BKA' THANG SDE LNGA

The Five Chronicles

The *Katang De Nga* is a treasure (*terma*, *gter ma*) text discovered by Urgyen Lingpa (O rgyan gling pa, born c. 1323). It was revealed in stages in the mid-fourteenth century, in last few decades of the Mongols' Yuan dynasty, which then dominated Tibet. This was also the time at which the Pakmodru (Phag mo gru), under their leader Ta'i Situ Jangchub Gyaltsen (Byang chub rgyal mtshan, 1302–1364) were gaining political power in central Tibet, at the expense of the Sakyapa (Sa skya pa), and with opposition from the Tselpa (Tshal pa), among others.

Urgyen Lingpa is said to have been the seventh incarnation of a Lhase Muruk Tsenpo (IHa sras mu rug btsan po), a son of King Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong Ide btsan). At the age of twenty-three he discovered an extensive treasure inventory at Samye (bSam yas) Monastery. He revealed twenty-eight different treasure troves, amounting to over one hundred volumes. He is said to have fallen out later with Jangchub Gyaltsen and gone into exile in Dakpo (Dwags po), where he passed away.

The Chronicles focus on the events surrounding Padmasambhava, but also contains other material. They recount the ancient history of Tibetan gods and demons, kings, queens, scholars, saints, and ministers.

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TBRC: W17319

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TBRC: W30450

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Chapter headings and page numbers are based on the 1997 Lhasa edition with occasional alternatives from the dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling xylograph.

OUTLINE

The chronicle of the gods (Lha 'dre bka'i thang yig)

Concerns different deities, both good and evil, and their activities for the benefit, or to the detriment, of worldly beings, and their conversion to Buddhism.

The chronicle of the kings (rGyal po bka'i thang yig)

Concerns the origins of the world, the Cakravartin (Buddhist king), the Buddha, and their spiritual paths. It recounts the emergence of the Cakravartin in Tibet, the establishment of religious doctrine, tantric practices, temple, tombs, castles, decrees, pillars, and subsequent lineages.

The chronicle of the queens (bTsun mo bka'i thang yig)

Largely concerns the activities of Vairocana in Tibet at the time of Tri Song Detsen (Khri srong Ide btsan), and his encounters with the queen.

The chronicle of the scholars and translators (Lo paN bka'i thang yig)

Concerns the activities of different scholars and translators.

The chronicle of the ministers (bLon po bka'i thang yig)

Concerns the origins of the kings and ministers in Tibet and their activities, including military conquests and expansions and the establishment and promotion of Buddhist doctrine. It also describes the emergence of tantric practices, Bön, astrology, and medicine, and the creation of terma.

EXTRACTS

Lha 'dre bka'i thang yig (The chronicle of the gods):

[p. 77-78]

ष्रा.ब्रा.ल्य.ल्य.वीट्य.विषयाट्यवा.पटीटा

In the female fire pig year [1347] the army of the law will appear in Yarlung.

It continues by saying that all the teachings will subsequently be destroyed.

rGyal po bka'i thang yig (The chronicle of the kings):

Introduction

- 1 How the external environment was formed
- 2 How the inner content, living beings, were created
- 3 How the cakravartin rulers (khor los sgyur rgyal) appeared
- 4 How the Buddha (bde gshegs rgyal ba) appeared
- 5 How the inner and outer Buddhist cycles ($y\bar{a}na$) were taught

[p. 108]

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The land became empty of high quality masters and disciples,

The royal law faded like the setting sun,

Human customs (mi chos) disintegrated like a grass rope,

The monks' religious law unravelled like a silken knot,

Study of the doctrine vanished like a mist.

6 How the Dharmarāja (chos rgyal) arrived in Tibet

At the time of Songtsen Gampo, temples are being established.

[p. 116]

|८४,क्र्य,थवर,मैय,ई,क्र्य,त्र्र,रं.वर्रींर

ट्रिन् 'पञ्चय' पट्ड, 'हुट, 'ब्रेग्य, 'ठड, 'पट्र, 'व, प्यूट्र। |ट्रिक, प्राप्त 'पट्ड, 'हुट, 'ब्रेप्ट, 'हुम्य, 'पट्ड्य|

As the holy doctrine (*dam chos*) flourished, Tibetan religious practice (*lha chos*) was transformed;

As the ten virtues were practised, general laws (thang khrims) were made;

The spirits of central and eastern Tibet and all living beings were made happy.

