RGYA BOD YIG TSHANG CHEN MO

The great history of China and Tibet

INTRODUCTION

This history is also known as the Rgya bod yig tshang mkhas pa dga' byed chen mo 'dzam gling gsal

ba'i me long. It was written by Tagtsang Dzongpa (sTag tshang rdzong pa dpal 'byor bzang po), who

was probably a lay official at the Dus mchod bla brang of the Tagtsang fort. This had been

established by a branch of the Sakya Khon (Sa skya 'khon) family in the fourteenth century. The text

was completed in around 1434, during a period of unrest in central Tibet, when the Rinpung (Rin

spungs) family began to wrest power from the Phagmodru (Phag mo gru).

The text consists of a history of China and Tibet, with emphasis on the activities of the Sakya.

Sources

All versions seem to be based on a single manuscript, kept by the Densapa family in Gangtok.

1979. Munzang Tobgey and Manii Dorji (eds), Thimpu (2 vols) (manuscript version).

rGya bod yig tshang chen mo. 1985. Chengdu: Mi-rigs Dpe skrun khang. (Introduction by Dungkar

Lobsang Trinley)

TBRC: W20848.

References

Macdonald, Ariane. 1963. Préambule à la lecture d'un Rgya-Bod yig-chan, Journal Asiatique 251: 53-

159.

Martin, Dan. 1997. Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-language Historical Works. London:

Serindia, p. 68.

OUTLINE AND EXTRACTS

The text is that of the 1985 edition, with references to its page numbers. The chapter headings are

also those of that edition (and different from those used by Macdonald, which follow the text's own

introduction). The 1985 edition is divided into two volumes, and runs to 608 pages.

The first eight chapters concern Chinese, Tibetan, and Indian royal genealogies and the history of

the Buddhist doctrine in India.

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The royal line of Nepal

चवार्चेते. १वी.सीवा, मैका.प्रचया.चर्षेयाया

[p.84]

व र कें लड़ र बे कि रहे थे।

चित्रयाद्य स्वायाः ह्याः स्वीतः वासुस्रायर्थे। पा

|अर्थे|ब्र-ग्रीम-त्राच्छ्दे-द्यदःध्रुव|व्यव्यव्यक्तिन्वव

|देवे'श्रुयाच्याचश्रुव'च'कुषाकार्द्र् 'केट'| |क्रे'सुयाक्रवायादिवा'विक्रयाचिव्याव्याद्र्या'च्रिया

Namo, Ārya Maitreya,

I bow to the feet of the master of the ten levels,

Who with kindness and compassion has become protector of the three realms of beings.

[Maitreya's] manifestation has spread the Buddhist teaching and explained the operation of the dual laws, which govern creation and destruction within the human realm.

The passage continues by extolling the virtues of Nepal (here referred to as Li yul), with its Buddhist connections, from as far back as a Buddha prior to Śākyamuni.

This chapter is followed by genealogies from China and Minyak (Tangut). There is then a long chapter on the kings of Tibet.

The royal line of the religious kings of Tibet

क्र्यामुयार्वेट्'ग्री'मुयार्च्ययाच्व्यवार्या

King Songtsen Gampo (Srong brtsan sgam po) orders the creation of a Tibetan script and the translation of Buddhist texts. He withdraws for four years within the palace in order to study them, in particular those concerning Āvalokiteśvara.

[pp.144-45]

At the time, the king, not having been outside for four years, heard the ministers saying, 'The king does not know anything at all. It is we who have made the Tibetan region happy'. The king thought, 'If I am regarded as stupid, Tibet will not be pacified (thul)'. He said, 'If the family of the king stays in one place, everyone will be happy. Previously when there was no law, the twelve tribes—known to us—used to wander around. Now I have established law, which follows the pattern of the religious law of the ten virtues.'

[p. 145]

चयर-त.ज ब्रूंट-ब्रट-ध्रेय.व्रि.क्रवा.ब्रूंट-। भेयारा.ज.चश्चेट-छ.पहजा व्री.वेयारा.बै.वाक्र्ट-ता ह्रेय.सं.याश्चेत्रा

For killing, compensation was twenty thousand to one thousand *srang*; for theft, compensation ('jal) was eighty; for adultery, cutting off the nose; for telling slanderous lies, cutting out the tongue.

अक्रयालास्य तमेगायाता-टटान्किटी

टटाज्ञी चाकुतालास्य तमेगायाता-टटान्किटी

टटाज्ञी चाकुतालास्य तमेगायाता-टटान्किटी

टटाज्ञी चाकुतालास्य तमेगायातान्ति । स्वाप्तान्ति । स्वाप्तानि । स्

Further, the sixteen pure human qualities (*mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*) established the foundation of the laws: first, people should unquestioningly maintain faith in the Three Jewels; second, seek the true Buddhist doctrine and practise it; third, study to be learned in the sciences and the doctrine; fourth, keep renewing their gratitude to their parents; fifth, respect worthy people and the elders of their families; sixth, observe the norms of honesty and straightforwardness with relations and friends; seventh, not concern themselves with matters that they do not understand and which are not entrusted to them; eighth, be helpful to their neighbours.

