MKHAS PA’I DGA STON

The feast for scholars

INTRODUCTION

This history was written by Pawo Tsuglag (dPa’ bo gtsug lag phreng ba, 1504–1566). He was a reincarnate lama of the Karma Kagyu (Karma bka’ brgyud) sect. The text was compiled between around 1545 and 1564. It presents a history of Buddhism in India and its diffusion in Tibet, along with a history of Tibet, itself, concentrating on the history of the Karma Kagyu. It includes a transcript of the inscription on the Samye (bSam yas) pillar.

Sources

dPa’ bo gtsug lag phreng bas brtsams. 1986. Dam pa’i chos kyi ’khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
[This is a re-print of the 1985 edition].
TBRC: W7499

Mkhas pahi dgah ston by Dpah-bo-gtsug ‘phreng-bal. 1965. Lokesh Chandra (ed.) New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture. (Śatapitaka Series no. 9 (4))
TBRC: W28792
[This is reproduced from prints from the Lho brag blocks from Rumtek Monastery, with the same page setting as the 1965 version]
[This work was published in identical form in 2006 and 2012]

References

OUTLINE

Section and chapter titles are found in the two-volume Beijing 1986 edition, as are the page numbers. The transliteration is based on the 1986 edition and the 1980 Delhi block print.

Section 1  How the doctrine was established generally in the world (’Jig rten gyi khaps spyir bstan pa), p. 5.
Section 2  Concerning India (rGya gar gyi skabs), p. 29.
Section 3  Concerning Tibet (Bod kyi skabs), p. 101.
Section 4  Concerning Khotan, old China, Minyak, Hor, and recent China (Li yul, rgya nag snga ma, mi nyag, hor, rgya nag phyi ma bcas kyi skabs), p. 1381.
Section 5  The five types of knowledge (Yul spyi dang shes bya’i gtso bo rig gnas lnga byung tshul), p. 1431.

Section 3: Concerning Tibet

The titles of the sub-sections on the Tibetan royal chronicles below are suggested by the 2012 edition.

Chapter (1)  How Avalokiteśvara became lord of Tibet (Thugs rje chen pos bdag gir mdo zon tshul), p. 105.
Chapter (2)  The Tibetan royal chronicles (Bod kyi rgyal rabs), p. 149.
   Part 1)  How people arrived in Tibet
   Part 2)  The twelve petty kingdoms
   Part 3)  The seven sky kings (gnam gyi khri
   Part 4)  The two upper realms
   Part 5)  The six beautiful lands and the eight middle realms
   Part 6)  The five emperors (btsan) of the lower realms
   Part 7)  King Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po)
   Part 8)  King Mangsong Mangtsen (Mang srong mang btsan)
   Part 9)  King Dusong Mangpoje (’Dus srong mang po rje)
   Part 10) King Tri De Tsugten (Khri IDe gtsug btsan)
Part 11) King Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong lde btsan)
Part 12) King Mune Tsenpo (Mu ne btsan po)
Part 13) King Tri De Songtsen (Khri lDe srong btsan)
Part 14) King Tri Tsug Detsen Ralpachan (Khri gTsug lde btsan ral pa can)
Part 15) Namdé Oshung (gNam lde 'od srung) and Tri De Yumten (Khri lDe yum brtan)
Part 16) Concerning Lhasa and Samye

Chapter (4) The history of the translators and scholars (Lo pan chos ’byung), p. 509.
Chapter (5) The appearance of the Vajrayana Nyingma (gSang rnying ma’i chos kyi byung ba), p. 537.
Chapter (6) The appearance of the Kadampa (bKa’ gAdms kyi byung ba), p. 655.
Chapter (7) The appearance of the Kagyu, in general (bKa’ brgyud spyi’i chos kyi byung ba), p. 739.
Chapter (8) The appearance of the Karma Kamtsang (Karma kams tshang gi chos kyi byung ba), p. 859.
Chapter (9) The history of the Drigung Kagyu (‘Bri gung bka’ brgyud kyi rnam thar), p. 1337.
Chapter (10) The appearance of various religious lineages (Chos brgyud sna tshogs pa’i chos kyi byung pa), p. 1359.

