough translation of those events, see Sukhanova 2021, p. 104, fn. 751.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé}, p. 320.3.

\textsuperscript{53} Cf. \textit{A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland}, fol. 20v1-2. This seems to be Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, see Sukhanova 2021, p. 96, fn. 713.
date of birth from the very start, this enables the reader to identify the
dating of events without great difficulties. Except for some minor un-
tentional omissions, presumably made by the scribe, the verses are
copied truthfully to their autobiographic source. Even though, as seen
above, some autobiographical events are omitted, the author didn’t
miss any crucial ones: the occasions of taking vows and ordinations,
receiving transmissions, and paying visits to important places are me-
ticiously documented, including the person’s names involved. To
sum up, the biography of mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal by
Padma ’phrin las is a reliable source for assessing the chronicle of
events and the history of religious transmission lineages.

What follows is a summary of mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang
rgyal’s life based on Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las’s biography in The Ac-
counts of the Eminent Masters with some minor additions from the for-
mer’s Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland and The His-
toriographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Mon-
astery.54

5. A Descriptive Summary of the Life and Deeds
of mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal

The child who eventually is to be renowned as mNga’ ris Paṇ chen was
born in the Marang valley of Mustang. He starts his education at the
age of eight. His father, ’Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan, “one of
the most important religious personalities in Mustang,”55 transmits
him the principal empowerments and teachings of Maha-, Anu- and
Atiyoga. The gifted scion of ’Jam dbyangs rin chen’s family came to the
attention of the local ruler (mi dbang) right away: the latter invited
Padma dbang rgyal to give a public exposition. The nine-year-old child
was able to defeat a certain Blo bzang (Lobsang), the “Great Pundit of
mNga’ ris” (mNga’ ris kyi Paṇ chen).56 At the age of twelve, Padma
dbang rgyal had his first vision of a deity. It was Dhūmāṅgārī (Dhūma-
vatī, Dūsöl Lhamo).57 Pad ma ’phrin las remarks that Padma dbang
rgyal saw specifically that goddess because the latter’s father was an

54 For the full translation of the biography of mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal
by Padma ’phrin las, see Sukhanova 2021, pp. 74-128.
56 And the ruler pronounced that this special child is “certainly a tulku” (sprul pa zhis
yin par the tshom med). See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland,
fol. 3v3-5.
57 Dud sol lha mo or Dhūmavatī. According to Cécile Ducher, Dhūmāṅgārī is the best
rendering for dud sol lha mo (see Ducher 2017, p. 110, fn. 385). For the goddess’s role
in the transmission of the bKa’ brgyud lineage and in particular, in the rNgog line-
eage, see ibid, pp. 109-112.
emanation (*rnam sprul*) of Mar pa Lo tsā ba. At the same age, Padma dbang rgyal reverses the flood that threatened the very existence of local inhabitants of Marang valley. The remains of a stūpa commemorating this event can still be seen in the upper part of the valley (see Fig. 3). In the next year mNga’ ris Paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal will have a vision of Bhurkumktuṣṭa (*rMe brtseg*). At the age of fourteen he begins practicing austerities (*dka’ spyad*), the extraction of nutrients (*bcud len*), and *Equal Taste* (*Ro snyoms*). These activities were interrupted by having to put his skills to serve the royal household of the ruler of Mustang, who quickly came to appreciate the talents of the young prodigy. As to be expected, Padma’ phrin las at this point omits that apart from long-life and sādhanā rituals, Padma dbang rgyal also performed rituals for repenting the Mongol armies (*hor dmag*). After mNga’ ris Pan chen was done with the service at the ruler’s court (a service that presumably was difficult to refuse), he continues to take special oaths (*dam ’bca*), to practice austerities, such as keeping silence (*ngag bcad*) and staying in solitude (*them spang*). He will intensively engage in such practices until the age of eighteen. At the same age he will vow to be a vegetarian.

Already in his fifteenth year of life, the future-to-be Pundit of mNga’ ris shows interest in teachings from masters other than that of the rNy-ting ma tradition. Padma dbang ryal goes to receive instructions from Glo bo mKhan chen at Brag dkar theg chen gling monastery61 and at the palace of ‘Khor lo sdom (*Cakrasaṃvara*) situated at the mKha’ spyod (*Khachö*) hill.62 About two years later Glo bo mKhan chen will invite Padma dbang ryal to travel and to attend some masters of the Sa skya tradition. He is unable to follow this invitation because his father commands him to stay home.63 But the young Padma dbang rgyal does not give up his interest in the Sa skya pa. Upon hearing people praising

58 See *The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé*, p. 309.1.
59 *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 6v5-7.
60 See *ibid.*, fol. 11v5.
61 Brag dkar theg chen dar rgyas gling (*Drakar Thöchchen Dargyé Ling*) of the Sa skya tradition was founded by Ngor chen Kun ḏga’ bzang po (*Ngoren Kun’ga Zangpo*, 1382–1456) on his first visit to Glo bo, 1427–1428. After a series of calamities, the monastery was eventually moved to another place (see Heimbel 2017, pp. 289-290). For a photo of its ruins, see *The Register of the Progressive Spreading of the Doctrine in the Land of Lowo*, p. 48, image no. 33. The ruins are located at 29°11’11.3”N, 83°57’46.9”E. Cf. Kramer 2008: “According to G. Tucci (1956), p. 18 note 3, this monastery was located at the east of sMon-thang.”
62 This place started to serve as the residence of Mustang rulers starting with A ma dpal (alt. A me dpal, 1380–ca.1440). The Cakrasamvara temple was consecrated by Ngor chen Kun ḏga’ bzang po in 1436 (see Heimbel 2017, p. 281). For the first account of meeting with Glo bo Mkhon chen, see *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 8r2.
63 *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 10r2-3.
a certain Sa skya pa master⁶⁴ Chos bstan bzang (Chöten Zang)⁶⁵ Padma dbang rgyal goes to seek for him. This master eventually grants Padma dbang rgyal numerous instructions on the sūtra and the vinaya, and explanations on classical Buddhist treatises.⁶⁶ At the age of twenty-one Padma dbang rgyal “skillfully sweeps away [the notions] of clan and familial lineage, as if it was a spit on the ground,” and relies on all the scholars with great devotion.”⁶⁷ Timely, in the next year, his father has a dream where he saw numerous Indian and Tibetan spiritual masters of different traditions uttering “I am Padma dbang rgyal” and dissolving into his son.⁶⁸ He continues to receive teachings from Glo bo mKhan chen, especially the exegesis on Lam 'bras that included the general (Tshogs bshad) and the esoteric exposition (Slob bshad).⁶⁹ His faith in Glo bo mKhan chen grows,⁷⁰ and he decides to follow his footsteps even more closely. Thus, in 1511 in his twenty-fifth year, he takes the full bhikṣu ordination at bSam grub gling (Samdrup ling, 29°11’9.40"N, 83°54’25.32"E) monastery.⁷¹

