THE DBA' BZHED

The royal narrative concerning the bringing of the Buddha's doctrine to Tibet Sangs rgyas kyi chos bod khams su ji Itar byung ba'i bka' mchid kyi yi ge

INTRODUCTION

The text of the *dBa' bzhed* used here is the manuscript reproduced in Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger (2000). A transliteration is found in the Beijing edition (2009: 237–81). Folio references and page numbers are to those sources, respectively. The manuscript contains interpolations, which are here indicated by smaller-sized text in brackets.¹

The text describes a succession of Tibetan kings, beginning with Lhato Dore Nyentsen (IHa tho do re snyan btsan), followed by Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po) (c.600–649), and continuing with later kings. The majority of the text concerns events that took place under Tri Song Detsen.

EXTRACTS

The text begins by stating that it concerns the way in which the holy doctrine (sangs rgyas gyi chos or dam pa'i chos) was introduced into, and established in, Tibet.

[p. 237, fol 1b]

यपट.पट्ट, जिना है, मेची. इका. क्योप. टाक्किंग. प्रें। श्रीट. वोचेय. क्यों, याहूं दे. टी. श्रीय. के. ते के. टी. वीचा की. क्षेया. श्रीपट. टप्ट. ट्यूय. श्रीय. क्या. श्रीट. क्या. वीचा की. वीचा. वीचा क्या. श्रीट. ट्यूय. श्रीय. क्या. श्रीट. क्या. वीचा की. वीचा की. वीचा. वीचा की. वीचा. वीचा की. वीचा. वीचा की. वीचा. वीचा की. वीचा की

As far as the first appearance at the time of Lha tho do re snyan btsan is concerned, (the six syllables of India, Ma ni pad me, written in gold and contained in a casket, fell from heaven in front of the king. Without knowing whether this was Buddhist or Bon) this was named 'the mysterious power' (gnyan po gsang ba). Then g.yu mngon (called snga, a kind of barley) and a ritual libation was offered to it. While it was in the treasury of Yun bu gla sgang, the king would open it from time to time and study it. In a testament, he proclaimed, 'May my descendants open it, whether the kingdom prospers or declines'.

[p. 237, fol. 1b]

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¹ Occasional edits are marked as normal-sized text, within brackets.

During the reign of his descendants, the kingdom expanded greatly and, after the powerful secret had been opened, the za ma tog with six essential syllables, written in gold Indian letters, and the mu tra'i phyag rgya (the gtsug tor dri med) appeared.

[p. 237–38, fol. 1b–2a]

ષદ્દી, તા શું, હવો, કુવા, કુવા, બ્રાંચ્યા, ક્રેન્સ, હે], ત્યાનું કુવ, કુવ, ક્રેન્સ, ક્રેન્સ, હવે, તા તાલું તાનું તાલું તાનું તાલું તાના તાલું તાલા તાલું તાના તાલું તાના તાલું તાના તાલું તાના તાલું તાના તાલું તાલા તાલું તાલું તાલા તાલું તાલું તાલા તાલું તાલું તાલા તાલું તાલુ

During the reign of Khri srong btsan, after his marriage with the daughter of the king of Nepal (Khri btsun), the Lhasa temple (Ra sa pe har gling) was built. The construction of the (forty two) temples of the Ru bzhi was requested and the Brag lha temple was built. 'Thon mi gsam po ra was sent by royal order [to India] in order to acquire the Indian doctrine and a model for the alphabet. He returned with Li byin, an Indian skilled in reading and writing, and brought with him some texts of the doctrine, such as *Chos dkon mchog sprin*, (*Pad ma dkar po, Rin po che tog*, *gZugs*) *grwa lnga*), and the ten virtues (*dge ba bcu*). The texts of the doctrine were given the royal seal and placed in the treasury of Phying pa [castle]. Then [the king] announced, 'In my lineage, after five generations there will be a descendant who will spread the doctrine of the Buddha and at that time the casket should be opened.' (As far as the alphabet was concerned, Li byin and gSam po ra transformed the Indian script into the Tibetan script). It was taught to four attendants in charge of the royal household.

