A DHARMA HISTORY: THE HONEYED NECTAR OF FLOWERS

Chos 'byung me tog snying po brang rtsi'i bcud

INTRODUCTION

This twelfth-century work has traditionally been ascribed to the treasure-finder, Nyangrel Nyima

Ozer (Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer) (1124–1192). There is, however, some debate about whether it was a

later compilation (Hirshberg 2016).

As a history of Buddhist religion (chos 'byung), the text contains a first section on the Buddhist

religion (five chapters), followed by a section on the doctrine in India (two chapters), and then a

section on the doctrine in Tibet (twenty-one chapters). The main focus of the Tibetan section is the

rule of Emperor Songtsen Gampo (Srong brtsan sgam po), extolling him as a Buddhist ruler, who

enacts laws based on the ten Buddhist virtues. Shorter passages on the Emperors Tri Song Detsen

(Khri srong Ide btsan), Ralpachen (Ral pa can), and Langdarma (Dar ma'u dum btsan; gLang dar ma)

are also included. The work ends with the post-imperial revival of interest in Buddhism, including the

life and works of Atisa (eleventh century).

The text contains sections that are taken from the work known as the Zangs gling ma (The

Copper Palace), also attributed to Nyangrel, and on the activities of Padmasambhava at the time of

Tri Song Detsen, in the eighth century. There are also sections from the sBa zhed btaq ma (The

Testament of Ba). For textual analysis, see Meisezahl (1985), Doney (2014), and Hirshberg (2016).

Sources

The 1988 (Beijing) edition, used here, has been edited by Khyenrab Ozel (mKhyen rab 'od gsal) and is

derived from two manuscripts. It is organised into three sections and twenty-eight chapters.

Meisezahl (1985) has reproduced a manuscript held in Berlin.

Nyang ral nyi ma'i 'od zer. 1988. Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud. Lhasa: Bod ljongs

mi dmangs dpe skrun khang. (1st ed.)

TBRC: W7972.

[The second edition, published in 2010, contains different pagination].

Meisezahl, R. O. 1985. Die grosse Geschichte des Tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition rNying

ma'i chos 'byung chen mo. Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.

References

Doney, Lewis. 2014. *The Zangs gling ma: The First Padmasambhava Biography. Two Exemplars of the Earliest Attested Recension*. Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies.

Hirshberg, Daniel. 2016. Remembering the Lotus-Born: Padmasambhava in the History of Tibet's Golden Age. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Hirshberg's biographical synopsis of Nyangrel Nyima Ozer can be found at:

http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyangrel-Nyima-Ozer/5999

Yeshe Tsogyal. 2004. *The Lotus-Born: the Life Story of Padmasambhava*. Eric Pema Kunsang (trans. and ed.) Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications.

OUTLINE

The Tibetan text and chapter headings are taken from the 1988 edition, with minor corrections.

Introduction: Expressing respect and commitment in composing [the work]

Part A. General teaching on the worldly realm

Chapter 1: The manner in which the teacher Śākyamuni came to the world, the manner in which the vessel's inner contents were created, how the 1,000 Buddhas of the fortunate era (bskal bzang) came, about the Twelve Deeds, and so forth.

Chapter 2: How the three bases arose.

Chapter 3: How the eighteen Śrāvaka (nyan thos) sects diffused.

Chapter 4: How the Vajrayāna spread in the world.

Chapter 5: How Dharma King Aśoka erected stupas containing the relics of the Tathāgata.

Part B. The royal lineage in India

Chapter 1: How the royal lineage arose.

Chapter 2: History of Gautama.

Part C. The Tibetan period

Chapter 1: How people came to Tibet.

Chapter 2: The four types of Tibetan people.

Chapter 3: How the king came to Tibet: about Nyatri Tsenpo (gNya' khri btsan po) and so forth.

Chapter 4: About Drigum Tsenpo (Gri gum btsan po).

Chapter 5: About Shatri (Sha khri), Nyatri (Nya khri), Jatri (Bya khri) and so forth.

