

**Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's
Pramāṇavārttika Commentary of 1297 Part Two(a):**

'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge (ca. 1195–after 1267)*

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Abstract

This essay is happily dedicated to Dan Martin whose scholarly originality, far-reaching and profound knowledge of all kinds of things Tibetan and then some, and boundless generosity have become a byword in Tibetan Studies. While *tshad ma* may not be high on the list of his scholarly priorities, I hope that he might find something in the pages that follow that causes a faint smile on his face.

The present essay is the first of two sections that comprises the second part of an open-ended series of essays devoted to Btsun pa Ston gzhon's study of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti's (ca. 550–610 or 600–660) seminal work on logic and epistemology.¹ This part, the second in a projected series, focuses on the life and works of 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge (13thc.), the first Tibetan commentator of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Although Ston gzhon belonged to the same tradition, he so vehemently disagreed with him on so many issues that it has become quite important to situate 'U yug pa and his work in a proper context if we wish better to understand both Ston gzhon and 'U yug pa. Hence, in this first section, I outline what is known about 'U yug pa's life. The second section, which flows naturally from the first and is indeed presupposed by it on several counts, will discuss his writings on logic and epistemology. Parts One and Two of this series are designed to function as a prolegomenon to future studies of their different views on Dharmakīrti's work.

* For purposes of bibliographical economy, my references as a rule include only a single publication of a "work," or, better, an instantiation of a work, by a given author, even if different editions might be available. I do wish to stress that I have consulted other editions, xylographs, manuscripts, or typeset versions, whenever possible to ensure the greatest philological veracity. These are called upon when pertinent.

¹ First-rate introductions to Dharmakīrti's thought are V. Eltschinger, "*Dharmakīrti*", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 64 (2010), 397-440, and T.J.F. Tillemans, "*Dharmakīrti*", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/dharmakiirti/>>.

Introduction

In the first part of this open-ended series of studies that focuses on the thirteenth and early fourteenth century Tibetan scholar Btsun pa Ston gzhon and his commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, I attempted to situate him and his oeuvre in a historical context. Owing to the extreme paucity of information about him and his social and intellectual environment, my attempt admittedly resulted overall in a rather thin description.² The reason for this was that Ston gzhon seems to have been completely forgotten by the tradition and that, what is more, his work does not appear to have been read by anyone outside his immediate circle. The same would seem to hold for his earlier work on Dharmakīrti that he mentions but once in his commentary. Indeed, I have thus far not found either treatise referenced by any subsequent Tibetan intellectual. No printing blocks were ever carved for them so that they could never "fall out of print," and there was no public memory for them either. In Part One of this series, I also pointed out that, in addition to his two tracts on logic and epistemology (*tshad ma*), Ston gzhon had also apparently authored a study of the highly esoteric text of the *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang* that is attributed to [a] Virūpa. A manuscript of this work has now surfaced³ and it is hoped that it is but a question of time before it finds a publisher and that, if there were any other works by him, they will surface as well. In addition, a retyped 'edition' of a manuscript in which his name *appears* to occur was published in a collection of rare [and not so rare] Tibetan studies of Sanskrit and Tibetan grammar. The work in question is one in which the eight cases of Sanskrit nominal inflection are discussed.⁴ The slight colophon states that the original

² See my "Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's *Pramāṇavārttika* Commentary of ?1297, Part One: Bibliographical and Biographical Preliminaries", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 30, Octobre 2014, pp. 111-198. It will be noted that I now omit the "?" before the date 1297, for I am increasingly convinced that the year that appears in the colophon of his work is indeed the equivalent of 1297.

³ The manuscript is listed in the *Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyon 'tshol grig khang gi lo gsum gyi 'char gzhi'i dpe tshogs khag gi dkar chag*, Pod dang po [vol. 1], Chengdu, n.p., 2011, p. 14. For two surprisingly very different translations of one and the same text of the *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang*, see the references in my "Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's *Pramāṇavārttika* Commentary of ?1297, Part One: Bibliographical and Biographical Preliminaries", p. 149, n. 89.

⁴ See the *Sgra rig pa'i gnas brgyad bstan pa, Brda sprod dpe rnying gces bsdu*s, Sa skya'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2015, pp. 37-56 – I should like to thank Ms. Li Xiaonan for drawing my attention to the volume in which this work was published. The colophon states that this little work is on either the eight cases (*gnas brgyad*) or ('am) the case-endings (*rnam par dbye ba*, **vibhakti*). P.C. Verhagen discussed this work and a copy of a different manuscript that I made available to him in his *A History of Sanskrit*

manuscript had belonged to a Dpyal Lo tsā ba—might he be Chos kyi bzang po (ca. 1170–1217/29)?—and that it was copied by Kāyastha Ston gzhon, where *kāyastha* has the sense of scribe or secretary.⁵ It is of course not certain that this Ston gzhon is to be identified with our Btsun pa Ston gzhon.

No doubt affiliated with the intellectual community of Sa skya monastery in a number of important ways, Ston gzhon was quite familiar with the interpretive contributions that had been made to Dharmakīrti's thought by the fourth patriarch of the Sa skya school, Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), and by at least one of his disciples, 'U yug pa Bsod nams seng ge, alias Rigs pa'i seng ge, reputedly, as stated, the very first Tibetan intellectual to comment on the *Pramāṇavārttika* [hereafter PV, but only when actual passages are cited] in its entirety. We saw in Part One that Ston gzhon took 'U yug pa in the crosshairs on an unusually large number of occasions. Clearly, he did not see eye to eye with his senior's interpretations of Dharmakīrti. This being the case, it will be useful to provide some pertinent details concerning 'U yug pa's life and his contributions to *tshad ma*, and this is precisely what I seek to accomplish in the first two sections of the present essay. In Part Three of these *Studies* that is now close to completion, I first shed light on the sources that Ston gzhon has overtly used as well as on his method of exegesis and contrast these with the sources and method 'U yug pa employed in his work on the *Pramāṇavārttika*. This is then followed by a discussion of Ston gzhon's explicit use of Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* [hereafter *Rigs gter*]⁶ in his commentary which is something that is absent in 'U yug pa's work.

A note: As a rule, I translate only the Tibetan text even when a Sanskrit original is available. To be sure, I do try to keep an eye on whatever Sanskrit text lies below the Tibetan translation when pertinent. And I will, when necessary, draw attention to important differences that might contribute to a certain thinker having taken a path that would

Grammatical Literature in Tibet, Volume Two, Assimilation into Indigenous Scholarship, Leiden, Brill, 2001, pp. 15-18.

⁵ For this term, see M. Visvanathan, "From the *Lekhaka* to the *Kāyastha*: Scribes in Early Historic Court and Society (200BCE-200CE)", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* [Platinum Jubilee] 75, 2014, pp. 34-70.

⁶ I use "*Rigs gter*" for the text comprising both the basic verse-text (*rtsa ba*) and what is ostensibly the auto-commentary (*rang gi 'grel pa*). When greater precision is called for, I write "*Rigs gter*-verse text" and "*Rigs gter*-auto-commentary" or something to this effect. For issues relating to the *Rigs gter*'s transmission, see my "On the Transmission of the Verse-text of Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* and the *Rang 'grel*-Auto-commentary", *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3.1, 2020, pp. 126-169.

not be immediately explicable by just looking at the Sanskrit text. But I do not consider this essay, or the ones that follow in this series, to be a contribution to Indian Buddhist *pramāṇavāda per se*. Rather, it falls within the purview of the Tibetan reception of Indian Buddhist thought, especially that of Dignāga (6th c.), Dharmakīrti, and their Indic commentators. I am of course aware of the hermeneutic problems that are germane to this enterprise, problems that bear great similarity to, say, the philologico-philosophical problems that resulted in the Arabic reception of Greek [especially Aristotelian] thought and thence in the Latin reception of early Arabic translations of Aristotle and later, from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 13th century, the Latin reception of newly discovered Greek texts of Aristotle. And I would be foolish to deny their importance. But I do think it would be premature, since the fields of especially Dharmakīrti and Tibetan Studies are, despite advances over the last fifty years or so, still in their infancy as compared to the study of medieval European logic and epistemology, and basic semasiological studies of key-terms in Sanskrit and Tibetan have yet to be made.