[p. 238, fol. 2a]

के.कृतो.तोका.कृता नहिब.क्षचंट तपु.कुंट.काट.टा.कूर्वकारी टाजपिष्टीक्षकारीची.टा.टंटी.तका.ता.खुंची.काहरी.टी.कुंची.कुंटी.कुंची.चुंचा.कुंची.कह्री.कट.चपु.खुंची.कह्री.कट.चपु.खुंची.क्षट्टी.कुंची.कुंची.कट.चपु.खुंची.कट.चपु.खुंची.कट.चपु.खुंची.कट.चपु.खुंचा.कट्टी.कुंची.कुंची.कट.चपु.खुंचा.कट्टी.कुंची.क्षच्ची.कट.चपु.खुंचा.कट्टी.कुंची.कुंची.क्षचंची.कुंची.कुंची.कुंची.क्षचंची.कुंची.कुंची.कुंची.चुंची.कुं

At that time the king remained in his palace, (in retreat), without even coming to the gate, for four years. All the subjects said, 'The king does not even come to the gate of the palace; whatever the reason, he seems to have disappeared; there appears to be a minister ruling instead.' The king heard these rumours from the subjects. He therefore held a discussion with his four attendants—those who had been taught the alphabet in four months—and, on the basis of the ten virtues, he made the law (*bka' khrims*) and set it down in writing. (It made provisions for

blood money (*stong gsos*) for the taking of human life, compensation (*rku 'jal*) for theft and robbery, cutting off noses and removing eyes for sexual misconduct, taking oaths for detecting lying, and so on).

[p. 238–39, fol. 2a–2b]

દ્યોત્રાનુવ્યા ક્રમાન્યા ક્રમાન્યા ક્રમાન્યા ક્રિક્યા શે. લેમાના માન્યા વ્યાપ્ત ક્રમાન્યા ક્રમાન્યા ક્રમાન્યા ક્રિક્યા શે. લેમાના માન્યા વ્યાપ્ત ક્રમાન્યા ક્રિક્યા શે. લેમાના માન્યા વ્યાપ્ત ક્રમાન્યા કર્માન્યા કરમાન્યા કર્માન્યા કરમાન્યા કરમાન્યા કર્માન્યા કરમાન્યા કર્માન્યા કરમાન્યા કરમાન્ય કરમાન્ય કરમાન્ય કરમાન્ય કરમાન્યા કરમાન્ય કરમાન

One day, the king ordered all the subjects to gather and announced, 'I have been staying in one place without moving the royal residence. I have avoided dealing with affairs and the subjects have been relaxed and happy. You have noticed that the king has not even come to the gate of the palace and that, whatever the reason, he seems to have disappeared, and that there has been a minister ruling instead. Was the wise minister appointed by you or by me? If you, subjects, do not like this, you must act according to a law (*bka' khrims*) which I made in four months. If you do not follow it, [the kingdom] will become like the twelve petty kingdoms, which lost political power because they had no law. After that, crimes will increase and my descendants, king and subjects, will not have a legal government (*khrims srid*). So you must follow the law carefully.'

[p. 239, fol. 2b]

For a whole morning the whole administrative record (*rtsis mgo*) and all the good customs (*chos lugs bzang po*) (made) in accordance with the law and the official orders (*bka' nan*) were announced to the assembled subjects, without any mistakes. Then all the subjects offered thanks and said, 'Since no-one is more profound than you, you shall be called Khri srong btsan bsgam po'.

The text continues with an account of the mission sent by Songtsen Gampo to the emperor of China to seek his daughter as a bride, and her bringing a Śākyamuni statue to Tibet. It then continues with the following story.

[pp. 240, fols 3a-3b]

यद्यं रूपुं रूप्तं चंट्टं रेअकृषाची

पत्रवीयारा श्रीयं राया वाच्यां वाच्यां प्राप्ता स्त्रा स्वाया स्वया स्वाया स्वया स्वाया स्वाय स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाय स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वाया स्वय

People considered King Khri srong btsan to be Āryā Palo. This can be related as follows. The holy doctrine had arrived in Li (Khotan) one hundred years after the nirvana of the Buddha. At that time two monks of Li longed to see the face of 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs and they were making offerings and propitiations throughout the year. 'Phags pa 'jam dpal appeared and asked, 'Blessed sons, what do you need?' They replied, 'we are longing to see the face of 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs'. 'Phags pa 'jam dpal replied, "Phags pa spyan ras gzigs is the king of Tibet; go to Tibet and you will see his face'. Then, carrying *sūtra*s and monks' staves they travelled from the upper regions to the royal palace in Tibet.

[p. 240-41, fol. 3b]

At this time the first law (*bka' khrims*) of the king was being enforced. They saw some people being executed, some sent into exile, some imprisoned inside an enclosure of thorns, others had their noses cut off or their eyes removed. The two monks of Li lost their faith and said, 'this cannot be 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs; let us go back'. They were about to set off for their country when the king learned of them. An order was issued [for attendants] to go out from the four gates of the palace to summon the two monks. After they arrived, they prostrated before the king and he asked, 'Why have you come here?' They replied, 'We came here because we were longing to see the face of 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs.' The king stood up and said, 'Let us go'. He took the two monks to a wide, lonely plain and he showed them the form of 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs. The two monks were delighted and prostrated. Then he asked them, 'Now what do you wish to do?' They replied, 'We beg you to let us return to Li.' They clutched the feet of the king and cried. Afterwards they fell asleep in the palace. A warm sunshine woke them up. 'Phags pa had disappeared and the two monks were back in Li.