Chapter 6: About Thori Nyenshal (Tho ri snyan zhal) and so forth.

Chapter 7: About Neri Songtsen (gNas ri srong btsan).

- Chapter 8: About the birth of Songtsen Gampo, and so forth.
- Chapter 9: How a Tibetan script was created and the making of the laws.
- Chapter 10: The search for wives, the Nepalese Princess Tritsun (Khri btsun) and Chinese
- Princess Wencheng (Kong jo).
- Chapter 11: Concerning the activities of Tri Song Detsen (Khri srong Ide btsan).
- Chapter 12: The history of Vairocana (Bai ro tsA na).
- Chapter 13: Concerning Padmasambhava leaving Tibet.
- Chapter 14: The Gradual-Sudden dispute.
- Chapter 15: How Mune Tsenpo (Mu ne tsan po) equalized the poor citizens of Tibet.
- Chapter 16: The activities of Emperor Sanaleg Jingyon (Sa na legs 'jing yon).
- Chapter 17: The activities of Emperor Tri Ralpachen (Khri ral pa can).
- Chapter 18: About the denigration of the religious doctrine by Darma Udumtsen
- (Dar ma 'u dum btsan).
- Chapter 19: How the embers of the religious doctrine were revived.
- Chapter 20: How Atiśa was invited to Tibet.
- Chapter 21: How the tenets of the older translations arose.

Closing remarks and author's colophon.

EXTRACTS

Part A

Chapter 5: How Dharma King Aśoka erected stupas containing the relics of the Tathāgata

Before Aśoka's conversion to Buddhism, a young man, Girika, has been employed as an executioner and is famed for his cruelty.

[p. 100]

र्ह्में प्रति प्रमान ने त्या महित्र मार्चन प्रति मार्च मार्च का महित्र मार्च मार्च का महित्र मार्च का महित्र महित्य महित्र महित्य महित्र महित्

The minister thought: 'That [young man] is suitable to be an executioner'. So he said, 'If you are happy to kill such a thing [as a bee], would it be possible for you to be appointed as an executioner under the king's law?'

Part C

Chapter 1: How people came to Tibet

[p. 106]

ञ्चर-रवानीनवर्गा शुभारावे द्वित रेवा वे र्वाचारावर्ष वात्राम्यान्त्रीन रवी राजक्षित्रे केवा रामिर वाल्या विवास

After the adolescent manifestation of Avalokiteśvara explained the rejection of the ten nonvirtues and the doctrine of the ten virtues, he established the religious law.

Chapter 9: How a Tibetan script was created and the making of the laws

Minister Tonmi Sambhota (Thon mi sam bho ta) creates a system of writing for the Tibetan language, based on an Indian alphabet, which is adopted by King Songtsen Gampo.

[pp. 174-75]

Then the king studied the script for four years. Some ministers said: 'For four years the king has not appeared at all; he is obviously a fool. The happiness of Tibet is (down to) the kindness of the ministers.' The king thought: 'The ministers of Tibet are acting foolishly; they are not exercising control.' He said: 'You say I am the foolish king of you, the Tibetans, and that it is the ministers who have established happiness in Tibet. (But) was it I who appointed the ministers or you? While I have been staying in my palace and not travelling around, the subjects have been happy and content. Previously, when there was no law, twelve wise people travelled abroad. Now I have established laws, if people act unlawfully, punishments will be applied. My sons and nephews will see to the non-governance of the ministers. I am a dharma king (chos kyi rgyal po), and if my subjects have no religious laws, they will engage in the ten non-virtuous activities. Later, after they have gone to the three lower realms, they will be reborn in a place where there is no liberation from suffering. Now, if my subjects fight and this results in taking life, the one who has killed must pay compensation. Do not steal from one another. If you take what has not been given, you must repay seven-fold, making eight-fold [with the stolen object]. As for

wrongful desires, if you have sexual relations with another's wife, this is considered to be licentiousness. Do not tell lies. Invoking the various local deities (*lha klu gnyan*), you must swear oaths [to prevent lying].' This is how he established the laws of the ten virtues.