EXTRACTS

Section 3, Chapter 2: The Tibetan royal chronicles

Part seven concerns the life and activities of Songtsen Gampo. The text describes how the king sends his minister, Tonmi Sambhota (Thon mi sam bho ta), to India in order to learn reading and writing, so as to be able to create the laws of the ten virtues (dge bcu yi rgyal khrims ’cha’ ba la), among other things. He encounters the brahmin Li byin and other scholars and creates the Tibetan alphabet. On his return, the king establishes his government and its ministers, allocating them with different tasks, and he himself goes into retreat to learn the script.

Later, his kingdom flourishes: from the east, from China and Minyak, come craftsmanship (bzo) and arithmetic (rtsis); from the south, from India (dkar po’i rgya gar), comes the sacred doctrine; from the west, from Sogpo and Nepal, come material wealth; and from the north, from Monglia and the Uighurs, come law (khrims). It is said that the king rules over half the world.
One hundred ministers in all, levelled differences (bar gyi khod snyom) and maintained the two laws (khrims gnyis), so it is said.

The king stays in his palace for four years to learn the script and the people become restless. He emerges and gathers the people and announces his intention to create laws. After explaining his absence, he declares:

“Now, I must make the great royal laws. Formerly, when there were no laws, there were scattered small polities. Now again, without law, evil conduct is spreading and it is causing my subjects to suffer, so I must make law”.

He made the six great laws (bka’ yi khrims yig chen po). First, he divided Tibet into five horns. He made eighteen divisions of territorial power. He divided [Tibet] into sixty-one military thousand-districts. He divided it into civilian districts of servants and servants’ servants. The three maternal uncles, together with the ministers formed a central council. The three regiments
of heroes protected the watchposts on the borders. These were known as the six Tibetan
institutions. As regards the six laws, they were: the law of Khri rtse 'bum bzher, the law of 'Bum
gser thog sha ba can, the law modelled on the kingdom, the law of mDo lon zhu bcad,¹ the
general laws created by the governors (dbang chen), and the internal revenue law. These were
the six.

[p. 185]

First, the king gave instructions to the different ministers according to the explanation of
government and administration in Khri rtse 'Bum bzher’s [law].

This involves organising:
The four horns [p. 186]
The shares of power [pp. 186–87]
The ten sde [pp. 187–88]
The civilian districts [pp. 188–89]
The experts, herders, traders, servants, and kings [pp. 188–89]
The upper regiments of heroes [p. 189]
The middle regiments of heroes [p. 189]
The lower regiments of heroes [pp. 189–90]

The text continues with the seven officials:

[p. 190]

¹ This may mean, alternatively, the law concerning the summary of the decision on what is received and
given, that is, the arguments on both sides. It could, then, indicate, a law guiding judges' decision-making.
Then, as far as the seven officials (dpon) are concerned: the duty of the regional officials is to maintain the laws of the smaller regions (yul chung khrims); the duty of the army officials is to defeat the enemy; the horse officials define the highways; the official of the prices manages the grain, gold, and silver—since there are many prices to enumerate, he is known as the official of the prices (rgan dpon); the official of the herd (phru dpon) manages the herds of yak and dzo; the justice official (drang dpon) decides legal cases. These are the seven officials.

Furthermore there were the six great principles (bka’ gros), the six insignia of rank (yig tshangs), the six official seals, the six attributes (rkyen), the six emblems of heroism, with the addition of the six legal codes. These were known as the thirty-six institutions of Tibet.

Those who take care of the body of the lord will be given wages; by controlling the soldiers, the servants’ servants will be supported; servants who have not been sent to be soldiers should not be attached to the words of noblewomen; by protecting the borders, the subjects’ fields and gardens will not be trampled by horses; by suppressing the enemy, the subjects will be protected; by observing the ten virtues, the ten non-virtues will be rejected. These are the six great principles (bka’ gros chen po).

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2 Reading slar as blar would mean ‘superior wages’.
3 See Dotson (2006: 291–94) for a discussion and alternative reading of this passage.
As for the insignia of rank (yig tshang): the excellent are gold and turquoise; the middle are silver and gilt; the low are copper and iron, making six. Each is divided into two, an upper and lower, making twelve. Thus, the great ‘high minister’ (gung blon chen po) is given the large turquoise insignia; the middle ‘high minister’ and the great interior minister are given the small turquoise insignia; the lower ‘high minister’, the middle interior minister, and the great bka’ yo gal ‘chos pa, all three are given the large gold insignia; the lower interior minister and the middle bka’ blon are given the small gold insignia; the lower bka’ blon is given the gilt insignia.