In the time of Mutig Tsenpo (Mu tig btsan po) and his descendants:

[p. 117]

|पगाप,विश्वयाचट,विश्वयाक्षर,पयाप्यचट,पर,पश्चेर्या

The edicts and general laws (*bka' khrims thang khrims*) were observed even more closely than before.

[p. 119]

विता कुं.क्या ज्ञ्याचाया वेया पर्ये अस्या स्ट्री वित्ता कुं.क्या ज्ञ्याचा वेया पर्ये अस्या स्ट्री

Five types of general law (thang khrims) and internal [Buddhist] laws (nang gi bca' khrims) were established.

The five edicts (zhal lce) distinguished between good and bad goals and attitudes.

- 7 How the translators and teachers came to Tibet
- 8 How the holy doctrine spread in Tibet
- 9 How the tantrists (sngags 'chang) and siddhas (grub thob) came
- 10 How the royal tutelary deities were established
- 11 The great temples built by the royal family
- 12 How the tomb of Srong was offered
- 13 How the temples were erected
- 14 How the residential royal forts were built
- 15 How important general decrees were promulgated

[pp. 149-150]

जियायः खेरा कु.किट. यूट. पूर्या ज्यायाः तर र प्रम्याया |पक्ष - पूर्या प्रयापः खेट. प्रक्षितः पपुः रियायीः सटा |प्रापः जु. स्या हा कुर. या प्रथ्यः स्या

How the most important decrees were promulgated.

When the emperor issued oral decrees,

He carefully examined the good and bad, the lesser and greater, and the higher and lower.

He considered them thoroughly and in great detail.

He formulated them with succinct words, concise meanings, implications, contrasts, and metaphors.

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विभव्यत्वावृष्यं अप्टर्स्य मुक्तःस् स्टरंस्टर्स्य स्ट्रा

विश्रव्यत्वा अप्टर्स्य मुक्तःस् स्त्रुचं स्त्र पट्टी

विश्रव्य अप्टर्स्य स्त्रुचं स्त्र प्रवादः स्त्रुचं स्त्र प्रवादः स्वा

विश्रव्या विष्य स्त्रुचं स्त्रुचं स्त्रुचं स्त्र प्रवादः स्वा

विषयः संज्ञुचं स्त्रुचं स्
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[After] the king speaks once

If [the decrees] have been contravened, wrongs are to be punished.

[But] if the good and bad, the lesser and greater, and the higher and lower [aspects] have not been examined.

And time is not taken to analyse corruption, then under the oral decrees of the emperor Innocent people receive many punishments.

The king seems like a demon, devoid of kindness.

The king who does not examine corruption in detail is like an avalanche.

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प्रस्तियः स्वास्तियः स्वास्तियः स्वास्ति स्वासि स्वास्ति स्वासि स्वास्ति स्वासि स
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If time is not taken to examine the good and bad, and the greater and lesser,

Common [people] [become] like beasts of burden, choked by false accusations.

The unexamined, unanalysed oral edicts of the emperor

Are despised by others, and disputed by everyone.

Without reason, sentient beings will be abandoned to an ocean of suffering,

Even if they themselves feel remorse, they will not be able to bring it to an end.

Bad ministers generate disputes among the people.

At a time when the scales of law ought to be properly examined,

Because of self-serving explanations, not one word of truth will be heard.

चित्तः ब्रीट्र . थेशव्यः ये. चैत्तः द्वां . यः लुवी |ट्यूट्र . जः व्रु. प्यसूट्यः र्ह्यवी. जः व्रु. प्यह्त्रः श्रूेट्री |चैतः ब्रुट्र . वीतः जः त्यदः त्युः . टैयः खे. यु। |वृवः त्यां . पष्ट्यः . ट्यीं . जपटः पट्टें . यटः . ची। |व्यवायः थेयः व्रुच्यः प्रियः . पट्टें . यटः . ची। |प्यवायः थेयः व्रुच्यः व्यव्याः ची. चे. यः . यु. चित्रः यावावा। |पटः . व्योः श्रष्टः प्रयः तीत्यः । विष्यः याव्यवा। |चैतः त्यं . व्यं याः त्यं . क्यां खें. ' खें व्यव्यां व्यव्यां व्याः चित्यः त्यं . व्याः व्यः व्याः व

[So] the king puts on poor clothes,

And travels around to investigate his subjects and his kingdom.