[p. 175]

After he had issued many written edicts (*bka' chems kyi yi ge*), one morning he issued a major legal order (*khrims kyis bka' nan*). When he had promulgated many official documents (*bka' shog*), the king put the world in order. Since he acted for the benefit of sentient beings, everyone respected him, saying, 'This king is a profound (*sgam*) person with a just mind'. So he became renowned as Songtsen Gampo (Straight Powerful Profound).

[p. 175]

Then, because the 'Tshal ris minister of Tibet had no control whatsoever, the king thought: 'I have set up law and have become emperor. Thus I will establish a tradition of the true doctrine', and he proclaimed it.

The king then reflects that to train sentient beings in the doctrine, a deity would be required, so he instigates a search abroad for a suitable statue.

Chapter 10: The search for wives: the Nepalese Princess Tritsun (Khri btsun) and Chinese Princess Wencheng (Kong jo)

Minister Gar (mGar) is sent by King Songtsen Gampo to negotiate with the King of Nepal (bhi ham lo bi pa de ba) for a diplomatic marriage with his sixteen-year-old daughter, Princess Tritsun. The Nepalese king says to the minister:

[pp. 202-03]

ટી. શૈના ત્રળા ક્ર્યા નેપાત્ર ત્રું તેનું તા તર્જનું હિંગળ તરુવો ને દૂરા જાક્તા ત્રું તો હોન્ તેની ત્રું તેને ત્રું તેના હિંગળ ત્રું તેનું હોન્ ત્યારા તુર્વાને ક્રિયાના ક્રિયાના હોન્યાના તુર્વાના ક્રિયાના હોન્યાના તુર્વાના ક્રિયાના હોન્યાના તુર્વાના ક્રિયાના હોન્યાના તુર્વાના તુરા તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુરા તુરા તુરા તુરા તુરા તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુર્વાના તુરા તુર્વાના તુર

'So, although your king has made this great promise to me, it is of no benefit. A 'king' is in need of law, but you do not have law. I have the pure laws of the ten religious virtues, which conform to the doctrine. You do not have them. If you are able to put into effect the laws of the ten pure religious virtues, I will give you my daughter. If you cannot, I will not give her. Go away and give me an answer.' Then the Minister mGar said: 'I have been carrying messages back and forth over long distances, between Nepal and Tibet, but I have not been able to secure the princess. So the king [Songtsen Gampo] has asked me to convey this silver document-casket to you.' He offered the silver casket to [the king], who took it in his hands, looked at it, and saw [a document], written in Nepalese. [It said]: 'You have declared that, "a king needs law and you do not have law." If it pleases you to order the giving of the princess, then in a single day I will manifest 5,000 bodily forms and I will establish the law of the ten virtues of the pure doctrine.'

After securing a marriage with the Princess Tritsun, Songtsen Gampo sends minster Gar to the Chinese emperor to secure a diplomatic marriage with Princess Kongjo (Wengchen). The emperor addresses the minister:

[p. 210]

चेंयाचे खु केंट्र-ट्या हुया तथा सूची चीवेट्या तथा। तू.ची.ट्या ता क्रूया ट्यो.चा तथि पुंचा ता तथी। छिटी ट्यूट त्या हुंच्या अप्टी त्या त्यूटी ख़िया हुंचा त्या क्ष्या हुंचा त्या क्ष्या हुंचा हुंचा हुंच्या त्या क्ष्या हुंचा हुंच्या त्या क्ष्या हुंचा हुंच्या त्या क्ष्या हुंचा हुंच्या त्या हुंच्या हुंच्या त्या हुंच्या हुंच्या त्या हुंच्

'Your barbarian king is very courageous. I am of a royal lineage, uninterrupted since the time of Sangs rgyas 'od srung (Buddha Kaśyapa). Not only do I have religious law, which is like a silken knot, but I also have royal law, which is like a golden yoke. You do not participate in my marriage alliances. However, you have come from a distant place and when you go back, you must pose a question to the king: "A king needs the law of the ten religious virtues; you do not have law in Tibet; can Tibet put in place the laws of ten religious virtues?" Unless you are willing to arrange that, I cannot give my princess and I will not give her. That is my answer.'