In his autobiography mNgā’ ris Paṇchen casually describes how he flew in the air, walked on a surface of a lake, entered the face of a cliff.⁷²

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⁶⁴ This master likely belonged to the Sa skya pa as well, because he stayed at Brag dkar (Drakar) monastery See The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 310.2
⁶⁵ Düdjom Rinpoche calls this master “Nor bstan bzang po” (see Dudjom 1991, p. 805 and Dargyay 1998, p. 156).
⁶⁶ Such as the Five Treatises of Maitreya (Byams chos sde lnga), The Perfection of Wisdom (Phar phyin, Prajñāpāramitā), The Valid Cognition (Tshad ma, Praṇāya), The Root Stanzas on the Middle way (dBu ma rtsa shes, Mālamadhyamakakārikā), The Four Hundred Verses (bZhi brgya pa, Catuḥṣatakā), The Compendium of Instructions (bSlab btus, Śikṣāsamuccaya), Entering the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life (sPyod ’jug, Bodhicaryatāvāra), The Eight Principal Subjects and Seventy Topics (dNgos brgyad don bdun cu), see The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 312.6. Other early teachers of mNgā’ ris Paṇchen included Slob dpon Namka (ācārya Nam mkha’), ‘Jam dbyangs chos skyong (Jamyang Chökyong), sDom brtson Tshul khrims dpal (Domtsön Tsültrim Pel), Dri med dam pa Rin chen seng ge (Drimé Dampa Rinchen Sengé), ‘Jam dbyangs chos kyi rgyal po (Jamyang Chökyi Gyalpo). See ibid., pp. 313.1-3.
⁶⁷ Tib. mkhas grub kun la dkon pa’i sens kyis bsten// rigs rus cho ’brang mchil ma’i thal ba ltar// thabs kyis spangs nas, see A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 13v7. The words mchil ma’i thal ba ltar is a common idiomatic expression that is used to convey a notion of something that has a zero value.
⁶⁸ See The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, pp. 314.1-315.1
⁶⁹ See ibid., p. 315.2-3.
⁷⁰ Cf. ibid., p. 315.3: de’i tshe yang bla ma nyid dgyes mdzad rdo rje dngos su gziṅs.
⁷¹ This monastery lies about five kilometers to the west of Mönthang. As the seat of Glo bo Lo tsa ba Shes rab rin chen (Lowo Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, b. 13th century), it is strongly associated with the Sa skya school. Glo bo mKhan chen resided and passed away here in 1532 (see Ehrhard 2013a, p. 325, fn 20 and Kramer 2008, p. 77). For references on this monastery, see Heimbel 2017, p. 327, fn. 482. For a brief historical sketch, a detailed description of the ruins and its restoration plans, see Kitamura 2010, pp. 148-159.
⁷² See The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 310.3-4 and A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 9v3-4. In my opinion, this bolsters the
Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las’s remark demonstrates that in the 17th century Padma dbang rgyal was in the first place renowned as the great ordained pundit, not as a gter ston or a siddha.

In his eighteenth year, Padma dbang rgyal conducts his first visit to sKyid grong (Kyirong) and pays respects to the image of ’Phags pa wa ti (Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara) that was enshrined in the ’Phags pa lha khang (Phakpa Lhakhang). According to the autobiography, the statue miraculously talked on this occasion, and Padma dbang rgyal had clear visions of the geographical places he had a karmic connection with. In the future mNga’ ris Paṇ chen will regularly pay his respects to this shrine and undertake a renovation of its mandalas around 1521.

The autobiography mentions his visit to the temple dedicated to Buddha Maitreya, Byams sprin lha khang (Jamtrin Lhakhang) only once.

Padma dbang rgyal started his frequent travels by visiting Dolpo in 1512. He stayed in retreat at the Shel gyi ri bo ’brug sgra (the Crystal-Mountain Dragon’s Roar, 29°21’10.5"N, 82°56’00.6"E). Padma ’phrin las omits that mNga’ ris Paṇ chen contributes in building a temple (gtsug lag khang) in the vicinity of sTag phug (Tagphuk) monastery that was supposed to repent foreign invaders (mtha’ dmag bzlog) from the

hypothesis that the autobiography was not meant to be shared with the wider public, since the same author later refused to give a permission for writing his rnam thar out of several concerns that include the notion of secrecy as being indispensable for nurturing virtuous qualities (yon tan), see ibid., fol. 38r2.

“Nowadays, some teachers of ourselves and others maintain that mNga’ ris Paṇ chen was just a learned noble monk. [However,] I think that among people who consider themselves to be accomplished there isn’t anyone who has the greater awesomeness of accomplishment signs such as walking on [the surface] of a lake, flying above a cliff like a bird, entering the boulder of a rock without any obstacles like a mouse, running across the precipice and so forth.” See The Biography of Ngari Paṇ chen by Pema Trinlé, pp. 310.6-311.1: deng sang rang gzhan gyi bshes gnyen ’ga’ zhig mnga’ ris pan chen mkhas btsun tsam yin zer yang/ mtsho’i steng du ’byon pa dang/ brag la [311] bya ltar ’phur ba dang/ ri brag la thogs pa med par byi ltar ’dzul bal g.yang sar rgyug pa sogs grub rtags kyi ngo mtshar/ di las che ba rang grub par khas len pa rnam la yang med ’dra snyam.

The self-arisen statue of Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara was housed in the temple of ’Phags pa lha khang (28°23’47.64"N, 85°19’39.38"E) until 1959. Afterward, it was “evacuated” to India and since then it is kept in the private quarters of the XIV. Dalai Bla ma. A rare photograph of this statue was found in Decler 2006, p. 78, p. 97. For the translation of the history, or “biography,” (rnam thar) of this statue that was accidentally discovered within when it was transported from Nepal to India, see Ehrhard 2004.