He hears accounts by his spies about good and bad laws,

He enquires into the chattering of old men and women,

And he also enquires into the chattering of young people.

In any period of royal government,

If wealth is not spread and sin not actively avoided,

And the kingdom is degenerate, then the king is damaged.

विवायःक्रूट् - क्षेत्रां तम् - क्षेट्- वाध्यः हुयः तमः क्ष्र्या विकायःक्ष्यः - क्षेत्रां तमः क्षेट- वाध्यः ट्वाः तमः क्ष्रिया विवायः कृषः यटः च्याः व्यायः त्याः तमः क्ष्रिया व्यायः क्ष्यः यटः च्याः व्यायः तम् व्यायः विवायः क्ष्यः व्याः क्ष्रियः विवायः क्ष्यः व्याः क्ष्यः वाष्ट्रियाः क्ष्यः व्याविवायः तमः व्यव्याः विवायः क्ष्यः व्याविवायः तमः विवायः क्ष्यः व्याविवायः तमः विवायः विव

In future generations, when people observe the instructions of the law,

When the emperor issues oral edicts,

All the activity of law and punishment, for locals and foreigners,

Must not be conducted in haste, but should be considered properly.

When [the emperor] delivers a speech

He does not speak to any person who does not investigate thoroughly,

He does not speak to any person who is unprepared.

[So], you should broaden your mind [by] speaking to the investigating ministers (nang blon),

Just as the ministers of old asked for advice.

Do not act self-importantly, give properly with complete sincerity,

Speak honestly and open-mindedly of the ancient advice.

The section continues with a discussion of the qualities of good and bad ministers and how people should behave at court.

- 16 How the stone stelae (rtsis kyi rdo ring) were erected
- 17 How the future royal lineage wealth and good fortune is hidden
- 18 How the end of time will come

bLon po bka'i thang yig (The chronicle of the ministers):

Introduction

- 1 Explanation of the origins of people
- 2 Explanation of how the kings of the people arrived In an account of the lineages of the rulers:

[p. 435]

म्रिमयाम् मितार्ग्,थे.च.स.स.स्यूषा

There were twenty-five kings without law.

- 3 Explanation of the origins of the ministers
- 4 Description of the army generals and cavalry
- 5 The making of the religious laws (chos khrims)

This concerns the vows that can be taken by both lay-people and tantrists, along with matters of doctrine, religious practice, and moral principles.

6 The making of the royal laws (rgyal khrims)

[p. 442-43]

क्रिया प्रेयत त्या प्रमान्ते । देश तेया तस्या या प्राप्त । विवासिय प्राप्त । विवास । विवा

Next, concerning the way in which the king's laws were made.

Regarding the teaching of the ordinary black-haired ones (the people of Tibet),

Former endearments and slander are lost,

Petitions with good words are not heard,

Nowadays, overtly good behaviour does not flourish (mdzes pa med),

Guidance along the path by the lamas is hard to understand,

The views of non-Buddhist ministers are taught,

Royal law does not address wrong-doing. But from now on,

If people are devoted, they will quickly achieve secure happiness.

विट.शुट.ग्र्य.विट.शु.यविया.यक्कळा.शचर.हुची विश्वट.विचेश.विट.शु.च.च्याव.लु.श्रकुटी विचट.टच.पर्सुट.विश्वश.श्रुट.पुष.ट्याव.लु.श्रकुटी विचट.टच.पर्सुट.विश्वश.श्रुट.पुष.ट्याव.श्रकुट.टट.। इश्चिट.च्य.श्रेष.इश्वर.ग्री.ट्याव.श्रकुट.टट.। वियाव.श्रकुट.इश्वर.च.ह्य.ल.वश्चर.चष्ठ.ग्रूबा

Advice should comprise five types of directives (bka' mchid):

Generally, the directives found in the examples of the king's ministers;

The directives of one's own lineage;

Directives concerning knowledge of the management of the trio of good, bad, and middle;

Directives concerning the concealment of hidden secrets;

Not allowing women to make recommendations: this completes the composition.