A document sent by Songtsen Gampo to the Chinese emperor contains the following:

[pp. 210-11]

कु.कुंट.ब.ट्य.टेथवो.टंतवो.धं.कुंट.तं.क्रैय.ला.वुंट.कुं.कैंग.विश्वय.चश्य.क्ट.(प्रह्मथा.त्र-प्रवेट.कूं.तपु.कुं.वा.वुंव्या.चथा विश्वय.कुंट.त.ज.केंट.कुंट.बी ट्याक्रैय.तपु.कु.शट.तू.क्रैय.वय.कूंट.लिंग.टे.कूंय.टेवा.तय्य.त.कुं.व.कुंव.तपु.वुंशया.कुंव.याकुंव.ज.वक्य.तप्र.त्य.कुंव. शचप.पंत्र्य.कुंच.कुंच.त्यक्य.क्षेश.त्या कें.ववा.क्य.कुंग.त्य्य.ता.त्याप.क्षेत्य.ता क्षेत्र.व्यं.कुंव.त्य्य.कूं 'The barbarian king Songtsen Gampo makes this request to the Chinese king Seng ge btsan pa. Please offer as my queen empress the Princess Kong jo. Since you make the insulting accusation that I do not have law, after I have manifested many miraculous men, I will in one day establish laws in Tibet based on the ten religious virtues; and if, despite having done this, you do not give your princess, I will manifest an immense army and will destroy your entire kingdom'. This was in the letter.

King Songtsen Gampo tells Princess Tritsun about his plans to build a temple at Rasa (Lhasa). He asks that a statue of Amitābha be placed in the main temple and goes on to remark that those who do not have faith in the teaching of the Buddha are not able to imbibe the nectar of the dharma.

[p. 251]

द्वि'विम्नापर्वन'त्'चुन्न'पम्ना कॅन्न'ग्री'पर्ट्'हे'त्रवृद्धःप्या

Because of my strict law, they will imbibe the nectar of the dharma.

After the description of the temple founding there follows a self-contained story about monks from Khotan.

[p. 266]

कृत्यान्तान्त्रस्य प्रस्तायान्त्रस्य स्थान्त्रमायान्ने स्थान्त्रस्य स्यान्त्रस्य स

In Khotan (Li yul) two monks had been venerating the exalted 'Jam dpal (Mañjuśrī). 'Jam dpal said: 'You ask what use I am. You should seek out holy sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara). The Lord sPyan ras gzigs is currently the king in Tibet. Go there to see him.' At once they both went, bearing gifts. When they arrived at the valley of U ru, they saw that many people had been punished under royal law for doing evil, through such means as executions, having their eyes gouged out, their noses slit, and their hands cut off. When they [the monks] asked what had been done, they were told: 'These are the punishments of the royal law.' So they said: 'The Tibetan king is sinful. He is not an emanation of holy sPyan ras gzigs,' and they turned away.

[p. 266]

८८.अ.बैस्.तर.चरेस्.४८.बैस्य.च.अबूस्.। पर्सृ.कु.लुस्.बैस्.स्य.च्यां.च्यां.च्यां.स्य.वेयां.बैस्.स्य.याच्यां.याच्य चक्रस्.त.बिस.सूर.बैस्य.च.अबूस्.। पर्सृ.कु.लुय.ह्यात्म.बैय.सूय.कर्स.त.चक्रस्.त.लुय.चुर.तमा ह्येर.सूयां.य.पत्याया.त्यां.व्यां.स्य.कुय.स्यायां.व्याः सृ.यया.लस्.बैय.सूर.बै.या.ज.चर्यायाच्यायाच्यात्.च्यात्.व्यायां.विस्.त्याहीय.तमा लस्.बैय.सूय.कर्स.त्याया.स्यायां सृ.यया.लस्.बैय.सूर.बैस्याया.चर्यायाच्यायाच्यात्.च्यायाच्यायाच्यायाच्यायाच्यात्.