Further, scholar translators, the emperor’s mantra specialists, governors, and ministers of the upper and lower regions⁵ are given the large silver insignia. The Bon po who take care of the body of the lord, personal chamberlains, riders, guides to the northern plateau, border guards, those who protect district forts, and so forth, are given the small silver insignia. The six clans of paternal subjects, and so on, receive the bronze insignia. The heads of thousand-districts and horn officials receive bronze insignia. Heroes in battle receive iron insignia and, further, as for the wavy pale wood insignia, it is given to the common subjects.

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⁴ Dotson (2006: 248–49) translates this as ‘imperial justice’. The literal meaning is ‘impartial executor of orders’, but in the lDe’u chronicle the duties are described as those of a judge.

⁵ This could possibly mean ‘west and east’. 
As regards the six seals (*phyag rgya*): the seal for official orders is a casket, the seal signifying a regional military government is a banner, the seal signifying a district (*yul*) is a royal fort, the seal signifying religion is a temple, the seal signifying heroes is a tiger skin, the seal signifying the learned is a text (*yig tshangs*). They are divided thus.

As regards the six attributes (*rkyen*): six the attributes of the hero are the leopard and the tiger; the attribute of the coward is the fox hat; the attribute of the nobility (*ya rabs*) is the divine religion (*lha chos*); the attributes of the lower classes are *thags* and Bon; the attributes of the learned are texts (*yig tshangs*); the attributes of the wicked are (those of) thieves.

As for the six emblems of heroism, they are both the upper and lower tigers, the large and small *zar*, the *gam ras* cloth and tiger skin coats, making six.

\[\text{Dotson (2006) translates this as ‘qualities’.}\]
\[\text{See Dotson (2006: 306) for discussion of this term.}\]
\[\text{This could possibly mean using tiger skin for either upper or lower garments.}\]
Further, the three—great, middle, and lower—‘high ministers’ (gung blon), the three interior ministers, the three great imperial justices, making nine, comprise the nine great ministers. The high minister, like a husband, manages the entirety of the external affairs; the interior minister, like a clever wife, manages internal affairs; the great imperial justice (bka' yo gal' chos pa) rewards the good, even if it is the son of an enemy, and he punishes the bad, even if it is his own son.

This is what is known as the [law] of Khri rtse ‘bum bzher,
The first of the six laws (bka’ yi khrims yig).
Bre, srang, phul, khyor, zho, nam, se, sran, and so on:
The order that delineated them is the second law (khrims yig),
Known as the [law] of ‘Bum gyi gser thog sha ba can.
Thirdly, what is known as the law modelled on the kingdom
Demonstrates appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
Subdue enemies and make the kingdom happy;
Tend to internal affairs and look after your retinue;
For your future life, practise the holy doctrine (*dam chos*).
Since the divine religion (*lha chos*) is a fundamental attribute of the nobility,
Do not expound it to servants, who are not (worthy) recipients;
Since secret mantras (*gsang sngags*) are the foundation of perfect enlightenment,
Do not sell them, like other possessions, but keep them in your heart;
If you praise the bad, you will both be ruined,
So do not set up servants as lords.
If you do not praise the brave with tiger (insignia),
Bravery will not be cultivated;
If the wise are not praised with texts (*yig tshangs*),
Later, the wise and the bad will not be differentiated;
If the good are not rewarded,
Then who will do good deeds?

If cowards are not shamed with a fox hat,
Then heroes and cowards will not be differentiated;
If the bad are not scrutinized,
They will never endeavour to change their attitudes;
If sins are not punished,
People will continue to commit sins.
If you harm your father and mother, who gave you life,
There will be great pain and suffering in the present and future;
If you harm your own son,
Outside, your enemies will uncover your deeds and words;
If you harm your family members, remote or close,
Husbandry and agriculture will diminish.
These are the three deeds, the three non-deeds, the three praises, the three shames, and the three non-harms. They are the fifteen renowned royal laws (rgyal khirms) [which ensure that] those who are heroic in battle are rewarded with the six emblems of heroism and those who are cowardly are shamed by wearing fox hats. So it is said.