[p. 145-46]

पूर्ययान्त्रीययान्तर्टान्यकुःक्षि युत्रयान्वयान्तान्यन्त्रकृत्यान्ययान्ययान्ययान्ययान्त्रम् विकासकृत्यान्त्रम् स्टान्यकृत्यियाः मृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यान्यम् विकासकृत्यम् विकासकृतम् विकासकृत्यम् विकासकृत्यम् विकासकृतम् विकासकृतम् विकासकृतम्यम् विकासकृतम् विकासकृतम्

Ninth, be fundamentally honest and humble; tenth, emulate all the duties and behaviour of the nobility and consider them closely; eleventh, renew their gratitude for the decisions of those who are kind; twelfth, repay debts on time and not cheat with weights and measures; thirteenth, treat everyone with equanimity and not antagonise anyone; fourteenth, amongst friends, not listen to women's talk and rely on their own judgement; fifteenth, be wise in the midst of all activity and only use gentle speech; sixteenth, not bear ill-will towards any sentient beings but treat them with love and compassion.

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¹ Literally, keep 'wet' or 'fresh'.

[p.146]

The laws of Tibet, the religion of Tibet, and the explanation of the laws were established at *Sho ma ra*. Then the ministers and subjects were happy. They said, 'This king is a very profound (*sqam*) person', and gave him the name Khri Srong btsan sgam po.

Later in the reign of Songtsen Gampo:

[p.163]

योट. मैथा.तर. कुंग. येथा मैजा.वश्वा.ज.त्व. योटवाबाटवूथा. अंशवा.टा.वंबेटवा. पुं राषु. ट्यूटबा.टा.जा टबा.कूबा.वहवा. हुब. कुं. तुंशवा. वकूबा टूट. प्यटबा. ट्वी.ज. तम्भेज. विटा. वैटा. वेपटा. वहूबा. हुब. ता. बंश. हूबा. वृद्ध. ता. बंश. हूबा. वृद्ध. ता. बंश. हूबा. वृद्ध. ता. व्या. कुंबा. व्या. कुंबा. व्या. व्या. कुंबा. व्या. व्या

After the Ra sa temple was built, when three years had passed, the majority of the Tibetan subjects did not know the calculations associated with the four seasons. As the divisions had not been made, the religious king Srong btsan sgam po, thought, 'I ought to establish religious and worldly laws. I have come to the conclusion that even though I can guide the Tibetan people towards virtue, in order to benefit the kingdom, I need to disseminate methods to address the tangle of worldly concerns, including the calculations of India and China'.

The king then establishes standards for weights and measures.

The text continues with chapters on the histories of tea and porcelain, on the kings Tri Detsugten (Khri IDe gtsug brtan, also known as Mes ag tshom, 680–743) and Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong Ide btsan, 755–797), and a history of medical knowledge in Tibet.

This chapter concerns the early ninth century. It starts with the successor to Tri Song Detsen, Mune Tsenpo (Mu ne btsan po), who disseminates the two laws (*khrims gnyis*).

Tri Tsuk Detsen (Khri gTsug Ide btsan) (also known as Ralpachan (Ral pa can), r.815–836), is a strong supporter and sponsor of Buddhist activity. He establishes the royal law (*rgyal khrims*), on the basis of the doctrine (*chos*).

There follows a chapter on the later spread of the doctrine (*phyi dar*). The account then turns to the ministers.

The history of seven wise ministers of Tibet

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र्चर ग्री ब्रॅंब केव अहंद्याय के पर्व ग्री कें कुया
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The text describes a group of seven ministers, to whom it attributes social and scientific achievements: agrarian reform, irrigation issues, metallurgical discoveries, development of the Tibetan script, standardization of weights and measures, construction of bridges, and the resolution of disputes, respectively.

As regards the first, 'Dzang gi bu ru las skyes:

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[pp.229-30]
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|ट्रे.णु.सूट.च.सूट.च.झ.झूचो.सूचो.शूट| |इन्ट.चट.खुट.टे.यूँचोर्यूंखोर्ट.चय.सूच.सूच्.सूच्रीच्यंत्र्य्त्र्र्य्त्रे |झ्.ज.क्ष्यं.सू.चेब.चय.सीच्यःक्ष्यंत्र्यंत्रेय्त्रेय्त्रेय्त्रेय् |ट.प्रस्त.चयत्रस्ट.जयात्त.कु.चेब.ची |ट्रे.णुब्य.चयव्यस्ट.जयात्त.कु.चेब.ची

Regarding his skills and achievements,

He initiated rules (khrims) regarding cattle, female yaks, goats, and sheep;

Stacks of hay were made, [so that] summer grass could be used in the winter;

Pastures were turned (ploughed) into fields, so that the mountain sides were cultivated.

Previously, in Tibet there had been no harvesting of hay or crops.