[p. 241, fol. 3b-4a]

ष्टत्वाबाराः श्रेष्ठ : प्रवाचावाबाः क्षयः च्याः श्रेष्ठः व्याः श्रेष्ठः व्याः स्वाचाः प्रविद्धः स्वाचाः विद्धः स्वाचाराः श्रेष्ठः प्रवाचावाः श्रेष्ठः व्याः श्रेष्ठः व्याः श्रेष्ठः व्याः श्रेष्ठः व्याः विद्याः विद्याः विद्य

They said that before, when they had thought that it was not 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs and they were clinging to the idea of returning to Li, they were not able to obtain supernatural realization. However, the king was 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs, beyond any doubt. This is reported from the great prophecy of Li yul.

The text continues with short accounts of the activities of the kings Dusong ('Dus srong) and Tri Detsugten (Khri Ide gtsug btsan), before moving on to the reign of Tri Song Detsen, which forms the major part of the text.

There is considerable opposition to the king's attempts to support Buddhism in Tibet, but he is supported by gSas snang of the dBa' clan.

[p. 258, fol. 15a]

Then, as gSas snang had not built the *bLa* temple he commissioned the *gLag* temple. [He] asked the male members of the dBa' clan to abandon Bön and adopt the practice of Buddhism (*chos*). dBa' Lha gzigs became the spiritual guide of his friend Myang Ros Kong. He gave [him] the five Buddhist precepts (*chos bslab khrims*). Ros Khong, in turn, became spiritual guide of his male relatives and made them virtuous. Then, in the male hare year [763 or 775] they decided to build bSam yas [monastery].

Following the great debate concerning Buddhism and Bon and the building of Samye monastery, members of ministerial families are sent to India to learn the language of the doctrine. A great consecration of the Samye temple is held, at which one hundred people take monastic vows.

[p. 262, fol. 17b]

क्ष्यात्तर त्याबा योषटा। श्रिष .कट् .क्षाया योष्ट्राया प्रतान्यात्या प्रतान्यात्या क्ष्या श्रिषा तक्ष्याक्षया योषट् । व्याप्या श्रिष्य .क्ष्या विष्याया योष्ट्राया विष्या विष्याया प्रतान्या विषय । व्याप्या विषय । विषय

A great *bka'* shog was promulgated: henceforth, among his subjects, men's eyes were not to be put out, women's noses were not to be cut, and the great (kindness) of religious doctrine was to

be bestowed on the subjects. Everyone, from the higher and lesser ministers to the subjects, (was consulted, edicts (*chos gtsigs*) were recorded, and a pillar was erected).

The text continues by recording the material support to be provided for the sangha and their institutions.

The text announces its end with the death of Yeshe Wangpo (Ye shes dbang po), the first abbot of Samye, but continues with a short paragraph on Tri Tsug Detsen (Khri gtsug Ide btsan), or Ralpachan. Indian scholars were invited, translations were made, and one hundred and eight temples were completed.

[p. 274, fol. 25b] ઢૅરા'લેંગ્ગર,પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્रાપ્ત પ્રાપત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપત પ્રાપ્ત પ્રાપત પ્રાપત

The religious law (*chos khrims*) was tied again, like a silken knot, and the holy doctrine (*lha chos*) was securely established.

This is the conclusion of the main part of the text. It continues, in this manuscript, in a different hand, with events under subsequent kings.

Under the young King Muné Tsenpo (Mu ne btsan po) there is a debate among religious leaders concerning funerary rituals. A minister on the side of the Bonpos gives an account of the past and the establishment of a powerful kingdom. In response, Vairocana (Be be ro tsa na) addresses the king:

[p. 277, fol. 28a] હ્યુંચ: ગ્રુપ્ત: ત્રેચન ત્રેચન ત્રેચન ત્રાણ ત્યાના ક્યુંચ: અર્થેન : વંદિ: શ્રુપ: વાના ક્યુંચ: ક્રેન્સન ત્રે ત્રે : ક્રેન્સન ત્રે : ક્રેનેન ત્રે : ક્રેન્સન ત્રે : ક્રેને : ક્ર

'From the lineage of the *bodhisattvas*, emanation of the three protectors, lord of great compassion, you are the lord of the people and the descendant of the gods. You will remain at the top, like a precious golden yoke.'