[p. 192]
As regards the sixteen pure rules of human conduct and, in particular, the rejection of the ten non-virtues and the pronouncement of the laws (bka’ khrims):
The law of not taking life [requires] blood money (gshin stong) and wound price (gson stong); the law of not taking that which has not been given requires—for stealing the property of the clergy—compensation of one hundred, for that of the king—compensation of eighty, and for that of the subjects—compensation of eight; the law of sexual misconduct requires compensation for adultery (smad ‘jal) and punishment for rape (byi chad); the law against lying requires that you swear an oath taking the protector deity as a witness; [consumption of] chang should be measured. These were modelled on the five established religious laws (chos kyi gtan...
khribs). In addition to these five, the laws against servants revolting and people digging up royal tombs comprise the six or seven great renowned laws.

Generally, in addition to rejecting the ten non-virtues: regard your mother as your mother, your father as your father, religious ascetics and brahmins as such; respect elders, repay kindness, and do not be deceitful towards others. These make up the sixteen pure rules of human conduct.

[pp. 192–93]

གཞན་ཡང་།
དཀོན་མཆོག་སྐྱབས་བཟུང་དད་ཅིང་གུས་པས་མཆོད།

།ཕ་དང་མ་ལ་དྲིན་གཟོ་བཀུར་སྟི་བྱ།
།དྲིན་ཅན་ཡིད་མི་གཅོད་ཅིང་བཟང་ལན་འཇལ།
།མཐོན་པོ་རྣམས་ལ་མི་རྒོལ་སྨྲས་ན་ཉན།
།ལས་སོད་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡ་རབས་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲང་།
།ཆོས་དང་ཡི་གེར་བོ་འཇུག་དོན་ཤེས་བྱ།
།རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ཡིད་ཆེས་སྡིག་པའི་ལས་ལ་འཛེམ།
།གཞན་ལ་བསམ་ངན་མི་བྱ་ཕན་པ་གདགས།
།ཅི་བྱེད་རང་སེམས་དཔང་བཞག་དྲང་པོར་བྱ།
།ཟས་དང་ཆང་ལ་ཚོད་ཟིན་ཁྲེལ་འཛེམ་སྐྱེད།
།སྐྱིན་པ་བུ་ལོན་ལ་སོགས་དུས་སུ་གཞལ།
།བྲེ་དང་སྲང་ལ་སོགས་པར་གཡོ་ཟོལ་སྤང་།
།མ་བཅོལ་ལས་ལ་དོན་མེད་ཁ་གཏོགས་སོང་།
།རང་ཚུགས་བཟུང་ནས་བསྒྱུར་ཁ་ལྕི་བཐ་བྱ།
།མནའ་དང་དམ་བཞག་སྲོག་ལྟར་གཅེས་པར་འཛིན།
Furthermore,
Take refuge in the Three Jewels, and respect them with faith and devotion;
Show gratitude and respect to your father and mother;
Do not cut yourself off from your benefactors, but repay their kindness;
Do not quarrel with your superiors, but listen to what they say;
In all your activities, emulate the upper classes;
Concentrate on the doctrine and [its] texts so as to grasp their meaning;
Have faith in [the karmic law of] cause and effect and avoid sinful activities;
Do not think harmful thoughts of others, but determine to be of assistance;
In whatever you do, take your own mind as witness and always be honest;
Be measured in food and drink and act modestly;
Repay the interest on loans, and so forth, on time;
Do not cheat or be deceitful over bre, srang, and other [weights and measures];
Do not interfere in things that do not concern you;
Be self-reliant and controlled, and make your words weighty;
Hold fast to your oaths and vows, as if to your life.
These were the official proclamations.
With treatises on the excellent customs of the nobility (ya rabs)
And vows [to achieve] a prosperous and happy status in the next life,
All Tibetan subjects were established in pleasure and happiness.
As for the third law (khriims yig), when you make orders (zhal ice) concerning truth and falsehood:
Do not favour the powerful in your decisions,
But respond [appropriately] to both sides, as in the case of Danḍin,
And decide according to the truth for both of them.
If powerful and weak [people] are in dispute, when you have completed your investigation into the truth, do not favour the powerful and decide without disappointing yi chad the weak. This is the law of mDo lon zhu chad.10

[p. 193]
As for the response to both (parties): the brahmin Danḍin had borrowed a householder’s ox and when he went to return it he put it in the owner’s enclosure without saying anything. The householder saw that the ox had been returned, but he did not tie it up, and the ox came out of the gate and went astray. They took it as a legal case to Me lung gdong. (He decided that) since the brahmin had not said, ‘I have returned the ox’, his tongue should be cut, and since the householder had seen [the ox] but had not tied it up, his hand should be cut off. Taking this legal decision as an example, decide in favour of both equally. This is the general law of the great governors (dbang chen).