Regarding his son:

जिल्लाम् सुर्वे स्टाल्लाम् सुर्वे स्टाल्लाम् सुर्वे स्टालाम् सुर्वे स्टालाम् सुर्वे स्टालाम् सुर्वे स्टालाम् सुर्वे स्टालाम् सुर्वे सु

During the reign of Khri snyan bzung btsan

A second wise one, son of the [previous] great minister,

Known as Lha bu go dkar, appeared.

Regarding his skills and achievements,

He united the activities of the nomads and the agriculture of the farmers.

The text continues with the way he deals with irrigation, and then discusses the achievements of the other wise ministers.

As regards the seventh, Stag tshab Idong gzigs:

[p.231]

ट्रियु. सूट. व. त्यूक्य. कूट. अट। विट. त्यी. पर्यूट. कथेकथ रे क्षेक्य रे . त्युक्य. ग्रीथ. त्यूक्य. कूट. कैटी कूट. ग्रीथ. कूट. क्रय. त्यूरे . त्यूरे. ट्यी. त. सूटी व्यूया. त्युपुर. त्य्यीट्य. कथा. भ्रीय. दुका. त्यूर. तुटी ट्रि. त्यूय. व्यूय. ट्रिय. कथा. त. कु. त्यूर. त्यूर.

Regarding his skills and achievements,

He invoked the female protectors of the four directions;

His generals fiercely attacked the enemies at the borders;

He equalized [the wealth of] the internal population and his laws provided restorative compensation.

Previously, in Tibet, there had been no restorative compensation.

The next chapters concern the Mongolian dynastic succession, with particular reference to the activities of these dynasties in Tibet in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The great Mongol royal lineages

केव'र्रार्द्रर'ग्री'मुल'र्घरा

Das sman, a Mongol official who has been asked to set up the postal relay service in Tibet, speaks to Qubilai Qan:

[p.274]

ट्रेय.कूच क्याचा क.मृथं.वाट.ट्यूब.क.र्यं.वाय.त्यं.वथ.त्या.वभेरा कविय.मुथं.क्र्रेय.त्यं.टिटी चे.त.क्र्यं.स्.बीटात.ह.,क्रेय.लूट.लुयं.चुरी लट.क्रिय.त्यूप्.लेट.बुया यट.जा यूट.क्रेट.त्य्वा.थे.क्या.लूट.तयं.चुर.वप्.व्याचेश.क्षेत्र.क्र्यं. यूट.ची.वो थु.वि.क्र्य.परंटिवो.त.टटा पूट.रट. वो.क्रिय.विश्वया.लुवो क्रि.क्र्य.क्री.विश्वया हु.त्युवे.श.पटहवोबा ब्रा.वि.क्ष्यःग्रीट.श.क्षेवोब्य.तयं.लूट.परंची.तया त्यर.बीट.व्या

'As regards Tibet, its people are fierce. Its own royal law has been destroyed and Chinese-Mongolian law has not been introduced. Even the borders have not been settled. So how can we introduce beneficial foreign conditions and achieve great things?' Then, the king [Qubilai Qan] declared that he had received sufficiently clear advice that Tibet was being left to deteriorate, and whatever it needed, but did not have, would be provided by his treasurer.

The emperor continues by giving orders concerning the postal stations and appoints Das sman as Sonjingwen (*son jing dben*). The text continues by describing his activities in different regions, after which his authority increases (*son bying dben gyi khrims dar*) and he is appointed as the main

governor (rtsa ba'i dpon chen).

The second volume begins with a lengthy chapter on the Sakya.

The succession of the glorious Sakya Khon family

र्सः इव .या. भ्री.पात्य. मी.वारीट . प्रयाना विवाया ज्ञा

Here, *khrims ra*, literally 'court', indicates administrative power, and *khrims* is used to refer to government and administration in general. *Khrims la bsgral*, literally 'liberated in law', is used to indicate that someone is executed.

The lineage of the kings of Gyantse

This chapter contains a description of the religious activities of the Sharga (Shar dga') family, rulers of Gyantse (rGyal rtse).

It describes the birth of an emanation in 1269, who has an extraordinary life. The text recounts how, by means of the two laws (*chos khrims dang rayal khrims gnyis*) he achieves many things.

The chapter ends with a lengthy biographical sketch of Rabten Kunzang Pagpa (Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags pa, 1389–1442), who commissioned the famous Gyantse stupa and was alive at the time of the composition of this text.

[p.398]

टटा, धिवाब,ग्री,कूंटवा,ग्रीया मैना,ग्रियवा,याक्ष्य

Even the rulers of the north accepted his orders and when he became master of the royal law for them all, the splendour of his person, the strength of his speech, and the power of his thought enforced the royal law and overcame his enemies. Then he became truly renowned as an emanation of Phyag na rdo rje (Vajrapani).

The text continues with further chapters on later religious and political events. There are references to the leaders of the Pagdru and Khams acting against the law (*khrims 'gal mu med byed*). In this section the phrases *rgyal khrims chen po'i bya ba* and *khrims las kyi bya ba* and *khrims gnyis kyi bya ba* are used to refer to the activities of the governors (*dpon chen*).