ाशवयः,यर्द्धेयं,यज्ञचः,त्र्यंत्राज्ञी,कूँचे,येटः,वाङ्च्वा कूँचे, वार्थियः,श्रॅचे, वार्थियः,थाह्चेरः,वार्थियः। क्रिंच,विश्वयः,ह्यः,तृथा,यज्ञापः,यङ्ग्यः,येवटः,थाह्यं,विश्वया प्रस्थः भूस्, अ. ययस्य वेष्ठः ययः प्राप्त त्यवेषः विद्ये। विद्यः भूस्य व्यक्तः विद्यः व्यक्तः विद्यः विद्य

The royal law commanded by the lords is the law establishing power.

The three praises, the three scorns, the three deeds, and the three non-deeds.

First, praise the learned monks with [high] seating;

Second, praise heroes who defeat the enemy with tiger [insignia];

Third, praise the wise and mindful with documents.

The three scorns: kill thieves and expel rumour-mongers (gtam po),

[Cut] the noses and eyes of rapists, and imprison dissolute women, making three.

The three deeds: create supports for body, speech, and mind, and for the divine religion (*dam chos*);

Create laws for blood money and wound price;

[Provide for] compensation of one hundred for theft from a lord,

Compensation of eighty for theft from the [Three] Jewels (dkon cog),

Compensation of nine for theft from an ordinary person.

The three non-deeds: do not straighten the crooked;

Do not call to mind examples of past and future harm;

Do not act like an arrogant soldier, but like a docile (female) servant.

भिगाम्निथान्य प्रस्तान्त्र भ्रम्यान्ते, द्वेयान्त्राम् ॥ ।युवायाः सुधान्त्रान्त्रः द्वेयः भ्रम्भान्त्रः स्त्रः सुन्तः । ।कूट् सु.यः मुच् असूट. व्याभवः श्लूट. ताः दृथा |बूखा वाट्यः मियान्यान्त्रः सुधाः सुधाः भ्रमः श्ली। ।श्लेटः सु.चे स्वरूषः वाटाला वाटास्य सुधा

With loyalty and affection, be of assistance [to others],

Because when advice is given, people usually become confident.

If it is not possible to grasp what is correct, ask those who have experience and insight.

Act according to the examples and meaning of what is good and bad.

The sixth [chapter] concerning the making of the royal laws.

7 About the provision of welfare for the people

The section begins with numbered lists of advice concerning daily activities, respectful speech, and good manners.

[p. 443-44]

हि.स्या.सिका.सिक्षका.सेच.स्येहट.ताध्य.क.स्टचन सिच्य.स्.झी.ट.खेळ.कूचोबा.खे.से.बाखेळा सिच्य.स.च्या.स्य.खहचो.स.च.कूस.स्ट.। सिक्य.स.च्या.स्य.पहचो.स.च.कूस.स.स्ट.। स्था.सब्य.प्रकृचोबा.स्ट.सप्ट्चो.स्ट.वाबूस.स.स्ट.। स्था.सप्य.खेच्य.स्य.च्या.स्य.क्य.च्या.स्य.स.च.ब्रेखा विच.लर.झे.कुस्चोबा.पहचा.स्य.कुस.च.ब्रेखा विच.ल.खे.कुस्चोबा.पहचा.स्य.च्या.चुस.स्य. सिट.ख.चक्रय.स.चयेट.कुष्य.या.चुस.च्या.चुस.। सिट.ख.चक्रय.स.चयेट.कुष्य.या.चेत्य.चुस्य.झुट.। विस.ल.च्या.खेळ.कूचोबा.खे.स.चेत्रेव्य.झेट.।

Discussion of what is said by good, religious people;

Discussion of bad people who engage in the twenty-two wrong-doings;

Discussion of those in the middle who are neither good nor bad.

The first [of the above] is about eliminating the stains of the mind.

