

## THE BLUE ANNALS

*Bod kyi yul du chos dang chos smra ba ji ltar byung ba'i rim pa deb ther sngon po*

The stages of the appearance of the doctrine and its preachers in the land of Tibet

### INTRODUCTION

The text was composed by the scholar and translator Go Lotsāwa Zhonnu Pel ('Gos lo tsa ba gZhon nu dpal, also known as Yid/Ye bzang rtse gZhon nu dpal) (1392–1481). He received teachings from multiple traditions and acted as translator for the Indian Pandit Vanaratna (1384–1468). The text was completed between 1476 and 1478.

The text is presented as a religious history (*chos 'byung*). It is divided into fifteen books, each dedicated to a particular school or sect of Buddhism.

The first book concerns the origins of Shakyamuni and the beginnings of the Buddhist doctrine. It also contains a brief chronology of the Tibetan kings of the seventh to ninth centuries and a history of the Tibetan and Mongolian emperors.

The main sources were the Bashay (sBa bzhed), the Red Annals (Deb ther dmar po), and the chronicle by Butön (Bu ston).

### Sources

A block print was kept in Kundeling monastery in Tibet. It was published in New Delhi in 1974 by the International Academy of Indian Culture, edited by Lokesh Chandra.

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A version edited by Dungkar Lobzang Trinlay was published in 1984 in Chengdu, by the Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, in two volumes. This was reproduced in 2002 in Sarnath, Varanasi, by Wa-na Badza bidya, Dpe mdzod khang, using the same page numbers.

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### References

Roerich, George N. (ed. and trans.) 1949–52. *The Blue Annals*, two vols. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

van der Kuijp. 2006. On the composition and printings of the *Deb gter sngon po* by 'Gos lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481), *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 2: 1–46.

## OUTLINE AND EXTRACTS

The text and page numbers follow the 1984 Chengdu edition.

### BOOK I

- 1 The early life of the Buddha
- 2 The deeds of the Buddha
- 3 The hierarchy of the doctrine
- 4 A royal chronicle of Tibet
- 5 The establishment of the doctrine in Tibet by Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po), Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong lde btsan), and Ralpacan (Ral pa can).
- 6 Royal chronicles of China and Mongolia

The section on the establishment of the doctrine in Tibet refers to the twelve petty kingdoms (*rgyal phran*) and then lists the emperors. The author recognizes that the texts give two different accounts: in one it is said that during the reign of Latotori (Lha tho tho ri) key texts fell from heaven and were worshipped; in others, the books of the doctrine were brought to Tibet and the later king Songtsen Gampo sends translators to India because he is unable to read them. The author records how, after Tonmi Sambota (Ton mi sam bho ta) has returned from India, Songtsen Gampo preaches many texts and instigates many religious practices. He and his queens found many temples.

[pp. 65-6 ]

གསོད་པ་དང་བརླུ་བ་དང་བྱི་བྱེད་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཚད་པ་དང་བཅས་བའི་སྲིམས་ལེགས་པར་བཅས། འབངས་རྣམས་ལ་འང་ཡི་གེ་དང་། མི་ཚོས་བརླུ་རྒྱལ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཚོས་  
ལྷགས་ལེགས་པར་བསྐྱབས་ཏེ། རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ་ལ་གསར་དུ་འཇུག་པ་མ་གཏོགས་ཚོས་གཞན་ཤིན་དུ་དར་བས་བོད་ཁམས་དཀར་པོར་བྱས་པ་ཡིན།

[The king] made a finely-crafted legal code with punishments for murder, robbery, and adultery. He carefully taught his subjects writing and good religious customs (*chos lugs*), such as the sixteen *mi chos*. As well as new ordinations, other aspects of Buddhist doctrine spread extensively and Tibet and Khams were made virtuous (*dkar po*).

### BOOK IV

This book concerns the 'new tantras' (*gsang sngags gsar ma*) and the followers of the Sakyapa (Sa skyapa) 'path and fruit' (*lam 'bras*) doctrine.

It starts at the time of Atiśa and concerns the translators of the tantras and their journeys to India.

It continues with the lineages of the Sakyapa teachers and describes relations between the Sakya masters and the emperor Sechen (Qubilai Qan). It says that Sechen bestowed the crystal seal

(*shel dam*) and the title of *mi dpon* on Byang rin.