1. *Apropos of the Life of 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge*

We can call ourselves fortunate that, even if it is not as rewarding as one might have liked, the available literature is comparatively more informative about 'U yug pa than it is about the lives of most of Sa skya Paṇḍita's other students, with the obvious exception of his nephew 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280). Firstly, located in Nyang yul, the toponym 'U yug refers to a valley that is located slightly west of the ferry crossing across the Gtsang po river when one travels from Lhasa to Shigatse along the "northern route." There are various spellings for the name of this valley: U yug, O yug, and 'O yug being the most common alternatives. Some texts indiscriminately use more than one of these to denote one and the same place. Thus 'U yug pa means "the person from or associated with 'U yug." The first half of the thirteenth century knows of at least four names in religion that are all prefixed by "'U yug pa," aside from the title of "All-knowing" (*thams cad mkhyen pa*), which we encounter on occasion; these are:

- a. Rig[s] pa'i seng ge
- b. Bsod noms seng ge
- c. Dpal gyi rgyal mtshan
- d. Kun dga' bsod noms

For my present purposes, I have assumed that at least the individual named "Bsod noms seng ge" and "Rigs pa'i seng ge" is one and the same

person.⁷ None of the texts used for this paper contradict this assumption, and some even implicitly support this equation since they attribute the earliest Tibetan *Pramāṇavārttika* commentary to either one. Nonetheless, this otherwise pleasant situation is offset by several problems of verification and authentication, for, as will be seen, several statements made about his activities in the literature often conflict with each other. It appears that the main reason for this is that there is a deficit of has been transmitted about him. For one, we do not even know the date of his birth or the year when he passed away. And Gser mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) suggests that some unidentified Tibetans had even considered 'U yug pa to have been one of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge's (1109–1169) students while still young, a hypothesis that was understandably guided by the fact that the last portion of his name was "seng ge," as well as by the circumstance that they confused him with his namesake who hailed from 'Bru zha [Gilgit], who was in fact one of Phya pa's "eight great lion" (*seng chen brgyad*) disciples.⁸ In any event, he rightly discredits this assumption on the grounds of chronological impossibility (*dus mi 'grig*). Most sources affirm that Gnyal zhig 'Jam pa'i rdo rje was his only major teacher other than Sa skya Paṅḍita⁹ and, in this connection, they speak

⁷ The issue was also recently addressed in G.yu gra Bsod nams tshe ring, "'U yug pa Rig pa'i seng ge dang 'U yug pa Bsod nams seng ge gnyis skyes bu gcig yin min sogs kyi skor", *Bod ljongs zhib 'jug* 1, 2015, pp. 6-13, who has come to a similar conclusion. We find this equivalence already expressly stated in Mus srab pa Byams pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan's (1424–1498) marvelous 1475 study of Sa skya monastery, its ruling families, institutions, and religious treasures that includes a chronology of Yuan and Ming emperors, the *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab (sic) rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, incomplete ninety-folio *dbu can* manuscript, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, Reel L 591 / 4, fol. 66b [= In *Sa skya rdzong lugs kyi chos skor phyogs bsodus*, vol. 19, Rdzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2017, p. 95].

⁸ See his *Rngog lo tstsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, *Collected Works*, vol. 16, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 451. This was recently repeated by Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las in *Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje's (1309–1364) Deb ther dmar po*, Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981, p. 381, n. 359.

⁹ Frequent variants of "Gnyal" are the homophonous "Mnyal" and "Snyal"; we even on occasion find it completely disfigured as "Dmyag"! "Gnyal zhig" is of course a contraction of "Gnyal pa Zhig po", where "Gnyal" is the name of a valley in Lho brag of Lho kha prefecture which nowadays has Rtse dang [or: Rtse thang, Rtse dang] as its administrative center. For some notes on this locality, see T.V. Wylie, *The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. XXV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962, p. 174, n. 546. The term *zhig po* can denote two things, a person accomplished in spiritual practice and one who is sexually promiscuous. It is no accident that Gser mdog Paṅ chen prefixes his name by "lord of spiritual realisation" (*grub pa'i dbang phyug*), so that we can be sure that he used *zhig po* in the former sense; see his *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed* [or: *Rtog*

of him as having been one of Gnyal zhig's "nine sons" (*bu dgu*). Tshal pa, so far known as the first to have listed these nine, divided these into three groups of three, whereby 'U yug pa belonged to the intermediate grouping.¹⁰ Now Gnyal zhig—his actual name (*mtshan dngos*), so Dpa' bo II informs us, was not 'Jam pa'i rdo rje but Shes rab blo gros¹¹—was one of the more famous scholars of his day. A student of Zhang E pa and Dan 'bag pa Smra ba'i seng ge, one of Phya pa's *seng chen brgyad* disciples, he spent some nine years in meditative retreat at the ancient royal monastery of 'On cang do,¹² after which he stayed for probably the remainder of his life at Gsang phu. Evidently not a very prolific author, he is best remembered for his influential commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, usually referred to as the *Gnyal tik*, a study which subsequent exegetes apparently could ill afford to ignore, since it is cited in many later studies of this Indian treatise.¹³ As a matter of

ge'i 'khrul 'joms chen mo], *Collected Works*, vol. 9, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 387. Dpa' bo II Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566) even writes that "[He is] known to have attained spiritual realisation" (*grub pa thob par grags pa*); see his *Chos 'byung mkhas pa dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], Rdo rje rgyal po, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986, p. 731

¹⁰ See Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po*, 69. Gser mdog Pañ chen, *Rngog lo tshsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, p. 452, appears to indicate there existed another listing of Gnyal zhig's disciples under the heading of his "nine daughters" (*bu mo dgu*), where *mo* is probably a scribal error.

¹¹ *Chos 'byung mkhas pa dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], p. 731. It would seem that the name "'Jam pa'i rdo rje" [*Mañjuvajra] was a name that he was given during his initiations into the mysteries of the transmission of practices focusing on the *Guhyasamājatantra* that are associated with the so-called *Jñāna tradition that was begun by Buddhaśrījñāna (ca. 800).

¹² In connection with his ascent to the abbatial throne of Gsang phu [sne'u thog], not far from Lhasa, Tshal pa writes that he had been invited to Gsang phu from 'On cang do; see *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 71, which has 'U shang rdor... [read: *rdo nas...*]. I also read 'On cang do instead of its many variants, since it is this spelling that is authenticated in the ancient inscriptions at Zhwa temple and Mtshur phu monastery; see, for example, Li Fang Kuei and W.S. Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Special Publications, no. 91, Taipei, Academia Sinica, 1987, index, p. 455. For further references, see Wylie, *The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, p. 147. 'On cang do was also the see of Zhang E pa.

¹³ The catalogue of titles, taken from books of Bkra shis 'khyil monastery's library holdings, the *Bod kyi bstan bcos khag cig gi mtshan byang*, Grags pa, ed., Xining, Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, p. 596, gives its title as *Mngon rtogs rgyan gyi 'grel pa theg pa chen po la 'jug pa*. This is also the title of the manuscript of this work that was published in the *Bka' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 12, Karma bde legs et al., eds., Chengdu, Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa / Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006; see G. Sparham, "A Note on Gnyal zhig 'Jam pa'i rdo rje, the Author of a Handwritten *Sher phyin* Commentary from about 1200", *The Tibet Journal* XXI (1996), pp. 19–29. This work is mentioned in one of Bu ston Rin chen grub's (1290–1364) biographies to the effect that he had made a close study of

course, this work is considered to fall in the illustrious line of such earlier Tibetan commentaries as those by Rngog Lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab (ca.1059–ca.1109), 'Bre Shes rab 'bar, and Ar Byang chub ye shes. The only other treatise of his was apparently a work on *tshad ma*, which, however, is only sporadically alluded to in the literature on the subject. No indigenous bibliographies list it, and it appears to have fallen into oblivion by the end of the thirteenth century at the latest. It was much less influential than his study of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*. It is of course not surprising that his disciples would have taught this work which, Bsam gtan bzang po, in his biography of Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1227–1305), alias Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri, characterizes as a *Tshad ma bsdu pa*.¹⁴ The disciple in question who taught Dar ma rgyal mtshan this work was a certain Skyogs Dar ma grags. Be this as it may, several *Pramāṇavinścaya* exegeses of his disciples [and their students], the commentarial literature on Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Rigs gter* and 'U yug pa's own study of the *Pramāṇavārttika* have preserved several paraphrases from what appears to have been some work on *tshad ma* by him. Indeed, the second of these unambiguously suggests that Sa skya Paṇḍita had argued against several of his propositions.¹⁵ These references certainly merit detailed study on some future occasion. When he was probably well advanced in years, Gnyal zhig became abbot of Gsang phu's Upper College, an event that possibly took place around the year 1199, and he occupied its abbatial throne for probably some twenty-eight years, meaning that he may very well have passed away in *circa* 1227.

it under his master Bsod nams mgon po (ca.1235–ca.1315), alias Tshad ma'i skyes bu, who himself belonged to Gnyal zhig's line of transmission that issued from Khro phu monastery; see D. Seyfort Ruegg, tr. *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. XXIV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966, p. 94. Bu ston's record of his studies details the *Abhisamayālamkāra* lineages of transmission he had obtained from Bsod nams mgon po but, oddly, no mention is made of Gnyal zhig's work; see his *Bla ma dam pa rnams kyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul bka' drin rjes su dran par byed pa*, *Collected Works*, Part 26, L. Chandra, ed. New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971, pp. 32 ff. However, on p. 86 of this work, we learn that he received teachings on Gnyal zhig's commentary from Slob dpon Bkra shis bzang po of Zhwa lu monastery.

¹⁴ See his *Bcom ldan rigs pa'i ral gri'i rnam thar dad pa'i ljon shing*, *Collected Works* [of Dar ma rgyal mtshan], vol. 1, Khams sprul Bsod nams don grub, ed., Lhasa, ?, 2006, p. 46.

¹⁵ See Gser mdog Paṇ chen, *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed*, pp. 277, 361 and 387, and his *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed*, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 458. See also Glo bo Mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), *Sde bdun mdo dang bcas pa'i dgongs 'grel tshad ma rig[s] pa'i gter gyi 'grel pa'i rnam bshad rig[s] lam gsal ba'i nyi ma* [Sde dge xylograph], *Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab gsal dang tshad ma rig[s] gter skor*, vol. 2, Dehra Dun, Pal Evam Chodan Ngorpa Centre, 1985, pp. 66, 227 and 285. Particulars concerning Glo bo Mkhan chen's work are detailed in Part Two(b).