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9 This should be the fourth law, according to the original list.
10 This could mean the law concerning the making of orders in contentious cases: see p. 5, fn. 1, above.
In the case that both parties are right: the son of a householder, just after he had been born, fell into a river and was swallowed by a fish. The servant of another householder, who lived in a village lower down, caught and killed the fish, and the boy—still alive—emerged. The householder raised him as his son. The first householder heard about this and a dispute arose, so they petitioned the king. [He ordered that] the two of them should raise the child in turns and each should take a girl [as a wife for him]. If a boy was born and either household said ‘take it’, then the boy should take the name of the second family; if a boy taken by either household later became a monk, then he should be known as a monk of the second family. Taking this as an example, in the event of both parties being right, decide in a way that pleases all three. This is known as the internal legal code of the king’s treasury.
Thus the men from the eastern grasslands and woodlands, the barbarians from Klo and Mon to the south, the Turks and those in Zhang Zhung from the west, the Mongols and Uighur from the north, were gathered as subjects. Half the world was governed [by Srong btsan sgam po]. The strict laws of the ten virtues [caused] peace and happiness equal to that of the gods.

In this way, from that time on, the all-benefitting

Good imperial law, like a yoke, bound them in an excellent manner;

The wild animals became part of the king’s possessions;

The goats, sheep, and calves were left alone;

Mountain shrines\(^{11}\) were built on the passes and boats crossed the great rivers;

The firm orders of the lord generated contentment and happiness among the subjects;

The king’s government expanded like a lake in the summer;

Men were brave, horses were fast, and material wealth was equal to that of the gods;

Putting their trust in the religion, from that day on people were happy;

\(^{11}\) Dotson (2006: 407–08) has ‘toll posts’ for la brtsas.
Regarding everyone as their parents, the people engaged in no disputes; Reading and writing flourished and all people entered into the religion; Without resorting to sinful friends, they obtain the jewel of the ten virtues; Because of the deeds of the reincarnation [Srong btsan sgam po] there were no taxes or corvée labour; As a result of timely rainfall, the stocks of fruitful seeds increased; The branches and leaves of all trees flourished; The birds sang carefree and melodious songs; The contentment and happiness of the people of Tibet was like that of the gods.

The text continues with a description of the happiness of Tibet and its people.

A few pages later, the text turns to the story of Songtsen Gampo’s missions to Nepal and China to seek brides.

Songtsen Gampo sends his minister, Gar (mGar), to Nepal, to ask the king for his daughter’s hand in marriage. The Nepalese king at first refuses, saying that he does not have marriage alliances with the Tibetans. However, he then asks whether Songtsen Gampo can establish Buddhism in Tibet. The Tibetan king sends a letter in reply:

The king of the barbarian Tibetans, Srong btsan sgam po, says to the king of Nepal, “You, in Nepal, to the south, have the doctrine (chos). I do not have either doctrine or religious practitioners. So if it pleases you to grant your daughter, then in one day I will create 5,000
bodily emanations and construct one hundred and eight temples, with all the doors facing towards Nepal, and there will be nothing more wonderful’.

Then the king of Nepal said, ‘Ask him if he has the power to establish laws of the ten virtues’, and he entrusted the paper with the question to a silver casket. The reply came, ‘In that case, after having created the 5,000 emanations, in one day I will establish the laws of the ten virtues.’ Being a little afraid, he thought, ‘In order to appear profound, the Tibetan king seems to be boasting. Since the time of the Buddha Kāśyapa, we have had the resources of unceasing smoke from our stoves’.

The Nepalese king then asks the minister about Tibet’s material wealth. He eventually agrees to give his daughter in marriage.

After the queens of China and Nepal arrive in Lhasa, they establish temples and the religion flourishes.

[p. 243]

So, when the temple for the tutelary deity was completed,
In order to make the laws of the ten virtues secure and stable,
They made a terrifying court of emanations.
In order to turn people away from practice of the ten non-virtues,
They created a suitably frightening executioner,  
To cut off people’s heads and various limbs,  
To pluck out their tongues and eyes, and to burn their skin with molten metal.  
The heads, limbs, and eyes were piled up,  
And when people saw this court they trembled with fear.

Then Tibet becomes a land in which the non-virtues are not practised.

[The following story about the novice monks from Khotan is introduced with a verse, which is omitted here.]