[p. 268]

བྱང་རིན་གྱི་དུས་ན་སེ་ཆེན་གྱིས་ཐུགས་ལ་བཏགས་ནས། ཟླ་འོར་སེའི་མི་དཔོན་དང་ཤེལ་དམ་གནང་། དེ་ནས་དཔོན་ཆེན་ཀུན་གཞིན། དཔོན་ཆེན་གཞིན་དབང་། དེའི་རིང་ལ་  
ཐུ་གསལ་ཆེན་མོ་དང་། དབུས་གཙང་གི་ཁྲིམས་གྱི་ཞིབ་ཆ་ཕལ་ཆེ་བ་བྱས།

At the time of Byang rin, Se chen took an interest in him and gave him the title of *mi dpon* of Zo 'or si and a crystal seal. Then came the *dpon chen* Kun gzhon and the *dpon chen* gZhon dbang. At this time there was an administrative reorganization (*phye gsal*) and most of the detail of the laws (*khirms kyi zhib cha*) was made for dBus and gTsang.

The chapter continues by describing the revolt by the Drigungpa ('Bri gung pa), which occurred in 1290, and the later conflict with Ta'i Situ Changchub Gyaltsen (Byang chub rgyal mtshan). The latter succeeds in becoming the master of most of the territory of Tsang (gTsang). The governors of Ü (dBus) and Tsang hand over the administration of the districts to him and affix their seals. On his death they transfer the seals to Gushri Khan and authorizes him to govern. The text claims that the Sakyapa were masters of the world (*jig rten gyi bdag pa*) for 75 years.

The chapter concludes with accounts of tantric lineages.

## BOOK VIII

This contains a lengthy section on the lineages of the translator Marpa. Towards the end there is a section concerning Lama Zhang (bLa ma Zhang), founding figure of the Tshalpa Kagyu (Tshal pa bka' rgyud) lineage. He reminisces on his life:

[p.836]

སློབ་མ་སྤོང་རྟག་མ་ན་མས་མ་གཏོགས་པ་གཞན་མང་པོ་ཅིག་གི་སློབ་མ་ཤོང་བར་བདོག་མི་ཆོས་གྱི་ཡུལ་དུ་གཞི་ཕབ་ནས། ཡུགས་མ་དང་གནས་གཞི་དང་རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་དང་ལམ་  
རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱ་སྐབས་དང་འཕུག་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་འཇིག་རྟེན་འདི་བའི་བྱེད་སྲོད་ཁོ་ན་འདྲ་བ་ཤ་སྟག་ཏུ་སྤང་སྟེ། འཇིག་རྟེན་འདི་དང་འབྲེལ་བ་གཏོང་ནས་བདོག་ན་འགྲུམ་པ་  
ལགས་སོ།

Apart from some steadfast disciples, many people may have grave doubts [about me]. On the basis of my worldly life, the casting of images, the founding of monasteries, the royal law, the improvement of highways, protection from brigands and fighting, and so on, seem to have been nothing but worldly actions. If in my innermost depths I was attached to the worldly, I would die.

Lama Zhang died at the age of 71, in 1193.

## BOOK XV

In the final chapter, the author ends with a discussion of the family lineages of people involved in sponsoring and producing the work.

[p.1267]

བྱ་ཚོས་རྒྱལ་དཔལ་བཟང་ནི་ཉིད་དང་འཇགས་འཕྲོན་ནས་དགུང་ལོ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ལོན་པ་གཅིག་གིས་འགྲོ་མགོན་འཕགས་པའི་ཞབས་ལ་གཏུགས། ཤར་པ་རྒྱན་བསོད་པ་ལ་  
སློབ་དཔོན་བཅོལ་ནས་རྒྱུད་གསུམ་མན་ངག་དང་བཅས་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་གསན། ཡངས་ཚེའི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་བརྗོན་རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་ཐམས་ཅད་གསེར་ལས་  
བཞེངས། རྒྱལ་ཁམས་ཀྱི་རོལ་ཕྱད་ཐམས་ཅད་བཟུས་ནས་མཛོད་ནག་ཏུ་བཀའ་རྒྱ་བཏབ་ཅིང་རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་གཞི་འདིངས་པ་སོགས། ལྷགས་གཉིས་ལ་གཞན་ལས་ཕུལ་དུ་བྱུང་  
བའི་སློབ་བཟང་པོ་བཅུ་གསུམ།

As for Bya chos rgyal dpal bzang, he made peace with the Mongols. At the age of twelve, he met 'Gro mgon 'phags pa. He requested that Shar pa kun bsod pa should become his teacher and learned everything from him: the three tantras, the hidden precepts, and so on. He built the Yangs rtse temple and prepared a copy of the complete Buddhist scriptures (*bka' 'gyur*), written in gold. He gathered a levy on all the wealth of the kingdom, which he kept secretly at mDzod nag, laid the foundation of the royal law, and so on. He introduced excellent worldly and spiritual traditions (*lugs gnyis*), which surpassed those of other [kings].