The second is about being deceptive towards those in one's community,

False measurements (bre srang), lies, confusion, and deception,

Following the wrong path, fighting, and quarrelling,

Conflict, remorse, abuse, and ridicule,

Threatening oaths, beating, and killing,

Binding, ensnaring, and cutting,

Cheating practices, and powerful deception,

And lying—these are the twenty-two wrong-doings.

This is what it means to reject the law of the land (yul khrims).

The section continues.

8 Expansion of the borders and conquest of foreign armies

This section concerns Tibetan dominance over surrounding regions and rulers, including China, India, Turkestan, and Gesar.

[p. 445]

मिज, त्रिभय, अवाय, ग्री, यथ, घवा, से, सी. राज्या

The royal laws were as strictly binding as iron.

9 The account of Tibetan rule.

[p. 445]

ष्रत्यंत्वाः भ्रःक्र्यः व्रःक्र्यः विष्यः व्यादीयः श्रुवः। विषाराया

It is said that sovereignty combines religious and secular customs (*lha chos mi chos*).

[p. 446]

No person has faultless qualities.

For Tibetans who have not been freed from stupidity and confusion

The royal law (rgyal khrims) is a large and heavy golden yoke;

The religious law (chos khrims) binds with a soft silken knot;

The people's law ('bangs khrims) is a combination of the many strands of a grass rope.

The exalted king sits above his subjects, who are quite content;

The subjects live below, obedient to the law of the land (yul khrims).

This is the ninth [chapter], explaining Tibetan rule.

10–14 Chapters on Buddhist practices and doctrinal points.

15 Instruction in the human customs (*mi chos*)

The section starts with an extended simile of a lion's body, whose different parts indicate the structure of existence, how beings are born, the inhabitant of the world, the lineages of the ruler and the people, the structure of the teachings, the lord of the community, and one's parents'

families.

There follow further explanations of good behaviour, including skillful and helpful activities and the need to examine one's actions.

[p. 469]

निर्वेट्-टापु-क्ष्याचित्रकाट्ट्-क्ष्यंवट-चित्रकाटक्षेट-नि निर्वेच-क्षय-अर्थर-ज्ञूबाचेट-अह्बाकु-टाक्कैट-क्रट्नी डि.म्री-तिवेच-द्रा-प्रचित्राच-प्रसिट-वेबा-पर्चू हित्राचा-पूर्व-पर्चाया-वे-परसिट-वेबा-पर्चू हित्राचा-पूर्व-पर्चाया-वे-परसिवाया-पर्चा-क्षु-वेबा विव्या-पूर्व-प्रच्या-वे-परस्वा-विव्या-पर्चा-क्ष्य-पर्च्या

Those who are not satisfied with their food and wealth will act contrary to the laws.

If tantrists and bönpos are angered, now or in the future, people will not be fortunate.

If the powerful spirits (Iha klu) are angered, decline will set in.

If oaths invoking earthly spirits are broken, a person's family will be afflicted by illness.

Protective ethical rules (tshul khrims) guard against a shameful reputation.

- 16 The dharma taught by the three emanations ($k\bar{a}ya$)
- 17 Distinguishing Buddhist and non-Buddhist doctrine
- 18 Establishing the basis of the teachings
- 19 The achievements of the ministers
- 20 The benefits of making offerings
- 21 The dangers of not making offerings
- 22 The establishment of Bön

[p. 496]

Next, the way in which the Bön teaching was established.

On a mountain, the noble king of the divination gods, Phywa gshen,

Established the oral teaching of Ta khu spyid ming ske.1

The sNang gshen chants and the deity Gar gsas btsan po

¹ This may be a reference to the Bönpo deity, *IHa Ku byi mang ke* (Charles Ramble, personal communication).

Were established through the appearance of the Bön of men and of deities (*mi bon lha bon*) and the royal law.

The section continues with the other aspects of Bön established through the actions of other Bönpo figures (*gshen*).

- 23 The codification of astrology
- 24 The codification of medicine
- 25 The codification of religious doctrine
- 26 Padmasambhava's knowledge of the past
- 27 Padmasambhava's words about the present
- 28 His predictions about the future
- 29 The teaching protected by the treasure gter ma
- 30 Explanation of what is and is not a treasure gter ma

Conclusion