Padma dbang rgyal visited ’Phags pa lha khang for at least five times: in 1504, 1518, 1520, 1521, and 1522. See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 10v7, 23v6, 28r2, 33r2, 34r2.

See ibid., fol. 24r7.

On this mountain, see Mathes 2019, pp. 299-321.
region. In the future, from 1523-1524, mNga’ ris Paṇchen will spend two years in Dolpo meditating and exchanging Dharma teachings. In the same year when Padma dbang rgyal journeys to Dolpo the first time (1512), he also goes on a pilgrimage to Purang (Tib. [s]Pu hrang), a journey he will once again undertake in the company of Glo bo mkhan chen in 1518. On his first journey in 1512, mNga’ ris Paṇchen visits the citadel of sKu mkhar Nyi ma’i gzung, the Kho char (alt. ’Khor chags, 30°14’59.5”N, 81°16’03.9”E) monastery and en route encounters “Mongolian robbers” (hor gyi jag pa). He eventually composes a guidebook (lam yig) that includes a description of his visions and auspicious signs he encountered en route. On his second visit to Purang in 1518, he visits Byang chub gling (Changchub ling, 31°20’33.58”N, 79°46’53.87”E), the “summer dwelling of Lord Atiśa, the place of Bāri Lotsāwa,” where Glo bo mkhan chen bestows some

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78 See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 18r6. Cf. The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 316.2-3.
79 Padma’phrin las limits the description of these years to saying that “at the age of thirty-eight he widely turned the Dharma wheel of the New and the Old Schools. At the age of thirty-nine he again continued numerous studies and contemplations.” See ibid., p. 320.3. For the autobiographical description of those two years, see A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fols. 34r4-37r6. For the rough summary in English, see Sukhanova 2021, pp. 104-105, fn. 751. mNga’ ris Paṇchen was “the unifying figure for the different transmissions [in Dolpo] in the 15th and the 16th centuries.” (Ehrhard 2013a).
80 This citadel was built in the early 10th century by sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon (Kyide Nyima Gön) and Glo bo Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (Lowo Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen, fl. 13th century) translated many texts in the 13th century here (see Stearns 1996, p. 135). The visit to the Nyi gzung fortress is not mentioned in Padma’phrin las’s biography of mNga’ ris Paṇchen and was complemented from the autobiography (see A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, 19r2).
81 For the numerous variations of its spellings, a brief description, and references, see Heimbrel 2017 p. 297, fn. 355. For a brief historical survey see Buswell & Lopez 2014, p. 431. For detailed descriptions of the modern monastic complex of Khorchag, its sitemap, historical survey, and colorful photos, see Gyalpo et. al 2015
82 And by virtue of taking refuge, he was veiled from their sight (see A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 19r7). This account is omitted in The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé.
83 See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 19r6. This guidebook seems to be inaccessible at the present. Cf. Dowman 1983 for a hypothesis that mNga’ ris Panchen wrote the earliest guidebook on Nepal for pilgrims (gnas yig). It is based on the fact that [Tenzin] Chos kyi nyi ma (Chökyi Nyima) and Bla ma bTsan po (Lama Tsenpo) mention a certain “mNga’-ris Pan-chen” in their works (Dowman 1983, pp. 186-187). However, this hypothesis has yet to be substantiated, since Bla ma bTsan po refers to mNga’ ris Grub chen, not to mNga’ ris Paṇchen (see Decler 2006, p. 104; Wylie 1970, p.18).
84 See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 24r2-3: jo bo a ti shas// dbyar gnas kyi sa cha byang chub gling// snying rje can ba ri lo tsā’i gnas//
special instructions and empowerments to the public.\textsuperscript{85}

The first mention of Shākya bzang po in mNgā' ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal’s autobiography comes in his twenty-seventh year. In 1513, Padma dbang rgyal makes a six-month retreat under the guidance of Padma ’Bum. He applies “experiential instructions” (nyams khris) on the Boundless Vision (dGongs pa zang thal) and on the Blue [Cycle of] the Mind Sādhana (Thugs sgrub sngon po).\textsuperscript{86} Later in the same year, he meets sPrul sku Shākya bzang po at the capital of Glo bo.\textsuperscript{87} From him [Ngari Pan chen] receives many empowerments and teachings such as the Three Sādhana Cycles of the Northern Treasures (Byang gter sgrub skor gsum). In the sGo le kha cave (29°07'17.8"N, 83°53'20.4"E, see Fig. 5-6) he performs an initiatory retreat (bsnyen pa) on “Avalokiteśvara from the Northern Treasures” (Byang gter spyan ras gzigs), Avalokiteśvara Who Liberates All Living Beings (sPyan ras gzigs ’gro ba kun grol)\textsuperscript{88} and sees three different appearances of Pañjaranātha Mahākāla (mGon po gur). In the course if his life, mNgā' ris Pan chen strives to use every opportunity of meeting and receiving instructions and transmissions from Shākya bzang po. In 1518 and in 1520 at Gung thang and at dKar ye respectively, he receives the Nyang Cycles, Hayagrīva [according to] the Nyang [tradition] (rTa mgrin nyang lugs), the Great Yoga of Padmasambhava (O rgyan gyi rnal ’byor chen mo) and The Ngadak’s Precious Ornament of the Ćākīs (mNgā’ bdag gi mkha’ ’gro nor bu ’phreng).\textsuperscript{89} Padma dbang rgyal later gave the transmissions of Nyang cycles to ’Bri gung pa Rin chen phun tshogs, and thus it became an important element of the ’Bri gung bka’ brgyud tradition.\textsuperscript{90} Besides, mNgā' ris Pan chen also met Shākya bzang po in 1521 at sKyid grong. On that

\textsuperscript{85} See \textit{ibid}. Padma ’phrin las limits the description of this journey by saying “at the age of thirty-two, he traveled to Purang as an attendant of Glo bo mKhan chen.” (See The Biography of Ngari Pan chen by Pema Trinlé, p. 317.4).

\textsuperscript{86} See \textit{ibid.}, p. 316.4-5. Cf. \textit{A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland}, fol. 18v6.

\textsuperscript{87} Cf. \textit{ibid.}, fol. 19r6.