Gser mdog Paṅ chen reports that as a young budding scholar, Sa skya Paṅḍita had met Mnyal zhig [= Gnyal zhig] at Gsang phu and that, while he had lectured on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* there, he had been unable to find a suitable master to continue his studies. He then left for Nyang stod, near Shigatse where he found what he was looking for; Gser mdog Paṅ chen states¹⁶:

*mnyal zhig gi dus su / sa skya paṅḍi ta jo sras gzhon nu mar
gyur pas / gsang phur byon nas rnam nges gsungs shing /
bshad tshar mdzad / bla mar 'os pa shig 'dug kyang bsten
dka' ba cig 'dug gsung / mnyal zhig la ma gsan / nyang stod
du brtsegs dbang phyug seng ge dang / rkyang dur ba gzhon
nu seng ge la / dbu tshad dang / bsdus pa gsan /*

Sa skya Paṅḍita, a young noble man at the time of Mnyal zhig's tenure as abbot, lectured on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* after he had gone to Gsang phu and explained it in its entirety. It is said that, although Mnyal zhig was suited to be a master, he found some difficulty in attending on him. He did not study with Mnyal zhig. Instead, he studied *madhyamaka*, *tshad ma* and the *Summary* (*bsdus pa*)¹⁷ under Brtsegs Dbang phyug seng ge and Rkyang dur [= Mtshur ston Gzhon nu seng ge] in Nyang stod.

A similar passage is also found by way of interlinear note in Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho's (1523–1596) work on Buddhist chronology, but in spite of its initial similarity it ends of a slight different note, namely, that Gnyal zhig was pained (*thugs bze reg*) at the fact that young Sa skya Paṅḍita had not requested a spiritual connection (*chos 'brel ma zhus*) with him.¹⁸ Now it has been shown that Sa skya Paṅḍita had studied under Mtshur ston from about 1201 to 1203,¹⁹ so that these

¹⁶ Gser mdog Paṅ chen, *Rngog lo tstsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, p. 453.

¹⁷ The "Summary" primarily refers to a genre of exegeses of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by members of the Gsang phu tradition and its affiliates.

¹⁸ *Bstan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed / Tha snyad rig gnas lnga'i byung tshul*, Nor brang O rgyan, ed., *Gangs can rig mdzod*, vol. 4, Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1987, pp. 125-126: *gnyal zhig gi dus sa paṅ jo sras gzhon nur gyur pas gsang phur byon / rnam nges la bshad pa mdzad / gnyal zhig de bla mar 'os pa shig 'dug na'ang [126] bsten dka' ba cig 'dug pas chos 'brel ma zhus gsungs pa yang snang bas thugs bze reg yod par snang* / The text in bold is not found in Gser mdog Paṅ chen's text.

¹⁹ D.P. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III). Sa skya Paṅḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 17,1, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische

years coincide very well with Gnyal zhig's probable tenure as abbot of Gsang phu's Upper College. Thus, because of his own inclinations or behavior, or because of Gnyal zhig's misgivings, or because of some difficulties with Gnyal zhig's attendants, young Sa skya Paṇḍita was prevented from duplicating his uncle Master (*slob dpon*) Bsod nams rtse mo's (1142–1182) lengthy stay as a student at this monastery some four decades earlier.

As far as 'U yug pa's connection with Sa skya Paṇḍita is concerned, virtually all our sources simply have it that he had not initially come to Sa skya for the purpose of studying with him. While this is precisely what happened, the implied date for this would fall not earlier than the second decade of the thirteenth century. Dpa' bo II and A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659) provide interesting accounts of what had motivated him to come to Sa skya in the first place, and what happened to him after his arrival.²⁰ Both observe that 'U yug pa had come to Sa skya in order to debate with Sa skya Paṇḍita, with A mes zhabs providing details of a kind that deserve our attention in as much as they reflect the perceptions of one of the Sa skya pa's most influential and important historians. His account is set against Gnyal zhig's alleged misgivings with Sa skya Paṇḍita's growing eminence and prestige. We can choose to agree or disagree with this assessment, but what lends some authenticity to this account of 'U yug pa's "conversion" is that A mes zhabs' collected writings contains an interesting piece on the circumstances surrounding their meeting that resulted in 'U yug pa throwing his lot in with Sa skya Paṇḍita and that he had thus turned his back on Gnyal zhig. Namely, it appears that a certain Mang thos bshes gnyen had asked A mes zhabs whether his source for this account in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* was based on an oral tradition or whether there existed some sort of documentation for it.²¹ It turned out that it was based on a written source. We thus learn that A mes zhabs' information came from a short document that he had retrieved from one of Sa skya monastery's libraries. It appears that the meeting between Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'U yug pa had been witnessed by a Bsod nams dpal, who

und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1987, pp. 105-107. Hugon came to the same conclusion in her consummate edition of Mtshur ston's work on *tshad ma* in her *Mtshur ston Gzhon nu seng ge, Tshad ma shes rab sgron ma*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 60, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2004, p. xii.

²⁰ See, respectively, the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], pp. 731-732, and the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, Rdo rje rgyal po, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986, p. 115.

²¹ For what follows, see the *Jo gdan bla ma mang thos bshes gnyen pas dris lan yid kyi mun sel*, *Collected Works*, vol. 40, Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, pp. 35-38.

apparently had taken notes of this meeting that ultimately resulted in 'U yug pa's "conversion," and that it was these notes that had formed the basis for A mes zhabs' narrative of the episode in question. In fact, he reproduced this narrative *in toto* in his formal reply to Mang thos bshes gnyen and then must have decided to include it in his oeuvre, no doubt for purposes of preservation. After all, one of the signature features of A mes zhabs' oeuvre as a whole is that it contains more than a handful of reproductions of entire texts that were not originally written by him. Presumably because of their relative rarity, his aim was to save them for posterity. To add insult to injury, 'U yug pa was probably not the only one of Gnyal zhig's "nine sons" to have shifted his social and intellectual allegiance to Sa skya. If Bo dong Rin po che who figures among these nine were identical to Bo dong Rin po che Brtson 'grus rdo rje (1200–1260), who with regularity figures in the listings of Sa skya Paṇḍita's students, then we must infer that he, too, left Gnyal zhig to join Sa skya Paṇḍita. And there seems to have been others as well.

When his younger brother, the layman Zangs tsha ba Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1184) died in 1239, Sa skya Paṇḍita suddenly found himself accountable for not only the spiritual affairs of Sa skya and her daughter institutions such as they were, but also for her secular and administrative business interests. Lest one forgets, Sa skya was "owned and operated" by one family and none of the other members of his immediate family were old enough to be able to assist him in shouldering these responsibilities. He thus stood alone. To add to his problems, in 1240, the year following Zangs tsha ba's passing, a Mongol army had invaded Central Tibet under the leadership of perhaps two commanders that Prince Köten had dispatched from Liangzhou [= present day Wuwei], in Gansu province.²² No doubt the prince had done so with the support and approval of his father Öködei Qan (r.1229–1241). For reasons that still need to be investigated in detail, once conquered, the governance of Central Tibet on behalf of Öködei's court first fell to the aged Spyan snga Grags pa 'byung gnas (1175–1255), 'Bri gung monastery's abbot and its Sgom pa-

²² For this event, see generally my "The Tibetan Expression 'bod wooden door' (*bod shing sgo*) and its probable Mongol Antecedent", *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan / Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions* [Wang Yao Festschrift, Shen Weirong, ed.] 3, 2010, pp. 89-134. S.G. Haw's recent "The Mongol conquest of Tibet," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, 2014, pp. 37-49, is unfortunately misleading in several crucial instances that are largely owed to the sources he was able to access; much more rewarding is Ch.P. Atwood, "The First Mongol Contacts with the Tibetans", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 31 [= *Papers for E. Sperling*, R. Vitali, ed.], 2015, pp. 21-45.

administrator Shākya rin chen.²³ The governing institutions were thus headquartered in 'Bri gung. In 1234, the Spyan snga had assumed the abbacy of 'Bri gung monastery, the mother monastery of the rather well to do 'Bri gung sect of the Bka' brgyud school of Tibetan Buddhism, then already a doctrinal if not an economic rival of the Sa skya school. And he remained her abbot until his passing. The fact that the Spyan snga's government was headquartered at 'Bri gung no doubt led to the circumstance that 'Bri gung's estates formed part of Öködei's imperial appanage. We should of course not underestimate the attraction held by the possibility of accumulating wealth and important relations of patronage that came with these imperial connections. Upon Öködei's death, the appanage of 'Bri gung was taken over by his eldest son Güyüg Qan (r. 1246–1248) after which his nephew Mönge Qaḡan (r. 1251–1259) took over. The fact that 'Bri gung and her estates, and not any other Tibetan monastic establishment, enjoyed very close connections with the supreme rulers of the Mongols is clearly indicative of its highly privileged status during these years. This status lasted until 1260. The political fortunes of 'Bri gung ended abruptly with the election of Qubilai (r. 1260–1294) as Qaḡan in 1260, at which time the governance of Central Tibet shifted from 'Bri gung to Sa skya monastery owing in large part to the connections Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephew 'Phags pa enjoyed with Qubilai and Qubilai's family. It is crucially important to bear in mind the politics of the time. Prince Köten, Öködei's son and Güyüg's younger brother, had sent a mission to Sa skya that apparently first went through the offices of 'Bri gung. The Spyan snga appears to have directed the mission to Sa skya Paṇḍita, for its purpose was evidently to invite the Sa skya pa hierarch to Köten's court in Liangzhou. In fact, Sa skya and her estates formed Köten's appanage.²⁴ On one hand, the

²³ For the Spyan snga and Rdo rje grags (1210–1278), his successor at 'Bri gung, and their era, see 'Bri gung Dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *'Bri gung chos 'byung*, Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004, pp. 351–358, 358–363. On the 'Bri gung administrators, see E. Sperling, "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung Sgom-pa", *Silver on Lapis. Tibetan Literary Culture and History*, Chr.I. Beckwith, ed., Bloomington, The Tibet Society, 1987, pp. 33–53. Dpa' bo II, *Chos 'byung mkhas pa' dga' ston*, Smad cha [vol. 2], p. 894, notes the role played by the 'Bri gung myriarch (*khri dpon*) Rdo rje dpal, who lobbied against Qubilai's candidacy for Qaḡan and fatefully supported Ariq Böke (d. 1266), Qubilai's younger brother. There is no doubt that if this "myriarch" were not the Sgom pa at the time, then he was at least his representative at the council to elect the successor of Mönge Qaḡan.

