MDO DRI MED GZI BRJID

'Dus pa rin po che'i rgyal dri ma med pa gzi brjid rab tu 'bar ba'i mdo

INTRODUCTION

This is a twelve-volume biography of Tönpa Shenrab Mibo (sTon pa gshen rab mi bo), mythical founder of the Bön religion. The second volume contains the *rGyal bus bka' khrims bstsal ba'i mdo* (*Sutra of the prince's law-giving*). Kvaerne (1986: 37) dates the text to the late 14th century, on the basis that the *dgongs gter* (mind treasure teaching) was revealed to Khyung po blo ldan snying po, who was born in 1360 (see also Kvaerne 1971: 232).

Sources

Printed versions:

gZi brjid. 1978. Dolanji: Patshang Lama Sonam Gyaltsen.

[Publisher's note: reproduced from an ancient manuscript from bSam gling in Dolpo, Nepal.]

TBRC: W1KG587

mDo dri med gzi brjid. 2000. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang.

Manuscript:

mDo dri med gzi brjid (12 volumes)

TBRC: W23434

References

Kvaerne, Per. 1971. A chronological table of the Bon po: the *bstan rcis* of Nyi ma bstan 'jin, *Acta Orientalia* 33: 206–82.

___. 1986. Peintures tibétaines de la vie do sTon pa gchen rab, Arts asiatiques 41: 36–81.

Ramble, Charles. 2006. Sacral Kings and Divine Sovereigns: Principles of Tibetan Monarchy in Theory and Practice. In D. Sneath (ed.) *States of Mind: Power, Place and the Subject in Inner Asia*.

Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, pp. 133–39.

OUTLINE

Most of the *rGyal bus bka' khrims bstsal ba'i mdo* sutra sets the scene for the discourse of the prince, Shenrab Mibo. He then expatiates on the subject of statecraft. He announces that the royal law has two aspects, the Bön law of the ultimate truth and the law of conventional truth.

The text emphasizes the need for there to be a king, but it also asserts that the priest is superior to the king.

EXTRACTS

The following are drawn from the manuscript reproduced on TBRC (W23434). Volume two is found at pages 395–634 of the pdf generated by that web-site. The manuscript, itself, contains some duplicate numbering, so we include here both the page number found on the manuscript and the number of the pdf file.

The translations are largely based on those of Ramble (2006) and we gratefully acknowledge his permission to reproduce parts of them here.

The prince is addressing an assembly of the living beings of the three worlds.

[p. 477, pdf 105]

ष्टित्रका-सूचाकाक्षी,पर्टीटा। पट्ट,युं,पीय.्ड्ट्यकात्रक्षयं त्रपुं,त्यचिर ह्रियात्रक्ष्यं विष्ठका-सूच्या मैज-सूपुं,ष्टियका-ज-¥का-ताबिका-तुब-भूप्र ह्यं,र्ट्य-सूच-तपुं,ष्टियका-सूच।

The royal law is twofold, comprising the Bon law of ultimate truth and the law of conventional truth. The Bon law of ultimate truth is dealt with separately. I shall now present the law of conventional truth.

[p. 477–78, pdf 105–06]

द्या-प्रचा-क्षेचा,श्र्,श्रुट-'ब-स्युष्ट, पद्मान,पट्चा, क्षेचा ट्याप-क्ष्य-श्रुट-चा,श्रुट-'ब-स्युष्ट, पद्मान,पट्चा,क्षेचा चाश्चर-क्षेच, वि. डीचा,श्रुट-'ब-क्षे, चापु-पची,क्मेट-अपवा चाय-पश्चच, वि. टि. कुच,श्रुट-'ब-सि. त्युचा,क्मेट-अट्या चाचप-कुच, च्ये-त्यं,श्रुट-'ब-क्षेच-स्यु-क्षेच-'ह्य-'व्यूचा ट्याट-कुच, च्ये-त्यावीश्व-द्ये, श्रुच-'ब्युच्या-क्ष्य-'व्यूचा श्रुच-'ब-इ्यु-'दा-वावीश्य-च्ये, श्रुच-'ख्ये-'व्यूच-'

Generally, if the creatures of the Three Worlds

Had no powerful king, the polity would crumble.

Without the great planets and the sun and the moon, the hosts of stars would not shine.

Without the resplendent garuda, it is the owl's feathered horns that would rise.

Were there no vulture, the quail would spread its wings.

Without the melodious voice of the cuckoo, the lark would be the sweetest singer.

In the absence of the majestic lion, it would be the jackal that snarled.

But for the striped tiger, the fox would openly smirk.

[p. 478, pdf 106]

प्रस्यायाक्षीयः चिना श्रम्यायाः चिना तयस्यायाः चिना स्थानी प्रस्यायाः स्थाने स्थाने

Without the mighty rhino the goat would paw the ground.

Without the thunderous roar of the turquoise dragon the buzzing of the bees would be the loudest sound.

Without the mighty elephant, it would be the bull that charged.¹

Were it not for the powerful steed, the southern rhino would run the fastest.

Were it not for peacock, that overcomes poison, the parakeet's plumage would be the most beautiful.

Without the wish-fulfilling tree, the palm would be the finest.

Were it not for powerful Indra, the vassal king Vishnu would stand supreme.

Without Thang bzang slagchen, the army of the Asuras would be scattered.