Further on, they were told, 'The king is in Lhasa.' When they arrived at the plain of sBu ru'i dan 'bag, they saw royal punishments, in the form of eyes being gouged out, heads cut off, and a heap of dismembered limbs. When they asked the reason for this, they were told that these were royal punishments. They turned away, and said, 'The exalted 'Jam dpal has not directed us to sPyan ras gzigs, but to a demon.' They went to investigate the king, knowing that he was residing in Ra sa.

[p. 266-67]

थव्यास्य स्वास्य स्य

A high minister emerged from a black tent and rode up. He summoned them sternly: 'You two, who have come to the Dan 'bag plain, attired in unusual clothing.' Having been summoned, they came closer and the king spoke to them in Khotanese: 'What have you come to do? What is your mission?' They said, 'The exalted 'Jam dpal prophesied to us that these days the Lord sPyan ras gzigs is king of Tibet, and told us to go there, so we have come.' They complained that sPyan ras gzigs had become a demon. The king said, 'Well, do you want to see the Amitābha (A mi de ba) on my head?' They said that they did, so he lead them to a sandy spot on a small hill in Lhasa, and he showed them Amitābha on the top of his head, and they had faith. Then they asked, 'Why are eyes being gouged out, heads cut off, and noses slit?' 'These criminal subjects of mine, have not been tamed through peaceful means, since I have been manifested, (so) I have created means to control them with force. Now, you have seen the illusory chopping of heads, eyes, and limbs. Since I have governed the kingdom, none of the sentient beings has experienced any harm.' They both came to see that the heaps of heads and limbs were stones and rocks. Knowing that they were illusions, they became embarrassed.

[p. 267-68]

The king asked them, 'What spiritual powers (*dngos grub*) would you two like to be given?' They did not ask for anything, except to return to Khotan. So the king said, 'You should each collect up a *bre* of sand and cover it with the hair of my head, as a pillow.' After hearing this, they did so, and he stroked their faces with his hand, whereupon the grains of sand were turned into gold and they collected it up. Then, in an instant, they had arrived in Khotan (Li yul). This is recorded in the Great Prophecy of Khotan. Then all the ministers, after discussing it among themselves, had confidence [in the king]. For the benefit of his followers, at the age of eighty-four he passed away.

Chapter 11: Concerning the activities of Tri Song Detsen

[p.306]

મુખ ર્સ કેન મુજા દૂષ મુખ્ય દુષા મુખ્ય કુષા તાલુક ત

The king himself said: 'A strict religious legal code, like a knot of silk, must be established, so I should set it up.'

Chapter 12: The history of Vairocana (Bai ro tsA na)

Padmasambhava arrives in Tibet from India to consolidate the Buddhist doctrine. He declares:

[pp. 327-28]

यः अह्ट. पूर्व क्षित्रयः यज्ञेषयः ययः स्यः प्रैं जैटः यः क्षेत्रयः यः यप्ते टः क्षेत्रे प्रियः यो ययः यो याववा व्य क्ष्या स्रिययः त्रेषे . प्रियः यः प्रहः । बेषः योष्टियः यय। व्यत् ये यावि क्षियः यप्ते याविष्यः यो व्यव्या स्थ

'... The religious law has spread very well.' The minor rulers assembled from the four horns of Tibet were pleased. The king created religious law like a silken knot; on the basis of the binding religious law, established for renunciates, he appointed a chief ritual practitioner.

Chapter 13: Concerning Padmasambhava leaving Tibet

Padmasambhava addresses the Emperor Mutig Tsenpo (Mu tig btsan po), also known as Tri De Songtsen (Khri Ide srong btsan), about his reasons for leaving Tibet.