²⁴ The undated letter by the Spyan snga to Sa skya Paṇḍita in *Chos kyi rje spyan snga rin po ches chos rje sa skya pan chen la phul ba'i chab shog*, *Collected Works*, H.H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, ed., Delhi, Drikung Kagyu Publications, 2002, pp. 60–64, is of undoubted relevance here, even if he only speaks to Sa skya Paṇḍita of an unnamed Mongol Qan. This letter and the one that Sa skya Paṇḍita sent to the Bka' gdams pa scholar Nam mkha' 'bum should be studied in tandem. For the latter,

prince's invitation must have come at a fairly inopportune time for Sa skya Paṇḍita, while on the other, the potential for deepening the patronage relationship with the Mongol prince was fraught with opportunities for Sa skya's economic advancement that would be difficult to pass up. A refusal to respond to this invitation would therefore have been politically as well as economically the wrong thing to do. At the same time, it could also serve as a counterweight to the rival 'Bri gung pa sect. And we need to recall how critical he had been of a number of their key doctrinal entities in his famous *Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba*, *Analysis of the Three Vows*,²⁵ and the critical response they had provoked from the Spyān snga as laid out in his *Grub mtha' chen mo*.²⁶ Much earlier, a younger Sa skya Paṇḍita had invited the Spyān snga to attend the funerary proceedings of his uncle and teacher Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), so that their relations must have been quite good at that time.²⁷ It is not at all clear whether these had suffered because of the *Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba*.

Before his departure Sa skya Paṇḍita was faced with setting up a governing body for the monastery that would protect its interests,

see his all too brief replies to queries two and three in his *Bka' gdams pa nam mkha' 'bum gyi zhus lan*, *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1, Mes po'i shul bzahag, vol. 15, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 507-508. At the end of this little work, he writes that he wanted to meet with him, but was prevented to do so by his escort, the imperial envoys (*gser yig pa rnams*).

²⁵ He *may* have composed this work in the early 1230s, as was suggested by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), who is cited in Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*. *Sa skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramaṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, pp. 64, 66. I have seen its "Mongol xylograph" (*hor par ma*) from printing blocks that were carved in the last decades of the thirteenth century in the Yuan-Mongol capital of Dadu, but I was unable to procure a photocopy.

²⁶ See the quotations of the latter in 'Brug chen Sangs rgyas rdo rje's (1569–1645) 1640 study of the three important pilgrimage sites Gangs can / Kailāsa, Lake Anavatapta, and Tsa ri, in *Gnas gsum gsal byed nor bu'i me long*, *Collected Works*, vol. V, Kathmandu, Acarya Shedup Tenzin, 1995, pp. 491-493, 505-506, and my forthcoming "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309), Part Three: Once more on his *Garland of Tales about Rivers**".

²⁷ The text of the invitation is reproduced in *Sa skya paṇḍi tas / spyān snga rin po cher phul ba'i spyān 'dren zhu yig*, *Rlāngs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa*, Chab spel Tshē brtan phun tshogs and Nor brang O rgyan, eds., Gangs can rig mdzod 1 Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1986, pp. 440-442. It is also contained in Spyān snga Grags pa 'byung gnas, *Gsung 'thor bu phyogs bsdu*, 'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo, vol. 34, A mgon Rin po che, ed., Lhasa, np, 2004, pp. 401-404. For cordial and not so cordial relations between Sa skya and Phag mo gru Gdan sa mthil, see Jampa Samten and Dan Martin, "Letters to the Khans: Six Epistles of Tugdogpa Addressed to the Mongol Rulers Hulegu, Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pagpa", *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 31 [= *Papers for Elliot Sperling*, R. Vitali, ed.] (2015), p. 318, n. 80.

which also required that this body was empowered to make administrative decisions in his absence. According to Stag tshang pa Dpal 'byor bzang po's 1434 compilation of a number of important documents, the result was that he established a triumvirate consisting of 'U yug pa, Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1198–1261), and Shākya bzang po (?–1275).²⁸ The newly acquired positions of 'U yug pa and Shar pa are described as "chiefs of religion" (*chos dpon*), whereas Shākya bzang po "shouldered the task of lustrous councilor of the see as a whole" (*gdan sa spyi'i kha ta brjid khur*). A mes zhabs, however, records two different triumvirates with 'U yug pa figuring in both.²⁹ In the first, 'U yug pa and Zhang btsun Mdo sde dpal, another one of Sa skya Paṇḍita's disciples, were given the responsibility for academic and spiritual studies at Sa skya; the title given to 'U yug pa was that of "assembly head for textual-philosophical studies" (*mtshan nyid tshogs dpon*) and the one given to Zhang btsun was that of "assembly head for tantric studies" (*sngags kyi tshogs dpon*). On the other hand, Shākya bzang po was appointed "general-chief chancellor" (*spyi dpon nye gnas*). In the fifth and last chapter of his work, A mes zhabs attempts to determine the exact sequence of Sa skya's abbatial succession on the basis of Ngor chen Dkon mchog lhun grub's (1497–1557) undated, versified history of this succession, the *Gdung rabs ya rabs kha rgyan*, a work of which his treatise is in fact a commentary. He cites an unidentified note (*mchan bu*) contained in his manuscript of Ngor chen's *gdung rabs* wherein is implied that it was not Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas who was part of the triumvirate, but rather Shar pa Ye shes 'byung gnas.³⁰ He passes over the different Shar pa-s in silence which, perhaps, points to the circumstance that he took both names to refer to one and the same individual, thereby assuming that his readers would do the same. Contrary to the similar passages in the chronicles of Tshal pa, Yar lung Jo bo Shākya rin chen sde, and Stag tshang pa,³¹ the latter is the earliest text in which, in a different context, for which see below, this variant of "Shar pa Yes [Ye shes] 'byung[gnas]" is

²⁸ See his *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las, ed., Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, p. 323.

²⁹ A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 145, 541.

³⁰ *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs ya rabs kyi kha rgyan*, *E vam bka' 'bum*, vol. 17/20, Mes po'i shul bzahag, vol. 148, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, p. 13. Truth be told, this gloss does not expressly state that Shar pa Sher [= Shes rab] 'byung [gnas] and 'U yug pa had held important posts, only that they did not pay their respects to Shākya bzang po. This latter piece of information is already met with in Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 53.

³¹ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 53, Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung, Dbyangs can, ed., Chengdu, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988, p. 174, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, 357.

attested. The only Ye shes 'byung gnas belonging to this period that could fit the bill for this confusion is Master Ye shes 'byung gnas (1238–1273/74), the son of Zangs tsha ba and his fifth wife, Rdo rje gdan, herself an attendant (*nye gnas ma*) of Lady Lha gcig mdzes ma, a daughter of the Gung thang ruler who was Zangs tsha ba's fourth wife.³² It is reported that he had studied with the brothers Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1198–1262) and Shar pa Rdo rje 'od zer, and A mes zhabs observes that Grand-governor Shākya bzang po had built for him the Shar gling which was to be used as his residence. Since his main teachers had been the Shar pa brothers and because he lived for some time in Shar gling.

The fact that Sa skya Paṇḍita had chosen 'U yug pa as a member of the triumvirate clearly indicates either that he thought rather highly of him, and this may have something to do with the possibility that he had established an academy for the study of texts at Sa skya, or that, owing to the seniority he enjoyed among his disciples, he really did not have any choice. The appointment was probably not induced because of 'U yug pa's authorship of his two main *tshad ma* studies which, inasmuch as they contain propositions that on occasion appear to go counter to what his master had written, were likely completed, if not composed, after his departure in 1244. There can be little doubt, however, that 'U yug pa had already established himself in Sa skya's Western Residence (*nub pa bla brang*) prior to Sa skya Paṇḍita's voyage, and that he evidently enjoyed excellent relations with his teacher's younger brother. In fact, Tshal pa is our earliest source to note that³³:

de la slob dpon zangs tshas bzhi thog phog

The four-story building was presented to him [= 'U yug pa] by Master Zangs tsha ba.

However, Yar lung Jo bo [a] and Stag tshang pa [b] have preserved a different reading³⁴:

[a] *de la zangs tsha' i^a bla brang nyis thog phog*
 [b] *de la slob dpon zangs tshas / nyis thog phog*

³² A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 235; see also K.-H. Everding, *Das Königreich Mang yul Gung thang. Königtum und Herrschaftsgewalt im Tibet des 13.-17. Jahrhunderts, Teil 2: Studien zur Geschichte des Reiches*, Bonn, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH, 2000, pp. 371 ff.

³³ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 52. We find this in all available editions of the text.