\textsuperscript{88} Whereas Padma ’phrin las speaks of byang gter spyan ras gzigs (see The Biography of Ngari Pan chen by Pema Trinlé, p. 317.1), the autobiography provides the full name of this cycle: \textit{spyan ras gzigs ’gro ba kun sgrul (=grol)}. See \textit{A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland}, fol. 19r7. mNgā’ ris Pan chen eventually transmits this cycle to rNam grol bzang po (Namdröl Zangpo, fl. 16th century). See Ehrhard 2013a, p. 327.

\textsuperscript{89} See \textit{A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland}, fol. 24v4-5, 28r2. Cf. the biography of Legs ldan rdo rje: “They received the Mahākāranātha and the Awareness-Holder cycles [of the Northern Treasure Tradition], the root empowerment for the Assemblage of Sugatas (bDe ’dus rtsa dbang) cycle, the longevity practice from the Radiant Longevity Benediction (Tshe sgrub ’od zer dra ba), The Hayagrīva cycle of the Nyang Tradition (rTa mgrin Nyang lugs lcags ral can), Sākya Zangpo’s autobiography, prophecies, and treasure practices revealed at the Red Stupa [at Samyé].” (Valentine 2013, p. 140).

\textsuperscript{90} Akester 2016, p. 169.
occasion mNga' ris Paṇchen made lavish offerings to the Drang sPrul sku and received the remaining teachings on [the gter ma Cycles of] Nyang: the Peaceful and Wrathful [Aspects of the] Guru (Bla ma zhi drag) and the Black Wrathful [Lady, Tröma Nagmo] (Khos nag). Their final meeting took place in 1527 at dGon pa bDe grol (Dedröl monastery) in Byang ngam ring (Northern Ngamring). Shākya bzang po stayed there with Thugs sras Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (Thuksé Namkha Gyaltsen, b. 1454–d.1541). Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las remarks that on this occasion Legs ldan rdo rje received the Boundless [Vision] (Zang thal).

mNga’ ris Paṇchen went on a pilgrimage to Nepal in 1522. He visited the Stūpas of Svayambhūnāth (Shing kun) and Bodhnāth (Bya rung kha shor), and Pharping (Pham mthing). In Thāṃ Vihāra in Kathmandu he saw a yogī playing a huge dāmaru, wearing maroon clothes and bone ornaments. Padma ’phrin las reports that mNga’ ris Paṇchen saw the great Indian siddha Śāvaripa (Sha ri pa).

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91 See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 39v2. 
92 This was the family estate of the Mes (Mé) family, “which had strong familial connections to the Northern Treasure Tradition” (Valentine 2018, p. 105, p. 107) and the seat of Thugs sras Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan, b. 1454–d.1541 (see Ehrhard 2013b, p. 125, fn. 9). For the discussion of his life and the translation of his biography, see Valentine 2013.
93 For the discussion of his life and the translation of his biography in English, see Valentine 2013.
95 A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 33r4 reads yam bur thang bhi ra. “Thang Bihari […] is the Tham Bahil or Tam Vihara in the present-day Thamel area of Kathmandu. Also known as Vikramasīla, it was founded, or re-founded, by Atiśa Dipamkara in 1040. […] It appears to have been a popular residence of Tibetans.” (Roberts 2007, p. 172). “However, of the plethora of names - Thang Baidhari, Stham Vihāra, Tham Vihāra, Vikramasīla Māhavihāra, and Thamel Bāhāl - which have been used to describe this supposedly same Vihāra, only the last two are known to the Newars of today, and more research is necessary before we can definitely identify Thamel Bāhāl with Atiśa’s vihara.” (Dowman 1983, p. 231). The geographical coordinates of what is known as “Bhagawan Bahāl” or “Bikramśīla Mahavihār” in Thamel are 27°42’56.05”N, 85°18’45.23”E.
96 In his autobiography, mNga’ ris Paṇchen does not explicitly mention the name of this person (cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 33r4-6).
97 For a biographical sketch on this siddha, see Stearns 1996, pp. 139-141, fn. 46; Burghart 2017, p. 68, fn. 222. Savarīpa was the guru of Maitrīpa (ca. 1007–ca. 1085) and lived much earlier than mNga’ ris Paṇchen. His possible dating ranges from the 10th up to the 15th century (see Mathes 2008, p. 249). For this reason, the account of their meeting is problematic. Perhaps, Padma ’phrin las makes this statement because of the existing belief that Śavarīpa was “known to have obtained the state of deathlessness because of his tantric practice” (Ehrhard 2002, p. 48, fn. 17) and realized emptiness (see Mathes 2008, p. 249). Besides, Savarīpa is known to have given visionary teachings to Vanaratna (1384–1468, see Ehrhard 2002, p. 48, fn.17) and Vibhūticandra (12th–13th century); the visionary meeting with the latter
Pañ chen stayed in Yang le shod (Yanglesho, 27°36’59.73"N, 85°15’51.05"E) for seven days. He had a vision of Padmasambhava (O rgyan chen po) surrounded by the deities of the Eight [Great] Sādhanas. From the Nepalese guru Jñānaśrī and his disciples (Jñāna naśrī yab sras) mNga’ ris Pañ chen received the Cycles of Acala (Mi g.yo ba), the Five [Great] Dhāraṇīs (Grwa lnga), Tara (sGrōl ma), Yoga (Yo ga), Hevajra (dGyes rdor), and Vajravārahī (Phag mo).

On his route back home in 1523, Padma dbang rgyal stays in a meditation retreat in dGe lung in lower Glo bo (Glo bo smad). With a help of a dākinī, he realizes that he was once born as Ācārya Abhayākara. Thereupon, mNga’ ris Pañ chen then decides he must receive the initiation of the Vajra Garland [Vajrāvalī] (rDo rje ’phreng ba). So, he travels to see Lo chen dKon mchog chos skyabs, a master who previously acted as the presiding abbot (mkhan po, upādhyāya) at Padma dbang rgyal’s monastic ordination at bSam grub gling in 1511. According to Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las, at the age of forty mNga’ ris Pañ chen completed all the approximation rites (bsnyen par rdzogs pa) on all the maṇḍalas of the Vajra Garland (rDo rje ’phreng ba’i dkyil ’khor), and that is something that deserves very high esteem.