[p. 360]

ाट.'तज्ञ्.'के.'बोट.'लेख,'ख,'तज्ञ् |क्ष्य,'तक्ष्य,'शावये,ख,ली,मु.क्षेबो |तूट',ग्री,'चक्ष्य,'त,'टंट.'ट.'शु,'शंधिय| |तटिज,'व्रिश्चय,'बोक्ट.'श्चर.'शु,'बीट.'चपु|

A ruler in Tibet who does not protect the pure Vinaya ('dul khrims);

Does not suit me;

I am in despair about the hypocrites;

I am going to India.

Chapter 17: The activities of Emperor Tri Ralpachen (Khri ral pa can)

[p. 426]

चित्रच, स्वायाः अवान्त्रच। वित्र भूष्यं स्वयाः अवान्त्रच। श्रुपः चित्रच अप्ताः अप्ताः अप्यायः अप्यायः अप्यायः अप्यायः अप्यायः अप्यायः अप्य

He bowed to the Zhang ministers, and he made various incomparable donations, such as the *snyung rmad btab ma dgu rtseg can* and the *Zings po sna tshogs can*. He confirmed both religious and secular traditions (*mi chos dang lha chos*).

[p. 427]

टाया.क्ट्रया.विश्वया.कु.कुचा.चुन्ना इति. पह्त्य. हे.क्र्या.विश्वया.कु.कुचा.चुन्ना क्ट्रया.विश्वया.च्याया.व्यया.वाक्टा.कुचीया.तया.क्ट्या.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.कुचा.चुन्ना लटा.टाया.चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना चुन्ना लटा.चुन्ना चुन्ना चुन्

Regarding the theft of religious property, he created a law that stipulated eighty-fold religious compensation, and so forth. The black Zhang ministers met in secret to discuss it. They said: 'We have decided to destroy the religious law, but if the king is not killed, the religious law will not be destroyed.' Some said: 'Although Lord Ral pa has no son, the younger brother Prince gTsang ma is happy with the religious doctrine. If we seize power, that will not to destroy the doctrine.' [And some said], 'If we are afraid of religious proselytizing, banishing gTsang ma is enough'. Moreover, the elder Bran ka, a dharma practitioner with superior qualities, said forcefully, 'The religious law ought not to be destroyed'.

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देवे प्ररावेंद्राणी क्रुवाविष्ठवाद्मा केंबाविष्ठवापविषाणा द्राप्यवादि क्रीट्राप्य प्रति प्राप्त प्रवादिष्ठवापी

In that period, the royal law of Tibet and the religious law spread. This was a fortunate lineage.

Chapter 18: Concerning the denigration of the religious doctrine by Darma Udumtsen [Langdarma]

[p. 432]

It is said that in six months he destroyed all the religious law established by his ancestors. After his edicts (*bka' shog*) reversed the [former] laws, he appointed ministers who were content (to go in) this evil direction.

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दे.व.लूट.तपु. थ्र.चंच.व.चंच.व.चंच.व्य.चं.ह्रांचा.कव.वी.विश्वयाचीया.व.कूत.तपु.व.व.व.वी.व्ययाचीया.व.व.व.व.वी.व्यय

Everyone who was there said: 'A-pa-pha! There is no-one who has not been struck by the law of this sinful king.'

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क्र्याच्रिम्यान्त्राची स्तर्भाता स्तर्भात्रा स्तर्या स्तर्या स्तर्या स्तर्या स्तर्या स्तर्

The silken knot of the religious law was loosened; the golden yoke of the royal law was broken.

Chapter 20: Invitation of Atisa to Tibet

The King of Purang (Pu hrangs) in western Tibet, Jangchub Ö (Byang chub 'od), is inclined towards religion, and brings the Bengali scholar Atiśa to teach in Tibet.

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Always acting with faith, he exerted control over the laws and established an army in Gu ge. He entered lower mNga' and went to the lower country (mar yul). Under the system of royal laws, punishments were applied to those who committed sins (nyes pa). After shaving his head, he established the royal law, like a golden yoke, in the three regions of mNga' ri (mNga' ris bskor gsum). Then he built two royal castles in sPu rang.