³⁴ Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 173, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, pp. 353-354.

The two-story building was presented to him [= 'U yug pa] by Master Zangs tsha ba.

What could be the origin for this variant reading? A mes zhabs records that the Lha khang, the Rin chen sgang as well as the Dus mchod Residences began to be constructed in 1268, just prior to 'Phags pa's departure for Qubilai's court; however, these were not completed until Kun dga' bzang po (?–1281) served as Grand-governor (*dpon chen*) starting in 1275 or 1276.³⁵ Of some importance here is that the famous Four-Story Residence (*bzhi thog bla brang*)—the name of this structure is doubtlessly the origin for our variant reading—is absent from this enumeration. And there is a good reason for this, for Tshal pa has it that³⁶:

*bla brang shar pa sher 'byung la gtaḍ nas bzhi thog btab /
rgyal bu go dan byang ngos pas gdan 'dren byung zhing /*

Sa skya Paṇḍita handed the Eastern Residence to Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and built the Four-Story Residence. He was then invited by Prince Kōten of Byang ngos [= Ganzhou].

This means that the Four-Story Residence was in existence before his departure in 1244 and that it was hardly Zangs tsha ba's to give. In addition, some Sa skya school texts, I think correctly, equate the Western Residence with the Two-Story Residence.

The Western Residence had thus been set up by Zangs tsha ba so that at least a portion of it must have existed before 1239. The earliest available account of the history of its leadership is given by Tshal pa as follows³⁷:

*de'i gcung po gcig gi sras bla ma kun smon yang chos rje pa
la thug de'i gcung po kun dga' mdzes sku mched gnyis /
phyis dpon chen kun dga' bzang po'i phyogs su chad nas /
bla ma 'phags pa dang thugs ma mthun pas / se chen gyi lung
gis spyugs nas / gcen po sman rtse'i yul du 'das / de'i dbon
po yon tan dpal / phyis dbon po sangs rgyas dpal zer ba gcig
gis gdan sa byas ['dug] /*

Bla ma Kun dga' smon lam, the son of his 'U yug pa's

³⁵ Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 175, and A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 212.

³⁶ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 47.

³⁷ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 52.

younger brother, too, met the Chos rje pa [= Dharmasvāmin (= Sa skya Paṇḍita)]. Since both brothers, he and Kun dga' mdzes, his younger brother, had subsequently sided with Grand-governor Kun dga' bzang po, they were on disagreeable terms with Bla ma 'Phags pa, and hence were banished from the see by order of Se chen [< Mon. sečen (= Qubilai)]; the elder brother died in the land of Sman rtse [< Chin. *manzi* (= south of the Yangze river, in Hangzhou?)]. His nephew was Yon tan dpal. Subsequently, the see of the Western Residence seems to have been occupied by the elder's other nephew who is said to have been called Sangs rgyas dpal.

Of interest in this very meager passage is the allusion of the Western Residence's complicity with Grand-governor Kun dga' bzang po's sustained resistance to 'Phags pa and thus as the center of a rebellion against the Mongol occupation that ultimately led to Kun dga' bzang po's gruesome execution.³⁸

At first glance, the sources invariably mention the strained relations that existed between 'U yug pa and Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas, on one hand, and Shākya bzang po on the other. Sa skya Paṇḍita's decision to establish a triumvirate to administer the see's politico-economic and spiritual interests must undoubtedly be interpreted in part as a move calculated to prevent the consolidation of too much influence in the hands of a single individual. Sa skya monastery had yet to become the large and powerful institution it was to become after it had been the object of sustained Mongol imperial patronage during Qubilai's reign. Despite his earlier statement that Sa skya Paṇḍita had given Shar pa the Eastern Residence, Tshal pa—he is followed in this by all our sources—nonetheless makes it clear that Shar pa had purchased the Eastern Residence from Shākya bzang po whom, significantly, he already styles Grand-governor. This leads us to suspect that Shākya bzang po had usurped this one of Sa skya's oldest and most prestigious structures and that Shar pa was forced to buy it

³⁸ This episode is detailed in my "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309) Part Two: For Emperor Qubilai? His *Garland of Tales about Rivers*", *The Relationship between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional Tibet*, ed. Ch. Cüppers (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute 2004), 307 ff.; see also B.W.L. Li, *A Critical Study of the 13th Century Tibetan Monk U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal based on his biographies*, DPhil dissertation, Oxford, University of Oxford, pp. 265 ff., and R. Vitali, "Grub chen U rgyan pa and the Mongols in China", *Studies on the History and Literature of Tibet and the Himalaya*, R. Vitali, ed., Kathmandu, Vajra Publications, 2012, pp. 38-39, 41-42.

back from him. If this turns out to be the correct scenario, then it must assuredly postdate Sa skya Paṇḍita's death, which occurred on 28 November, 1251. Furthermore, given that the above dates for Shar pa's life are historically valid, we must also conclude that the series of events in question must have occurred prior to 1261 and this unfortunately leads us yet to another problem, namely, the date of Shākya bzang po's assumption of the title *dpon chen*, "Grand-governor."

We hear nothing of 'U yug pa until we arrive at the year 1253, the ox-year in which, according to Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge (1429–1489) and Mus srads pa, so far our first sources to say so expressly, he allegedly breathed his last, and it is this dating of his passing, as later repeated by A mes zhabs, that was uncritically accepted in the secondary literature by, for example, D. Schuh in his deep study of Tibetan diplomatic documents from the Yuan period and by Chen Chingying in his remarkable and detailed biography of 'Phags pa.³⁹ To my knowledge, this notion has remained unchallenged until now. But it appears to have been mistaken. As far as the secondary literature is concerned, the main culprit who needs to be blamed for this may have been A mes zhabs who, in his narrative of 'Phags pa's ordination as a full-fledged monk, unwittingly allowed to enter in his discussion a thoroughly misleading chronology for the events that preceded it.⁴⁰ The scenario he proposes is the following: In 1255, 'Phags pa consecrated the enshrined relics (*sku 'bum*)⁴¹ of Sa skya Paṇḍita in

³⁹ See, respectively, *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba* [Sde dge xylograph], *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*, vol. 14, Bsod nams rgya mtsho, ed., Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko, 1969, p. 124/4 [Ta, 12b], and *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, fol. 27b [=Rdzong pa'i dpe rmying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., p. 39]; see also A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, 168, and D. Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, Monumenta Tibetica Historica, Abteilung III: Diplomata et Epistolae, St. Augustin, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1977, p. 98, and Chen Qingying, *Yuanchao dishi basiba*, Beijing, Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1992, p. 122 [= *Yon rgyal rabs kyi ti shri 'gro mgon 'phags pa'i mdzad rnam*, tr. Skal bzang dar rgyas Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006, pp. 107-108].

⁴⁰ The available secondary literature does not mention Go rams pa or Mus srads pa in this connection and has relied on A mes zhabs' account.

⁴¹ As is attested in A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 168, and Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1801–after 1867) study of Buddhism in Amdo, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, Smon lam rgya mtsho, ed., Lanzhou Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982, p. 144, 'Phags pa consecrated Sa skya Paṇḍita's reliquary (*sku 'bum*) in this monastery and not his uncle's collected works (*gsung 'bum*), as was apparently wrongly stated by the manuscript of A mes zhabs' text that Schuh used in his *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, p. 98. For Sprul pa'i sde, see the valuable monograph of Fan Baoliang and Shui Tianchang, *Kuodan yu Saban liangzhou huitan*, Lanzhou, Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1997 [= Hphan ba'o leng and Hre then khrang, *Byang ngos sprul pa'i*

Byang ngos which, here, can only indicate Liangzhou/Wuwei and, more specifically, the temple of Sprul pa'i sde, located about twenty kilometers (*le bar bzhi bcu*) north of this town. He then went to Mdo Khams, intending to request his ordination as a monk from 'U yug pa. Having heard from a traveler that 'U yug pa had died in 1253, he returned to Liangzhou and, after going to China proper with Qubilai, he ended up receiving his ordination from Grags pa seng ge of Snye thang monastery on May 22, 1255 in The le, a mysterious place that was located on the shore of a river at the Sino-Mongol frontier. As far as I know, no one has thus far been able to identify this place or this river. Immediately after having said this much, A mes zhabs reproduces a letter that 'Phags pa had allegedly sent to Grags pa seng ge in which he had requested him to act as abbot for his intended ordination. The letter is dated February 14, 1252 (*chu pho byi ba'i dpyid zla 'bring po'i tshes gsum*) and was apparently dispatched from the monastery of lustrous Ling chu (< Ch. Liangzhou) rtsir khab.⁴² At this juncture, Szerb observed that the addressee of this letter in A mes zhabs' narrative does not tally with the version of the letter that is given in the 1736 Sde dge xylograph of 'Phags pa's collected works. The title of the letter reads there: *Slob dpon bsod nams seng ge'i spyan sngar phrin du zhu ba*, "Letter of Request to Master Bsod nams seng ge"⁴³

sder gros su btap pa mkhas pa mgu ba'i gnam, Rgya Ye chos 'phel, tr., Lanzhou, Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009] and Brag dkar Zhabs drung, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, pp. 143ff. A general study of the region is Chu skyes Dge 'dun bsam gtan, *Ling ju'i yul du nyar ba'i bod yig gna' dpe zhib 'jug*, Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006. The golden ossuary (*gser gdung*) of Sa skya Paṇḍita that was housed in Sa skya's Lha khang chen mo apparently contained only a minor portion of the relics he left behind. The majority were deposited at Sprul pa'i sde and a portion of it has survived the 'cultural revolution'.