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98 For the legendary accounts of Padmasambhava connected to this place according to various Tibetan sources, see Dowman 1983, pp. 249-254.
99 Literally, “The Valley of Virtue.” This village is nowadays sometimes spelled as sger lung, the “Private Valley” (see Jackson 1984, p. 35). Modern maps give the following variants: “Geling,” “Gheling,” “Chiling Gaon,” “Ghiling Gaon.” At present, this village administratively belongs to Upper Mustang, whereas Padma ’phrin las refers to it dGe lung in Glo bo smad (see The Biography of Ngari Pañ chen by Pema Trinlé, p. 319.5).
100 Ibid., p. 319.5-6. Franz-Karl Ehrhard understood this passage in a way that the dākinīs prophesized dKon mchogchos skyabs, not mNga’ ris Pañ chen, as an incarnation of Abhayākara-gupta (see Ehrhard 2013a, p. 319). However, if we read the autobiography, then it is evident that the karmic imprints of Abhayākara-gupta had awakened in mNga’ ris Pañ chen (cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 34r6).
102 The Biography of Ngari Pañ chen by Pema Trinlé, p. 320.3-4.
Inspired by Glo bo mKhan chen in 1527, mNga' ris Pan chen decided to go to Tibet to “restore the precious teaching of the Victorious One” together with his younger brother Legs Idan rdo rje. Padma 'phrin las meticulously underlines that this journey took place after both 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan and the local governors (sde bdag) granted their blessings and permission to do so. Prior to arriving in Lhasa, mNga' ris Pan chen and Legs Idan rje spent one year in Tsang. Upon their arrival to Lhasa, they visit principle pilgrimage sites of Lhasa – the Ramoché temple and “the palaces on the Marpori and the Chakpori hill” (pho brang dmar lcags), and mNga' ris Pan chen yearns for the Doctrines of Ngok (rNgog chos) and Pacification (Zhi byed). At Barkhor he is approached by the protectress dPal ldan lha mo (dpal lhas) who advises him to seek those doctrines from rNgog ston gZhung pa, the rNgok Teacher of gZhung. When the mNga' ris brothers arrive to Nya mo skyur (Nyamo Kyur, 29°17’30.01"N, 90°56’23.15"E), the goddess Dhūmāṅgārī welcomes them. At gZhung spre' u zhir (Zhung Tre'u Zhing, 29°12’38.20"N, 90°57’50.47"E) and Thar pa gling (Tharpaling, 29°16’24.52"N, 90°55’22.49"E) they met rNgog Rin po che bSod nams bstan 'dzin (Ngok Rinpoché Sönam Tenzin, fl. 16th century) and obtained the entirety of transmissions of the rNgog dkyil (Ngok Maṇḍalas). Later in 1533, mNga' ris Pan chen again returns to the valley of gZhung and receives all the remaining doctrines of rNgog (rNgog chos), as well the teachings on the Merging and Transference (bSre 'pho). Besides, sometime after 1528 in Grwa thang (Dratang), the mNga' ris brothers receive the Cycle of Red Yamārī (gShed dmar) and other teachings from Zhwa lu Lo chen Chos skyong bzang po (Lotsāwa Chökyong Zangpo

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103 See ibid., p. 320.6-321.2
104 See ibid., p. 321.6.
105 See ibid., p. 322.1.
106 In his autobiography mNga' ris Pan chen does not explicitly name this lady “dPal ldan lha mo,” but he cites her telling that she “is a goddess in a female body, the guardian of this area.” Cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland fol. 40r5: nga bu mo’i lus can lha’i rigs gnas ‘di nyid kyi bdag po yin. For detailed arguments why dpal lhas refers to dPal ldan lha mo, see Sukhanova 2021, p. 107, fn. 757.
107 The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 322.5.
108 See Ferrari 1958, p. 55. Also, see Ducher 2017, pp. 358-359.
109 This monastery was founded in the late 15th century as a residence for the Gyaltsa (rGyal tsha) branch of the hereditary lineage of rNgog (see Ducher 2017, p. 141).
110 He is the last master of “rNgog about whom something substantial is known” (for a brief summary of his activities see Ducher 2017, pp. 350-351).
111 The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 322.6.
112 Ibid., p. 325.4.
of Zhalu, 1441–1527/1528). Also, mNga' ris Pañchen highly praises the master Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor (Namké Neljor) whom he meets at the White monastery, dGon dkar (Gönkar). The teachings he received from Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor include *The Assembly of the Sugatas of the Eight Pronouncements* (**bKa’ brgyad bde gshegs ’dus pa**). This transmission was the last one out of total twenty-five times that mNga' ris Pañchen receives it in his life, and he feels that it is the authentic one.

Around 1529 mNga' ris Pañchen meets a certain “Guru of Lhodrak” (lHo brag gu ru pa), with Kaḥ thog pa Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan (the Dharma Lord Sōnam Gyaltsen of Kaḥtok, 1466–1540), and with Kong chen Rin po che Nam mkha’ dpal ldan rgya mtsho (Kongchen Rinpoché Namkha Palden Gyatso, fl. 16th century) in *'Phreng phu O rgyan chos rdzong* (The Dharma Fortress of Oddiyana in the upper Treng valley).

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113 Based on his date of death, Cécile Ducher proposes that “it may be wiser to accept the dates for mNga’ ris Pañchen’s journey to gZhung given by bDud ’joms Rin po che, namely that it occurred ‘starting from his 38th year,’ i.e. from 1524 onward.” (Ducher 2017, p. 350). However, this is problematic because mNga’ ris Pañchen’s autobiography clearly places this visit between his forty-third and forty-sixth year of age (that is, if we take 1487 as the accurate date of mNga’ ris Pañchen Padma dbang rgyal’s birth, then this should have been between 1529–1532). Cf. *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 41v5.

114 This monastery was situated in Lhodrak in Tsendro (bTsan gro), see Ahmad 1999, p. 168. bTsan gro lies in gTam shul, see Akester 2016, p. 450.

115 *The Biography of Ngari Pañchen by Pema Trinlé*, p. 324.2. Throughout the course of his entire life mNga’ ris Pañchen strived to find the “actual paper of the Treasure (**gter shog dngos**) of Nyang ral’s **bKa’ brgyad bde gshegs ’dus pa** cycle” (Gyatso 1986, p. 33, fn. 44). mNga’ ris Pañchen’s descriptive autobiographical account of his quest is found on pp.165-229 in “The Wheel of the Sun and the Moon that Dispels the Darkness.” (**bKa’ brgyad bde gshegs ’dus pa’i chad thabs mun sel ngya zla’i ’khor lo**). For a bibliographical reference, see Bibliography.