Then, in Li yul, there were two novices who were venerating sPyan ras gzigs. 'Phags pa 'jam dpal appeared to them and said, 'If you two wish to see sPyan ras gzigs, he has manifested as a king and is now residing in Tibet. Go and seek him there'. Having delivered that prescription, he disappeared. Taking their staves and alms bowls, they immediately set off for Tibet. Firstly, arriving at Khra 'brug, they found the results of previous punishments—an enclosure of heads and piles of eyes. ‘What is this and who has done it?’ they asked. ‘A king who is said to execute this law cannot be trusted. He is not 'Phags pa 'jam dpal. He is a demon’, they said, and they turned away from the enclosure of heads, named dBu ra.
Then, having arrived near to Lhasa, they encountered a blind Bon po horseman and asked him the way to Li yul. ‘I am the messenger for the builder of the king’s temples and I am in a hurry; I do not have time to show you’, he said and left. In sTod lung valley, on the banks of the mDa’ river, they found many corpses, without heads, without eyes, and so on. Arriving in Lhasa, beside the ICags ri hill, to the west, they saw people being executed by way of punishment. ‘How could this be sPyan ras gzigs?’ they said, and turned away.

[p. 244]

When they reached the plain of Dan ‘bag, the king came to know of them and said to one of his ministers: ‘Take the black horse to the plain of Dan ‘bag. There are two men walking along there, with foreign clothes, shaved heads, saffron robes, and square-shaped garments. Bring them to me’. When they were led into his presence, he greeted them and said, ‘Where have you two come from and what are you doing here?’ The pair replied, ‘Phags pa ‘jam dpal gave
instructions and we came to see sPyan ras gzigs’. ‘Well, do you wish to see sPyan ras gzigs?’ he asked, and they asked to do so. He led them to the west, to a sandy spot, and took off his head covering to display the face of Amitābha. It is said that he actually displayed the eleven faces. ‘If you are sPyan ras gzigs, how is it that you have killed so many people?’ they asked. ‘These Tibetan people cannot be pacified, so I have created these emanations’, he said. He snapped his fingers and the court and the executioner disappeared. The two had faith and asked for advice.

The king advises them to observe the ten virtues, to follow the three Buddhist trainings, to recite the mantra of compassion, to take refuge in the Three Jewels, and to practise compassionate altruism. He then magically transports them back to Khotan, where they become arhats. The king becomes famous in Khotan, as the emanation of Chenrezig (sPyan ras gzigs).

Section 3, Chapter 2, Part 11: King Tri Song Detsen

After creating Samye monastery, the king and his sons make promises and swear oaths and establish the divine doctrine. They establish lineages, upper classes, and virtuous people. Tri Detsugtsen (Khri lDe gtsug btsan) marries a Chinese princess. He holds power all the way to the ‘eastern sea’ and makes a great ‘ja’ sa (edict) for Tibet.

[p. 377–78]
At that time, mGos khri bzang yab lhag, the son of the prime minister, the elder mGos, put in order the former judicial rulings (*zhal ce*) and blood money and wound price [compensation for injury and death], which had not yet been put in order. He then created the [system] of nine pairs of wooden slips (*byang bu cha*).  

In the case of a legal case (*zhal ce*) concerning blood money, the case is initiated by writing down the [plaintiff’s] insignia of rank, the blood price (*stong thang*), and [statements of] truth, and [the slip] presenting it to the authorities is called the ‘accusation slip’ (*byang gzas*). The slip with the reply is called the ‘snake’s head’. A further reply is called the ‘black hole’ (*smig nag*). These are the three slips for blood and wound compensation.

In a case about separating relatives, when a case is initiated concerning the way in which the mixing of relatives and the mixing of enemies happened, this is presented using what is called the *then* slip. In the case of oath-helpers (*dkar mi*) who expose falsehoods, the slip presenting this is called the swallow slip (*mchu smyung*). In general, these are the five parties’ (*blo yus*) slips.

Relating to the parties’ claims (*blo yus kyi shags*), if they are adjudged to be truthful, this is called the ‘good undefiled’ (*zang yag*); If they are found to be false, that is called the striped middle (*rked khra*). The slip with attached instructions concerning truth and falsehood is called the ‘instruction’ (slip). These are the three slips for court orders (*zhal lce*).

A good seal is applied to all faults and defects, and the one that purifies them is called the ‘seal’ slip. It is the slip for general use.