⁴² *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 168-172; see also Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, p. 101. The manuscript Schuh used is in several places different from the text in the Sde dge xylograph of 'Phags pa's collected writings. For Ling chu rtsir khab, see K.R. Schaeffer and L.W.J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 64, Cambridge, The Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, 2009, pp. 26-27, n. 54.

⁴³ See his "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags pa: II. Some Notes on the Events of the Years 1251-1254", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XXXIV 1980, p. 269, n. 21. For the Tibetan text, see now also the edition in 'Phags pa's *Collected Writings* (*Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma*), vol. 4, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 22, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 562-566. The title is the same in the witnesses of the text used for this edition, but the Zhwa lu monastery manuscript seems to have added that it was a "miscellaneous oral text of the precious 'Phags pa" (*'phags pa rin po che'i gsung sgras thor bu*). Finally, the text quoted in the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* [see n. 38] shows several interesting variants. Another manuscript of the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* also reads the addressee as Grags pa seng ge; see the text in the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs sgrigs*, vol. 64 [Ngu], Dpal brtsegs bod

and *not* something like **Slob dpon grags pa seng ge'i spyan sngar phrin du zhu ba*. Hence, the addressee was *not* Grags pa seng ge but Bsod nams seng ge! As we have seen above, 'U yug pa's original name in religion had been Bsod nams seng ge, which, Mus srād pa alleged, Sa skya Paṇḍita had at one point turned into Rigs pa'i seng ge, meaning "lion of reasoning." The impassioned letter in question bespeaks of 'Phags pa's deep desire as a novice-tantric practitioner (*shā kya'i dge tshul rdo rje 'dzin pa*) to receive ordination as a monk while bemoaning the recent passing of his uncle Sa skya Paṇḍita and how the latter had spoken so highly of 'U yug pa's intellectual accomplishments. As for the letter's context or purpose (*skabs don*), we read the following⁴⁴:

*da res rgyal pos thugs la btags nas bande dang / bon po la
sogs pa gnam mchod pa rnams la dmag khral med par sdod /
de'i mgo gnyer dang bande thams cad sa skya pa shes su chug
gsungs pa'i lung byon / de'i 'ja' sa bskyal nas mi rnams brtsi
ba dang / slob dpon spyan 'dren pa'i don la rdo rje 'brug
mngag pa yin / 'dir chos kyi rje bzhugs pa'i dus na'ang rgyal
bu'i : don du [Zhwa lu ms.: drung du yang yang] 'byon
dgos pa dang / 'phral gyi bsod nams kyis g.yengs pas / nged
rang gi yid tshims pa'i chos 'chad nyan gyi long ma byung
bas / khyed las chos kyi lung mang du len pa dang / bsnyen
rdzogs kyi mkhan slob ya gcig zhu ba'i don du spyan 'dren
pa'i gros byas pas / chos rje pas kyang 'thad gsungs nas / bka'
yig kyang bskur ba yin / nged kyis kyang zhu yig nan bskur
ba yin pa la 'byon du ma nyan / chos rje pa bzhugs pa'i tshe
byon na chos rje pa yang mnyes par yong bar 'dug gal te sku
gshogs na'ang khyed bzhugs na blo bde bsams nas spyan
drangs pa lags /^a ...
deng sang dbus gtsang khams gsum na slob dpon bsod nams
seng ge las mkhas btsun 'dzom pa med / khos^b shānti'i dod pa
yin gsungs /...*

^a The text has here a so-called *rin spungs shad* graph and not a simple *shad* " / ".

^b Read: *kho*.

yig dpe mnying zhīb 'jug khang, ed., Xining, Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2012, p. 204. And the text of his work in the recently published edition of his collected writings also has Grags pa seng ge as the addressee; see *Collected Works*, vol. 4, Si khron bod yig dpe mnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe mnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, p. 137.

⁴⁴ The text of the manuscript of A mes zhabs' work that Schuh used, and thus his translation, as well as the text of its Sde dge xylograph, are on occasion rather misleading.

Now having been taken to heart by the emperor [= Möngke], an order (*lung*) came which stated "The Buddhist clergy and the worshippers of Heaven (*gnam* = Mon. *tengri*) such as the Bon po, etc. will live without military tax (*dماغ khral*). All their administrative heads and clergy should be subordinated to the Sa skya pa." After his decree ('*ja' sa* < Mon. *jasag*) was promulgated, Rdo rje 'brug was dispatched for the purpose of doing a population count⁴⁵ and inviting the Master [= Bsod nams seng ge]. Because also when the Chos kyi rje [= Sa skya Paṇḍita] lived here, he needed to appear over and over again before the prince and was distracted by superficial merit, because there was little time for studying religion that satisfied my mind, and because I discussed with him to receive many reading authorizations of religious texts from you and to invite a pair, an initiating abbot and master, for the purpose of requesting a full ordination, the Chos kyi rje had said all right and on that basis he also sent you a letter (*bka' yig*). I also sent you an earnest letter of request (*zhu yig*), but you were unable to come. Had you come when the Chos rje pa [= Sa skya Paṇḍita] was alive, the Chos rje pa, too, would have been delighted; he said that even if he had passed away, if you are alive, I should invite you with a wholesome and good intention... He had said: "At present, there is in Dbus, Gtsang and Khams no one other than Master Bsod nams seng ge in whom scholarship and virtue converge. He is the equivalent of Shānti [= Ratnākaraśānti (ca. 1000)]."

Rdo rje 'brug, whom 'Phags pa mentioned as one to be dispatched to the Tibetan area, also occurs in a letter in which 'Phags pa allegedly notified Sa skya's clergy and Sa skya Paṇḍita's disciples in Central Tibet of his uncle's passing.⁴⁶ This is a little curious because it informs

⁴⁵ The term is *mi rnams brtsi ba*, that is, to do a census. It is not known if this census were ever conducted. However, the first fairly well documented census in Tibet is the one that took place in 1268 and it was dealt with in L. Petech, "The Mongol Census in Tibet", *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., Warminster, Aris and Phillips, 1980, pp. 233-238 [this article was reprinted in *The Tibetan History Reader*, G. Tuttle and K. Schaeffer, eds., New York, Columbia University Press, 2013, pp. 233-240; see also L. Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols. The Yuan-Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. LXV, Rome Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990, pp. 46-48.

⁴⁶ See his *Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen la spring ba*, *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 4, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 22,

the addressees that the master had passed away three months earlier on the fourteenth day of the first fortnight of the *smal po* [(= *mgo*, **mārgaṣīrśa*] month of the pig-year, that is, on November 11, 1251.⁴⁷ For this particular letter is dated two days after the one he had written to Bsod nams seng ge, that is, it was apparently written on February 16, 1252 (*chu pho byi ba'i dpyid zla 'bring po'i tshes lnga*). It was also sent from the monastery of lustrous Ling chu rtsir khab and it states in part that⁴⁸:

...bdag nyid chen po sku gshegs pa'i rjes su yang / chos rje
nyid kyi thugs rje'i mthus nged thams cad khams bde bar yod
/ rgyal bu mong go ta yang byon / thugs la 'dogs par yod /
mong go gan rgyal por mnga' gsol phyogs thams cad du 'ja'
sa bzang po bsgrags / rgyal khams thams cad kyang shin tu
bde / bye brag tu bande la dmag khral sho dang / gan mdzod
du nor 'dab mi dgos / bande'i khang pa dang lha khang du
gser yig pa 'bab ra med / 'u lag sbyin ra med / so so'i chos
lugs bzhin du gnam mchod / nged thams cad la smon lam
thob / bande thams cad kyi ji ltar bya ba'i mgo lung de / sa
skya pa shes su chug bya ba'i 'ja' sa bzang po gnang / de
phyogs mtha' dag tu bsgrags pa dang / gser yig pa rnams kyi
bod so so'i mi rtsi ba dang / rgyal khams gtan la 'bebs pa'i
ched du / khyed kyi bande zhig kyang thong zer nas / de'i don
du dge bshes rdo rje 'brug dang / dge bshes sum bu dpon
g.yog rnams btang ba yin /

Even in the wake of the great being's [= Sa skya Paṇḍita's] passing, we are all fine through the force of the compassion of the Chos rje himself. Prince Mongeta (< Möngetei?) also arrived.⁴⁹ He took us to heart. Möngeke Qan was enthroned⁵⁰ and an authentic decree was proclaimed in all directions. The entire empire is quite fine. In particular, it is not necessary for the clergy to deliver ('*dab*) military tax (*dmag khral*), duty (*sho* < Ch.

Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, p. 445. To be noted is that the Zhwa lu monastery manuscript of 'Phags pa's oeuvre titles this work *Dbus gtsang du gser yig pa brdzangs pa'i yi ge*, *Document of Having Dispatched an Envoy to Dbus and Gtsang*.

⁴⁷ *Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen la spring ba*, p. 444.

⁴⁸ J. Szerb, "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags-pa: I. On the Activity of Sa-skya Paṇḍita", *Tibetan Studies in honour of Hugh Richardson*, ed. M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 1980, pp. 291-292.

⁴⁹ For him, see Szerb, "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags pa: II. Some Notes on the Events of the Years 1251-1254", p. 274, n. 56.