116 I was unable to identify this person. Cf. *A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland*, fol. 42r1: *lho brag gi bla ma gu ru pa// sku mched mkhan chen seng rgyal sogs*.

117 In his autobiography, bSod nams rgyal mtshan lists the mNga’ ris brothers as his disciples (for an analysis of his life based on his autobiography, see Ehrhard 2013, pp. 379-391). For a reference to this meeting, see *ibid.*, p. 390.

118 The biography of Legs ldan bdud ’joms rdo rje mentions that this master acknowledges mNga’ ris Pañchen Padma dbang rgyal as the emanation of the qualities of the king Khri srong lde btsan (Trisong Detsen), and his younger brother as the speech emanation of rDo rje bdud ’joms (Dorjé Düdjom), see Valentine 2013, p. 148.

119 The entrance to the valley of Treng (Trang) lies east of rDo rje brag, on the northern shore of the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river, 29°21′23″N, 91°08′11″E. This valley nowadays belongs to Gongkar County. Other spellings include *‘phreng po, phreng bu, ‘phreng ’go or ‘phrang ’go* (not to be confused with Trango in Western Tibet (Tib: ‘Phrang sgo, Chinese pinyin: chang guo xiang, which lies about eighty kilometers to west from Saga). The exact location of the Dharma Fortress of Oddiyana, O rgyan chos rdzong, within the valley seems to be unclear. This hermitage was founded by Rin chen phun tshogs (Sørensen & Hazod 2007, p. 180, fn. 428), a
mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal’s activities as a renowned Dharma-master included presiding over the great accomplishment ceremony (sgrub chen) on the Gathering of Intentions (dGongs ’dus) in Yar res sNye mo¹²⁰ and giving teachings on the Assembly of Sugatas (bDe ’dus) at Phung po ri bo che (Phunghpo Riwoché, 29°18’9.66”N, 89°15’24.32”E)¹¹² in 1532.¹²² In the same year he held activity rituals (las kyi cho ga) at the monasteries of Ngor Ēwam chos ldan (Ngor Ēwam Chöden, 29° 7’9.74”N, 88°49’31.08”E)¹²³ and Thub bstan gser mdog can (Thubten Serdokchen, 29°19’2.92”N, 89° 2’0.42”E).¹²⁴ He also visited spiritual ally and student of mNga’ ris Pañ chen and Legs ldan rdo rje, whom they likely first met at bSam yas monastery. The mNga’ ris brothers later invited Rin chen phun tshogs to perform consecration ceremonies at bSam yas yesi (see The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 330.3-4). For more references on this valley and its connection to various historical figures, see Sørensen & Hazod 2007, p. 180, fn. 428. Eva Neumaier-Dargyay in her translation of mNga’ ris Pañ chen’s biography names here a certain Phreng so O rgyan chos bzang who gave teaching to the mNga’ ris brothers along with Kong chen Nam kha’ dpal ldan (see Dargyay 1998, p. 158). However, upon consulting the autobiography, we can rest assured that O rgyan chos rdzong is a name of a place, not of a person, and that bzang is probably just a misspelling of rdzong that found its way into the Tibetan sources that the author used for her translation. The autobiography speaks of the “Dharma fortress” (Chos rdzong) of Phreng phu. It seems that “Orgyan” (O rgyan) was supplemented later by Padma ’phrin las (Cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 42r: de nas kyang phreng bu’i chos rdzong du/ grub chen gyi rgyal po nam mkha’i mtshan/ kong chen la ’jam bshes gnyen dang/)

¹¹² The modern Nyemo County lies about 150 kilometers to the east from Shigatsé, on the northern bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo river. Its former capital was Dar grong (Dardong), 29°26’22.94”N, 90° 9’4.68”E.

¹¹³ This sacred mountain lies about forty kilometers to the east of Shigatsé at the southern bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo river near the modern-day airport. This place has a hermitage of Padmasambhava and is associated with discoveries of several treasure-texts (see Dorje 2004, p. 288). g.Yung ston rDo rje dpal (Yungtön Dorjé Pel, 1284-1365) used to have this place as his residence (see Ferarri 1958, p. 70; p. 162, fn. 628).

¹¹⁴ The explanation on the Assembly of Sugatas by mNga’ ris Pañ chen bears the ornamental title “The Wheel of the Sun and the Moon that Dispels the Darkness.” Full title: bKa’ brgyad bde gshegs ’dus pa’i chad thabs mun sel ngi zla’i ’khor lo. For a bibliographical reference, see Bibliography.

¹²¹ This famous monastic institution was founded by Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po (Ngorchen Künza Zango, 1382–1456). The abbot in 1533 was lHa mchog seng ge (Lhamchok Sengé, 1468–1535, see Heimbel 2017, p. 518), who paid a visit to Mustang in 1523. mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal attended lHa mchog seng ge’s teachings upon returning from Nepal in 1523 (Padma ’phrin las refers to lHa mchog seng ge as Ngor chen lHa mchog bzang po, see The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 319.5).

¹²² This monastery was founded in 1469 by Shākya mchog ldan (Śākya Chokden, 1428–1507, see Ferarri 1958, p. 70; p. 162, fn. 625). It is situated to the north-east of Shigatsé, on the southern bank of the Yarlung Tsangpo river. This was one of the monasteries in Central Tibet where monks from Mustang traveled to for obtaining the bka’ bcu pa title (see Heimbel 2017, p. 308, fn. 399). This title means “the one for mastering ten texts.” For more of its founding and for a detailed
and gave teachings at Nyang stod (Upper Nyang) and Zhwa lu (Shalu, 29° 7'40.38"N, 88°59'34.54"E). All those places belong to the gTsang (Tsang) province of Tibet.