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12 This passage is quite obscure. For an extensive discussion and some different interpretations, see Dotson (2006: 211–12).

13 shags kyi mgo rgyangs: Dotson (2006: 211) interprets this as indicating that these details relate to ‘the one faced with the charge’.

14 Dotson (2006: 212) corrects *zas* to *gzas*, as found in lDe’u, and suggests ‘rebuke’ slip.

15 Dotson (2006: 211) suggests that these are ‘complainants’ slips’ but they seem to relate to both parties. See also the lDe’u extracts, p. 5, fn. 3.
the lower ‘high minister’, the middle interior minister, and the great imperial justice, for all three it is nine thousand; the lower interior minister, and the middle imperial justice, for them it is eight thousand; for the lower minister, it is seven thousand.

The text continues by describing how one of the ministers arranges for livestock to be distributed equally among the people.

However, there comes a time in which the religion declines:

[p. 423]  
སྣུམ་ཟད་མར་མེ་ལྟ་བུར་ཡལ་ལ་ཐུག  
རྗེ་ཡི་མངའ་ཐང་དགུན་ཁའི་ཆུ་བཞིན་བྲི།  
རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་སོག་རུལ་ཕོན་ཐག་བཞིན་དུ་ཞིག  
ཆབ་སྲིད་ཕན་བདེ་ནམ་མཁའི་འཇའ་བཞིན་ཡལ།  
ནག་ཕྱོགས་སོད་པ་དཔྱིད་ཀྱི་རླུང་བཞིན་ལངས།  
བཟང་བྱེད་བསམ་པ་རྨི་ལམ་བཞིན་དུ་བརྗེད།

Then, as regards the Tibetan people,
All their merit faded away like the light of a lamp that has exhausted its oil;
The power of the nobility diminished, like a stream in the winter;
The king’s law perished, as if it were a rope of rotten straw;
The happiness and welfare of the kingdom vanished, as if it were a rainbow;
Evil deeds were whipped up, as if by the winds of spring;
And good intentions were forgotten, as if they were dreams.

Section 3, Chapter 8: The appearance of the Karma Kamtsang

The fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shegpa (De bzhin gshegs pa, 1384–1415), is invited to the Ming imperial court by the Emperor Yongle. Arriving in 1406 and staying until 1408, he has considerable religious interaction with the emperor, persuading him not to be too harsh on other Buddhist sects. At one meeting, the Karmapa sits to the left of the emperor, in the place of honour, with three monastic
dignitaries to his left, the State Preceptor (go‘i shri), a learned ritual master (slob dpon) and a great scholar.

[p. 1009]

Then the three lamas were entrusted [by the emperor] with the work of the great go‘i shri (State Preceptor), with a golden seal and a crystal document of authorization. About one thousand Chinese monks, who had committed crimes, had been put in prison and were in danger of dying. On the advice [of the Karmapa], they were rescued. On another occasion, he made forceful petitions on behalf of the criminals in prison in the great kingdom. On a third occasion, a widespread pronouncement was made known, that all the doctrinal traditions, such as Buddhists, Bonpos, and astrologers (zin shing), should each act according to their own traditions, and that none of their offering practices should harm anyone. When that was done, each headman said, ‘I understand that I will enact whatever the law (khrims lugs) is, as soon as it arrives’, and pronouncements and edicts (lung ‘ja’ sa) to enhance the teachings were distributed throughout the whole kingdom.

Later, the Karmapa establish large encampments, gar (sgar), for religious teachings, which grow to such an extent that they require their own internal regulations.

[p. 1092–93]
Monastic divisions, lamas, and go’i shri (State Preceptors), great ministers, minor ministers, beneath them the legal officers, the legal assistants, and the military officials, and beneath them three levels of men—upper, middle, and lower—there were multiple divisions on paper. The go’i shri ra appointed a judge (khrims dpon) for about three months, out of about thirty legal officers, in turn.

Those who assemble outside the door-curtain of the court in the morning are not to wear patched clothing or worn-out shoes and they should not wear a single cotton shawl.

The passage continues by describing the rules for those who may enter the camp, the behaviour of visitors and petitioners, the conduct of discussions and debates, and the provision and safeguarding of food and drink.

In subsequent sections, the phrases rgyal khrims and lugs gnyis seem to be used to refer to government and administration in general (eg. pp. 1273–74), while khrims can also refer to administrative rules concerning taxation, the army, and corvée labour (khral dmag ’u lag khrims) (p. 1422).