Without gTsug na rin chen (king of the nagas), gDolba would be highest.

Without Mount Meru at the centre, the minor hills would form no pattern.

Without a wheel-turning king, the king and subjects would be indistinguishable.

[p. 478-79, pdf 106-07]

ल्.ट्ट.प्रश्चिताः सूर्यः सूट. यं. शिष्ठं .टट. एयाना टट. तूर्यः टंट. खुट. पड्ड्या. धुष्ठं .शीष्ठं .यं. ट्यूं वोषाः टंट. लूष्ठं .तूर. खूट. यं. चत्या श्चेषाः तकूषा वोषाः प्रश्चे. कुष्ठं .ट्ट. पा. ट्यंटा . वा वोष्ट्री क्षेताः तूषुं . त्योषः विषयाः पष्ट्यां .वं. खुट. । वाष्ट्रा . व्यूं टं. ख्रीर. ट्यंट. कुष्ठं . क्षेताः तूषुं . त्योषः विषयाः वा बूं

¹ This is not certain.

कुषः सं कुषः त्रः यार् त्र सः कुषः सं ग्रीतः । यार्टे सः व्यव्याः । यार्टे सः व्यव्याः । यार्टे सः व्यव्याः ।

This is why the laws of the powerful king must be sovereign.

The promulgation of royal law will bring peace to the land.

The straight and golden rule is a constraint on power.

If it becomes split or warped, it must be skilfully repaired.

When people are led along the straight path of justice there is peace in the world.

If they follow a crooked and devious path conflict will reign everywhere.

The law for a king is to wield power from his throne.

By not stirring up dishonesty, he will bring glory to all.

The text continues with advice to the king on how to rule well: he should make clear pronouncements, take wise counsel, take care about the succession, and behave appropriately towards the different classes of society.

The prince then gives advice on the 'law' that relates to other people: the law for the queen, the law for different ministers and army leaders, and the laws for the common people, appropriate to their positions in society.

[p. 483, pdf 111]

अस् एकीम् श्रिकान्यमैं सूची तात्र सूक्त्यी भ्री. श्रुप्त क्या.या चेटा चेटा ताहुट् . जवाबा . चीटा । वाशिटा टीडाटया . चीटा ताहुट् . जवाबा . चीटा । वाशिटा टीडाटया . चीटा . वाष्ट्र या तावाबा . चीटा । वाशिटा टीडाटया . चीटा . वाष्ट्र चीटा . चीटा .

Listen, creatures of the Three Worlds,

And all you who are members of my retinue.

Although the king may have supreme power in this world,

Even higher than the king is the priest.

Although Mount Meru may be higher than any other in the universe,

Even above it is the Wish-fulfilling tree.

Although the garuda dwells at the summit,

The most melodious voice is that of the cuckoo.

Although the shang bird is the most resplendent creature of the forest,

The parrot has three hundred songs.

[p. 483-84, pdf 111-12]

ऄ, ५५ चं, चेषू. ८. अथ. थैं . ४. ८. तृत्रेथं। अ. ऐ.चं, मुट्टा-प्ताक्षटे. प्यत्य-ट्रम्पूथ, प्तव्यवायाचेट. । कूर्यथा सेवीया. चूचो. टा. अपटे. टा. खेथ. कुथ. तृत्ये। ची. अकूषु. मुट्टा-पा-खे. मुथे त्वाचिश्वात्वयाचेट. । शक्टा-पा-पिया-ट्रचो. यथुषे. २. त्वीकृषा-प्तव्यवायाचेट. । घटा-पा-पिया-प्रचा-प्रचुटे. मुथे त्योच्या प्यचेता मुथे। घटा-पा-पिया-प्रचिता-प्रचुटे. भीविश्वायाचेटा । यद्धेय . श्लेष्ठ . त्यांचिता प्रचिता चिता चिता चिता । यद्धेय . श्लेष्ठ . त्यांचिता प्रचिता चिता चिता ।

Although the turquoise dragon may roar the loudest in the sky,

The kalapinga bird has the most sweetly melodious voice.

Although the lion is the most majestic among the glaciers,

The most fearsome roar is that of the one-horned rhinoceros.

Although the water demon rages in the oceans,

The great conch [the killer of water-spirits] has unsurmountable power.

In a sea of flowers, the *Udumbara* lotus may be rare,

But the Tree of Paradise nourishes living creatures.

[p. 484, pdf 112]

चूच विश्वकार्य स्त्री अर्ट्य स्वाह्म स्त्री विश्वकार्य स्त्री स्वाह्म स्त्री स्वाह्म स्त्री स्वाह्म स्त्री स्त्री

Although 'The King of Six Excellent Ingredients' is a powerful medicine,

The 'Universal Equalizer' is supreme.

Although the lord of men is the most powerful,

His guide is the Enlightened Teacher.

For that reason, associate with the gods more closely than with men.

The great golden rule of the royal law bears down [on those below],

But the silken knot of the Bön law raises [them] up.

The text continues with instructions to support religious institutions.

[p. 485, pdf 113]

ব্রিমঝ'ঝ'রবাঝ'র'ঝঝ'গ্রী'क़८'ঘ'র্ক্কর

Those who contravene the law will suffer the punishment of karma.

It continues with further elaboration of the duties of different classes of people.