In fact, mNga' ris Pan chen hopes to depart to gTsang earlier. But he follows the urge of Kaḥthog Chos kyi rje bSod rgyal (Sogyal, the Dharma Lord of Kaḥtog, 1466–1540), and rather unwillingly accepts the request of a certain sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang po (Tulku Chökyi Wangpo) to come to lHo brag (Lhodrak) in 1530. mNga' ris Pan chen visits bSam grub bde ba chen po'i gtsug lag khang (Samdrup Dewa Chenpo Temple, 28°22'0.93"N, 90°38'11.24"E), mKhar chu (Kharchu, 28°05'36.0"N, 91°07'36.5"E), lHa bro (Lhadro), sMra bo lcog (Mawochock, 28°27'25.33"N, 91°26'46.81"E), and Gro bo lung (Drowolung, 28°10'43.26"N, 90°49'38.45"E). Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las omits that apart from sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang po, mNga' ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal also gave teachings to “the king of lHo brag, Khra pa” (lho brag gi rgyal po Khra pa). At Zha stod (the Upper Sha) and bTsan gro (Tsendro) mNga' ris Pan chen presides over a “great account of its development during the times of Shākya mchog ldan, see Caumanns 2013. I was unable to find any evidence in support of Martin Boord’s claim that mNga’ ris Pan chen was the founder of that monastery (see Boord 1993, pp. 28-29).

Alt. Myang stod. This district corresponds with the modern area of Gyantsé (rGyal tse), see Ryavec 2015, p. 38 map 10. The present-day Nyang valley lies to the south of Gyantsé. References: Sørensen & Hazod 2007, p. 312 (map).

126 See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 325.2
127 Full name: Kaḥ thog pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (Sönam Gyaltsen of Kaḥtok). See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 42r2-3: ka (=kaḥ) thog gi chos rje bsdod rgyal and ibid., 42r7: ka (=kaḥ) thog gi ches rtes (=ka thog gi chos rje). For the analysis of Kaḥ thog pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan’s life based on his autobiography, see Ehrhard 2013, pp. 379-391.
128 Cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 42r7.
129 See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 323.4
130 Alternative name: La yags gu ru lha khang (Layak Guru Lhakang). “For information on the Gu-ru lha-khang in La-yags (also known as the bSam-grub bDe ba chen-po’i lha-khang) and the rather few details on the descendants of Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug who kept the family residence in IHo-brag, see the historiographical work of Guru bKra-shis, p. 653.6-12; the site came in the 16th century into the hands of the IHo-brag gSung-sprul incarnations from the tradition of Rig-‘dzin Padma gling-pa (1450–1521).” (Ehrhard 2002, p. 76, fn. 42).
131 For a detailed description of this site see Chan 1994, p. 693 (map). Also, see Ferrari 1958, p. 136.
132 This site in western part of Lhodrak is associated with Guru Chöwang (see Ehrhard 2002, p. 59).
133 This was the residence of the descendants of Nyangrel Nyima Özer (ibid., 2002, p. 26). In addition, one account reports that it was here that Ngari Panchen acquired the prophetic guide to the treasures that he will later reveal at bSam yas at the age of forty-six, see The Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 279.3-4.
134 See A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 43r1.
accomplishment ceremony” (sgrub chen) on the Eight Pronouncements (bKa’ brgyad). After in 1532 Padma dbang rgyal was finally done with exchanging teachings with sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang po and giving “all sorts of explanations of his own tradition to the descendants of Myang, those of sGang zur and others,” thus fulfilling his obligations for the Padmasambhava’s prophecy “granted to Myang Rin po che (Nyang Rinpoché, 1124/1136–1192/1204) that mNga’ ris Pan chen Rin po che [should] restore the deteriorated doctrine’s lineages,” to come true, he straight away went to bSam yas. At bSam yas, mNga’ ris Pan chen gives teachings on The Heart Essence of the Dākinī (mKha’ ’gro snying thig) and on The Five Stages of Guhyasamāja (gSang ’dus rim Inga) to the descendants of the divine royal dynasty, the ones from the Bu tshal ba (Butselwa) clan. Later, when mNga’ ris Pan chen again stayed at bSam yas in 1533, he resides at the Bu tshal (Butsel) temple. Here, in 1532, he composes The Commandment, the Splendour of the Flaming Vajra (bka’ yig rdo rje ’bar ba’i gzi byin). This text serves as the monastic constitution (bca’ yig) for the.

“Drupchen” is a public ritualistic ceremony that may last for several days. It usually focuses on a certain deity (in this case, the deities of The Eight Pronouncements). The sound of the mantra of the particular deity on which the ceremony is focused may not be interrupted. For this reason, the participants usually take turns participating in sessions that run twenty-four hours around the clock. “The goal of a great accomplishment rite is for a group of ritualists and participants to communally realize the ultimate awakened state of Buddhahood through materializing and experiencing themselves and their immediate environment as a mandala of awakened deities and their pure realm.” (Gentry 2017, p. 58).

“myang rin po cher o rgyan dngos kyis lung bstn te/ mnga’ ris pan chen rin po ches chos bryug ydi kyi nyams pa gso bar gsangs pa’i don mngon du gyur te mnyang yi gdung sgang zur sogs la rang lugs kyi nyan bshad sna tshogs mdzad/ sprul sku chos kyi dbang por ’yang chos mang du gsan cing phul/ (see The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 324.6). The autobiography mentions that those persons belonged to the bu tshal lineage (see A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 43v6: de dus su chos rgyal lha yi bryug/ bu tshal gyi chos rje dpon sob kyis). The Bu tshal ba [clan] used to rule at bSam yas (see Smith 2001, p. 319, fn. 675). According to The History of Treasures of Zablungpa (Zab lung pa’i gter ’byung), those persons were IHa btsun Chos kyi rgyal po (Lhatsün Chökyi Gyalpo) and IHa rig sNams rgyal grags pa (Lharig Namgyal Drakpa), see The Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 298.6.

In some sources the Bsam yas bu tshal temple is referred to as the Bu ’tshal gser khang gling (Butsel Serkang Ling), see Wangdu et al. 2000, p. 68, fn. 227. This temple was built in form of a Vajradhātu-mandala (see Klimburg-Salter et al. 1997, p. 174).

See The Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 297.6. mNga’ ris Pan chen writes that he composed the text in the third month of the dragon year (without specifying its element). On the discussion why the dragon year should be considered to be 1534, see Sukhanova 2021, p. 126, fn. 845.
rDo rje brag monastery. Besides, he contributes to the renovation of bSam yas. In 1542 the mNga’ ris brothers together with ’Bri gung pa Rin chen phun tshogs reconsecrated the bSam yas complex.140

In 1533, mNga’ ris Paṇchen granted extensive teachings on the Northern Treasures. At Zangs mdog sgrags phu ri (The Copper-colored Mountain of the upper Drak valley)141 he taught the Three Cycles (sGrub skor gsum),142 The Eight Pronouncements: Natural Arising (bKa’ brgyad rang shar), as well as the Unimpeded [Realization] (Zang thal), and the Viśuddha–Vajrakīla (Yang phur).