⁵⁰ Möngeke was enthroned on July 1, 1251.

shui)⁵¹ and wealth (*nor*) to the treasury (*gan mdzod*). There shall be no resting place for the imperial messengers (*gser yig pa*) in the homes and temples of the clergy. There shall be no giving of corvée labor (*'u lag* < Mon. *ulaqa*). Heaven is worshipped according to various religions. All of us received prayers. The directive's heading (*mgo lung*) of how all individuals of the cloth should act was given an authentic decree of the need for being subordinate to the Sa skya pa.⁵² It is proclaimed everywhere and having said that for the purpose of doing a census of the various Tibetan areas ...⁵³ and stabilizing the region, your men of the cloth need to be dispatched, Dge bshes Rdo rje 'brug and Dge bshes Sum bu, officials and servants, were dispatched for that purpose.

It will be noticed that the diction of these letters shows specific influences from contemporary Sino-Mongol diplomatic documents; these are, for example, expressions like *dmag khral*, *shes su chug*, *'ja' sa*, *sho*, *gser yig pa*, *'u lag*, etc. However, there are important indications that neither letter may be as authentic as Schuh, Szerb, Chen and others have taken them to be. For one, neither title occurs in such pre-Sde dge xylograph listings of the titles of 'Phags pa's oeuvre as the ones we find in the records of education of Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), Ngor chen Dkon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), and Dalai Lama V Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682).⁵⁴ On the other hand, a work with the title *Chos kyi rje sa skya paṇḍita bde ba can du gshegs*

⁵¹ My translation is uncertain.

⁵² In a different context and mistaking Möngke for Qubilai, A mes zhabs' messy narrative in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 160, has a very similar sentence: *gzhan yang rgyal po'i lung gis / nyi ma nub kyi bande rnams ji ltar bya ba'i mgo lung sa skya pa shes su chug bya ba'i lung gnang /*. The translation of this sentence is incomplete in the Chinese translation of A mes zhabs' work, for which see *Sajia shixi shi*, tr. Chen Qingying et al., tr., Beijing, Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2004, p. 124. My rendition is also uncertain.

⁵³ The genitive *kyi* and thus the phrase *gser yig pa rnams kyi* cause me problems that I am unable to solve.

⁵⁴ See, respectively, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, *E vaṃṃ bka' 'bum*, vol. 1/20, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 132, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, pp. 225–234, *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul gsal bar bshad pa'i yi ge thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyin byed*, *E vaṃṃ bka' 'bum*, vol. 16/20, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 147, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, pp. 336–343, and *Gsan yig gangga'i chu rgyun*, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009, pp. 94–106.

pa'i tshé dbus gtsang gi grwa pa rnams la gnang ba'i bka' shog is found in the records of Rdzong pa [or: Gong dkar ba] Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–1496) and Gong dkar ba 'Phrin las rgya mtsho (17thc.).⁵⁵ But it is not obvious that these are two titles for one and the same work. A mes zhabs presents a category of his own since, while the title catalogues of 'Phags pa's oeuvre that are contained in his works do not appear to mention these,⁵⁶ it would seem that the title of a work for which he received the "reading authorization" (*lung*) from the Mkhan chen, namely, '*U yug pa'i zhu yig, A Request of 'U yug pa*, might be identified as the *Slob dpon bsod nams seng ge'i spyān sngar phrin du zhu ba*.⁵⁷ It probably should, since, after all, he does cite an entire version of it in his chronicle of the Sa skya school. Finally, it is hardly surprising that both are listed in Zhu chen Tshul khriṃs rin chen's (1697–1774) "record of teachings received," inasmuch as he was after all the editor-in-chief of this very Sde dge xylograph!⁵⁸ The variations in the titles and sequence and number of texts that we find in these records of course have to do with the different editions of 'Phags pa's oeuvre to which their authors had access, as Zhu chen painstakingly points out in the Sde dge catalogue of the writings of the five patriarchs of the Sa skya school.⁵⁹ The manuscripts that Zhu chen and his team used for the Sde dge edition of the entire *bka' 'bum*-collected works of the five Sa skya pa patriarchs (*sa skya gong ma lnga*) were⁶⁰:

⁵⁵ See *Rdzong pa kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* (Kathmandu: Rgyal yongs sa chen dpe skrun khang, [2005]), 23, and *Gong dkar bla ma 'phrin las rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* [= *Thob yig bum pa bzang po*], Kathmandu, Rgyal yongs sa chen dpe skrun khang, 2008, p. 339.

⁵⁶ A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 221–226, and his *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos ji ltar thob pa'i tshul legs par bshad pa zab rgyas chos kun gsal ba'i nyin byed*, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, pp. 153–159 and 177–183, which reflect the transmissions of 'Phags pa's writings he received from Mkhan chen Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641) and Mthu stobs dbang phyug (1588–1646).

⁵⁷ *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos ji ltar thob pa'i tshul legs par bshad pa zab rgyas chos kun gsal ba'i nyin byed*, p. 154. This title is not listed in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo!*

⁵⁸ See the *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge don gnyer gdengs can rol pa'i chu gter*, *Collected Works*, Sde dge xylograph, vol. Kha, p. 464 [fol. 232b], bdr.org, W1KG10853.

⁵⁹ *Dpal sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig* [Sde dge xylograph], *Sa skya'i bka' 'bum*, vol. 15, Dehra Dun, Sakya Center 1992–1993, pp. 926 ff., 937 ff. [fols. 464b ff., 469b ff.].

⁶⁰ *Dpal sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig* [Sde dge xylograph], p. 942 [fol. 472b]. For some observations on this edition, see Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III). Sa skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, p. 70, and his "Notes on Two Early Printed Editions of Sa-skyapa Works", *The Tibet Journal* VIII, no. 2, 1983, pp. 3–24.

1. One pristine exemplar of the *bka' 'bum* from Bsam gtan gling monastery in Skyor mda'.
2. The *bka' 'bum* of Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa in golden and silver ink that was prepared by Sga A Gnyan dam pa Kun dga' grags (1230–1303).
3. Six large volumes of 'Phags pa's writings that were prepared by Sga A gnyan dam pa.
4. A set of reliable manuscripts (*dpe khungs thub cha gcig*) from Thar lam monastery in Yul shul that was prepared by A nanda dznyā na [Kun dga' ye shes] (1397–1470), a disciple of Rong ston Shākya rgyal mtshan (1367–1449) and Ngor chen.⁶¹
5. Two sets of manuscripts that were prepared by earlier rulers of Sde dge and by the present one Bstan pa tshe ring (1678–1738), the patron of the Sde dge xylograph edition.
6. One set from Lcags ra⁶² Bsam 'grub monastery.
7. One set from Gling.
8. Some actual manuscripts that belonged to 'Thor bul Mkhas grub Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.

The same problem of authenticity is also met with in the open letter that Sa skya Paṇḍita allegedly sent to the authorities of Central Tibet.⁶³ Long ago, D.P. Jackson advanced important arguments that challenged the "received" opinion of its authenticity, arguments that are similar to the ones that, I suggest, would undermine the authenticity of these two letters that were allegedly written by 'Phags

⁶¹ A native of Mdzo nyag in Upper Sga and recognized as a re-embodiment of the still too little appreciated Smṛtījñānakīrti (11thc.), he received the reading authority (*lung*) of the *bka' 'bum* of the five patriarchs at the age of five from Byang chub bzang po, a disciple of Sa bzang 'Phags pa Gzhon nu blo gros (1358–1412/24), and also had a manuscript edition of the *bka' 'bum* plus catalogue prepared by his nephew 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' rnam rgyal in 1470; see his 1998 biography by 'Jam dbyangs shes rab, the *Bdag nyid chen po gzhung lugs rab 'byams pa kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar sprin dkar gzhon nu'i rol rtsed byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i char 'bebs*, *Collected Works*, vol. 1 ?Xining, np, ?2005), bdc.org, WOOEGS1016747, pp. 325, 371. Written under inspiration of the famous Sga Sde gzhung Rin po che (d. 1987), the edited version of the biography was completed by Bse mkhar Kun dga' tshe ring at the end of 2004. Kun dga' ye shes founded Śrī thar lam dga' ldan sa bzang rnam rgyal gling monastery in 1436.

⁶² An interesting capsule history of this monastery by Dam chos tshe ring and Kun dga' grol mchog is contained in *Sde dge rdzong dgon pa'i lo rgyus*, *Sde dge rdzong dgon pa'i lo rgyus u yon lhan tshogs and Srid srol sde dge rdzong u yon lhan khang*, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2011, pp. 137-144.

⁶³ See his *Bu slob rnam la spring ba*, *Collected Works (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1 [13/25], *Mes po'i shul bzhag*, vol. 15, *Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang*, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 452-457.

pa.⁶⁴ Namely, their titles do not occur in the earliest catalogs of the collected oeuvre of their author and they falsely presume that Sa skya and not 'Bri gung stood at the center of the Mongol governance of Central Tibet in the 1250s. In addition, Schuh has shown that portions of the letter Köten had allegedly written to summon Sa skya Paṇḍita to his court, which is cited in varying ways in different sources, were most probably forged as well.⁶⁵ He did accept that A mes zhabs' version of the first even though the title of this letter in 'Phags pa's oeuvre indicates that the addressee was Bsod nams seng ge, that is, 'U yug pa, and *not* Grag pa seng ge.