As a gter ston, mNga’ ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal is known to have revealed treasure texts on one occasion in his life.143 This event took place at the bSam yas monastery when he was forty-six years old. According to Padma ’phrin las, mNga’ ris Pan chen employed Legs ldan rdo rje’s kha byang the latter acquired at lHo brag srin mo sbar rjes can (The Demoness’s Claw Cliff of Lhodrak).144 Another account says that the prophetic guide was carried by the wind and fell into the hands of mNga’ ris Pan chen when he was visiting sMra bo lcog.145 The treasures consisted of The Full Gathering of the Gurus, the Awareness Holders (Bla ma rig ’dzin yongs ’dus) and The Full Gathering of the Gurus, the Eight Pronouncements” (Bla ma bka’ brgyad yongs ’dus).146 There were several hagiographies of Padmasambhava, one of them was the Great Comprehensive Account of Liberation of the Exalted One (’Phags pa grangs nges kyi rnam thar chen mo).147 Padma ’phrin las refers to mNga’ ris Pan chen’s treasures as The Five Former and Latter Profound Treasures (sNga phyi zab gter lnga).148

Sometime after 1534, the mNga’ ris brothers build a residence in ‘On. Many disciples settle in its vicinity. Padma ’phrin las refers to this

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140 See Akester 2016, p. 317; The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 330.3.
141 This mountain is the birthplace of gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes (Nupchen Sangyé Yeshe), one of the twenty-five principal disciples of Padmasambhava. Besides, this is the location of a hermitage of the 9th-cent. rGya ’Jam dpal gsang ba (Gya Jampel Sangwa), see Sørensen & Hazod 2007, p. 179, fn. 427.
142 Cf. A Talk by an Ordinary Bodily Being, the Precious Garland, fol. 44v1: thugs sgrub gsum. It included the gDung sgrub sādhana, see ibid.
143 That is, apart from his endeavour in finding the “actual paper” (gter shog dngos) of bKa’ brgyad bde gshigs ’dus pa’s, see fn. 114.
144 The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 324.6.
145 See The Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 279.3-4.
146 According to Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Christoph Burghard, Bla ma bka’ brgyad yongs ’dus and Rig ’dzin yongs ’dus designate the same cycle (see Ehrhard 2015, p. 161, fn. 26, and Burghard 2017, p. 68, fn. 223). This statement requires further research. Cf. The Historiographical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 279.5-6.
147 For the full listing of the treasures revealed by mNga’ ris Pan chen on this occasion, see ibid., fol. 279.4-281.1.
148 The Biography of Ngari Paṇchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 325.1.
community as “the monastic encampment of the vajra-holders” (rdo rje ’dzin pa’i lcog grwa).\textsuperscript{149} mNga’ ris Pañ chen passes away in his residence ’On smon ldan gyi bla brang (The Guru’s Residence of Ön Mön-\textsuperscript{den})\textsuperscript{150} on 11\textsuperscript{th} September, 1542.\textsuperscript{151} Legs ldan rdo rje managed the distribution of mNga’ ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal’s heritage. It included the materials pervading to the Sa skya, bKa’ gdamgs, rNying ma pa, and bKa’ rgyud traditions.\textsuperscript{152}

Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las lays an emphasis that mNga’ ris Pañ chen served “the Old and the New Schools without bias.”\textsuperscript{153} Some later bi-\textsuperscript{graphers call mNga’ ris Pañ chen “the non-sectarian sovereign of the Sūtric and the Tantric teachings” (mdo sngags bstan pa’i ris med kyi bdag po).\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{149} The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 332.4.
\textsuperscript{150} This residence is also referred to as ’On smon thang (Ön Mönthang), see Historio-\textsuperscript{graphical Account of the Northern Treasure’s Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, p. 288.2. Oral communication with the monks of Dorjé Drak revealed that there should be four destroyed stūpas with relics of mNga’ ris Pañ chen in the valley of ’On located to the north of Brag dmar ke ru lha khang (Drakmar Keru temple, 29°22’44”N, 91°49’49”E). The monks of the Ke ru temple, in turn, reported that the ruins above Ke ru used to be a nunnery by the name of ’On smon thang (not smon ldan) affiliated with the rDo rje brag monastery (November 2020. I am greatly indebted to Tenzin Namgyal who agreed to drive from lHa sa to ’On to conduct the interview). Approximate coordinates of the ruins of ’On smon thang are 29°22’40.78”N, 91°49’31.48”E.
\textsuperscript{151} The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 332.6. The exact date according to the Western calendar is given according to Ahmad, 1999, p. 170. For arguments why the year of death provided by Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las is correct, i.e. 1542, not 1544, see Sukhanova, 2021, p. 124, fn. 845.
\textsuperscript{152} See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 334.1-2.
\textsuperscript{153} See The Biography of Ngari Panchen by Pema Trinlé, p. 320.4.
\textsuperscript{154} The Jewel Necklace, p. 268.5-6
Fig. 7 – Places connected to Ngari Panchen in the Marang Valley of Mustang

1. The Oglungpa (‘Og lung pa) cave
2. mNga’ ris Pan chen’s footprint
3. “Omo Lhungrup”
4. Golékha cave (sGo le kha)
5. Ruins with a red wall
6. The Flood Commemoration Stūpa
Fig. 8 – Places connected to Ngari Panchen in lHo brag

10  Gangzur (sGang zur)
19  Trigu (Gri gu)
20  Guru Layak Temple (bSam grub bde ba chen po'i gtsug lag khang)
21  Mawochok (sMra bo lcog)
22  Drowolung (Gro bo lung)
23  Kharchu (mKhar chu)
### Fig. 9 – Places connected to Ngari Panчен in Central Tibet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mt. Chuwo (dPal chen chu bo ri)</td>
<td>14 Drak Yangdzong (sGrags yang rdzong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tharpaling monastery (Thar pa gling)</td>
<td>15 Jampaling monastery (Byams pa gling)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Shung Tre’u Shing (gZhung spre’u zhing)</td>
<td>16 Mt. Chakri (lCags ri)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ushangdo temple (‘U shang rdo)</td>
<td>17 Chimpu hermitage (mChims phu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nyiphu valley (sNyi phu)</td>
<td>18 On Mönden (‘On smon ldan)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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