In his article cited above, Szerb referred to a passage in Dpa' bo II's chronicle where Sa skya Paṇḍita is said to have compared 'U yug pa with Ratnākaraśānti and noted the presence of an almost identical phrasing in the first of the two letters that allegedly came from 'Phags pa's pen.⁶⁶ But this by itself constitutes insufficient proof for supposing that the original letter was addressed to 'U yug pa. As is almost to be expected, the version of the letter A mes zhabs paraphrases in its entirety reads at this juncture "Grag pa seng ge", and not "Bsod nams seng ge," let alone "'U yug pa".⁶⁷ Hence, all that we can infer from this is that versions of both letters probably existed by the middle of the sixteenth century at the latest. The comparison with Ratnākaraśānti also does not help us in identifying the addressee as there is no real reason why it should, or should not, do justice to either scholar.

That 'Phags pa was ordained by Grags pa seng ge, then abbot of Snye thang monastery, is a well-established historical fact, that is, it is something for which there apparently exists a consensus in our sources. And that this took place in 1255 is also something that is agreed upon. Working with the hypothesis that the letter did get to where it was supposed to go, it remains difficult to explain why, if Grags pa seng ge was indeed its addressee, it took him three years to make up his mind and why he was in no hurry to get to eastern Tibet

⁶⁴ "Sa skya Paṇḍita's Letter to the Tibetans, a Late and Dubious Addition to his Collected Works", *Journal of the Tibet Society* 6, 1986, pp. 17-23. This article was reprinted in *The Tibetan History Reader*, ed. G. Tuttle and K. Schaeffer, pp. 241-246. The letter itself was first translated in G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I, Roma, la Libreria Dello Stato, 1949, pp. 10-12; see also Chen Qingying, *Yuanchao dishi basiba*, p. 122 [= *Yon rgyal rabs kyi ti shri 'gro mgon 'phags pa'i mdzad rnam*, Skäl bzang dar rgyas, tr., pp. 107-108] and the study in Li Decheng "Zong sajia banzhida 'zhifan ren shu' dao hubilie 'you li senaren zhaoshu' [From Sa skya Paṇḍita's Letter to Tibetans to Qubilai Qan's Imperial Edict regarding the Courteous Treatment of Monks]", *Zhongguo Zangxue* 4, 2017, pp. 15-20.

⁶⁵ Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, pp. 39-41.

⁶⁶ See his *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 732.

⁶⁷ *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 169-170.

or Liangzhou, let alone to The [Thig] le, that elusive place that was allegedly perched "on the shore of a river at the Sino-Mongolian frontier," where he ordained 'Phags pa in the capacity of acting as his abbot (*mkhan po*). This is what we learn in the chronicles of Yar lung Jo bo and Mus srad pa.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Stag tshang pa states that he was ordained in a place close to He ce'u [= Ch. Hezhou], which is located in Gansu Province.⁶⁹ It is equally hard to come up with a convincing reason for 'U yug pa not showing up at 'Phags pa's doorstep unless, as Go rams pa and Mus srad pa and others have done, he was declared deceased before arrival. The fundamental problem with this scenario is that other, earlier sources suggest that 'U yug pa was still very much alive when 'Phags pa first returned to Sa skya monastery in 1264. Some of our sources, both primary and secondary, are quite confused about the year in which 'Phags pa returned to Sa skya monastery for the first time after his departure from Sa skya for Liangzhou with his uncle. But this confusion can be safely laid to rest when we take the colophons of 'Phags pa's own writings at their face value. The colophon of his study of a reverential petition that was written much earlier by his uncle states that it was composed at Ra mo che, Lhasa, on December 24, 1264, and we can safely assume that he left the Mongols in the first half of 1264 and that he must have arrived at Sa skya not long after his arrival in Lhasa, in all events before Tibetan New Year.⁷⁰ Further, according to Mkhas grub Dge legs dpal bzang po's (1385–1438) record of teachings received, 'Phags pa transmitted to 'U yug pa the "explanatory tantras" of the *Hevajratantra* as he had originally received them from Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁷¹ This finds confirmation in Ngor chen's cognate record, which adds elsewhere

⁶⁸ See Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 154—a note in the original manuscript of this work identifies Jo gdan Byang thang pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan and a Yar lung pa [= Yar lung pa Byang chub rgyal mtshan] as those who functioned, respectively, as his ritual master and confessor during the ordination—and also Mus srad pa, *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, fol. 27b [=Rdzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., p. 39].

⁶⁹ Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 326; see also Chen Qingying, *Hanzang shiji*, tr., Beijing, Minzu chubanshe, 1986, p. 203.

⁷⁰ See the useful chronology of his writings and where they were written in Fukuda Yoichi and Ishihama Yumiko, *A Study of the Grub mthah of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 4, *On the chapter on the history of mongolian Buddhism of Thulu bkwan's Grub mthah*, *Studia Tibetica*, No. 11, Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko, 1986, p. 55, in connection with his *Bla ma la thun mong ma yin pa'i sgo nas gsol ba 'debs pa'i 'grel pa*, for which see his *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 19, *Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang*, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 118-124.

⁷¹ *Mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsan yig*, *Collected Works [Lhasa Zhol xylograph]*, vol. ka [1], New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1980-1982), p. 102.

that 'U yug pa had also obtained from him the transmission of the **Vajravidaranatantra*.⁷² 'Phags pa was a mere nine years old when he left Sa skya for Liangzhou making it unlikely in the extreme that, if these "records of teachings received" are accurate, a nine-year old would have been capable of going through the complex rituals of transmitting these difficult texts. 'Phags pa left Sa skya for the Mongol court in the autumn of 1267, so that it would appear that 'U yug pa may have received these transmissions sometime between 1265 and late 1267. 'Phags pa then returned to Sa skya in 1276, so that we can also not completely exclude the possibility that he transmitted these texts to 'U yug pa sometime between 1276 and 1280. Given all this plus the fact that A mes zhabs' account of this particular phase of 'Phags pa's life is historically rather messy, we have no choice but to admit that we know as little about the year of 'U yug pa's death as we do of the year of his birth. Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that *circa* 1195 to *circa* 1267 would be a fairly good guesstimate for both. What remains an unanswered question is that if 'Phags pa had indeed addressed his letter to 'U yug pa requesting that he ordain him, why did he not show up and why did Grags pa seng ge make the trip in his stead. The answer will probably never be forthcoming. In any event, 'U yug pa's remains appear to have been enshrined in a large stupa on the outskirts of Shigatse, as Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820-1892) informs us.⁷³ But the stupa is no longer there.

'U yug pa had a number of students, the names of the most important of whom may be culled from several "records of teachings received" and a few other sources that were used for the above profile of his life; these students include:

1. Zhang Mdo sde dpal
2. Slob dpon Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1238-?)⁷⁴

⁷² Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 315, 331.

⁷³ See A. Ferrari, *Mk'yen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, ed. L. Petech with collaboration of H. Richardson, Serie Orientale Roma XXV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958, pp. 20, 61.

⁷⁴ He was the only son of Zangs tsha ba and his second wife Ma gcig Jo 'bro [var. 'gro] and, hence, another one of Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephews. Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 331, states that he built this residence after 'Phags pa had left for Central Tibet in 1276. Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 48, Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung*, p. 157, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 331, Dpa' bo II, *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i 'byung gnas*, Stod cha [vol. 1], p. 590, all suggest that he died in the year 1282, in Shing kun monastery. On the other hand, A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 234, refers to unidentified sources that supposed that he probably died in 1279 at Me tog r[w]a ba, which was the residence of the Yuan dynasty's Imperial Preceptor in Fayuan monastery, in Dadu [= more or less present-day Beijing]. The *History of the Yuan* also states that he passed away in 1279

3. Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri⁷⁵
4. Sru lung pa Kun dga' smon lam
5. Rin phug pa Shākya seng ge
6. Sangs rgyas 'bum
7. Bla ma Grags chen
8. Kun dga' bsod noms
9. Lte ra ba Chos grags
10. Khang ston 'Od zer rgyal mtshan
11. ?Stag stog Gnyan⁷⁶

'U yug pa figures in Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri's undated biography that was written by his disciple Bsam gtan bzang po. As is to be expected, the latter mentions not only that he studied Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's works, and the *Rigs gter*, under 'U yug pa, but also a number of tantric texts.⁷⁷ As for Kun dga' bsod noms, Mkhas grub states in his "record of teachings heard" (*gsan yig*) that he was a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita and the teacher of Kun dga' smon lam of Sa skya monastery's Nyi thog Residence.⁷⁸

(To be continued)

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and has it that this took place at Wanan monastery, in Dadu; see *Yuanshi*, vol. 10, chapter 10, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1976, 218.

⁷⁵ For him, see lastly L.W.J. van der Kuijp and A.P. McKeown, *Bcom ldan ral gri (1227-1305) on Indian Buddhist Logic and Epistemology: His Commentary on Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 80, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2013, pp. lxxxiv ff.

⁷⁶ His slight summary of the history of Indian Buddhist *pramāṇavāda*, the *Tshad ma'i lo rgyus*, was signaled in my "On Some Early Tibetan *Pramāṇavāda* Texts of the China Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing", *Journal of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies* 1, 1994, pp. 8-10. This journal has been long since defunct. The author was possibly a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita since he identifies him on fol. 6 as "our great scholar" (*bdag cag gi paṇḍi ta chen po*)—note the humilific *bdag!*

⁷⁷ *Bcom ldan rigs pa'i ral gri'i rnam thar dad pa'i ljon shing*, Collected Works, vol 1, Lhasa, Khams sprul bsod noms don grub, 2006, pp. 59-60. Earlier, on pp. 55-56, we learn that he studied the *Rigs gter* under Sa skya Paṇḍita!

⁷⁸ *Mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsan yig*, 81.

skrun khang, 1986.

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