

Monastic rules (*bca' yig*) from the medieval period

For further details and sources, see:

Berthe Jansen. 2018. *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet*.
University of California Press.

11th century Rong zom *bca' yig*

Author: Rong zom chos bzang (1042–1136)

Title: Rong zom chos bzang gis rang slob dam tshig pa rnam la gsungs pa'i rwa ba brgyad pa'i *bca' yig*

Source: *gSung 'bum*, vol 2. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang. 1999: 399–414.

This lays out rules for a new tantric community of both men and women. It provides that lowly people, such as butchers, hunters, thieves, robbers, and prostitutes are not to take tantric vows. Several rules concern the care of others: beggars should be given food at the gate but not allowed inside ('outside friends'); lepers should be segregated but fed; those who are too old to work should be cared for.

12th century *gDan sa bca' yig*

Author: Zhang brston 'grus pa (1123–1193)

Title: *gDan sa nyams dmas su gyar ba'i skabs mdzad pa'i bca' yig*.

Source: *dPal ldan tshal pa bka' brgyud kyi bstan pa'i mnga' bdag zhang g.yu brag pa brston 'grus grags pa'i gsung 'bum rin po che: bka' thor bu, shog dril chen mo*. Kathmandu: Shree Gautam Buddha Vihar. 2004: 176–81.

This text was created by the founder of the monastery for the religious community. It confirms that behaviour must be in accordance with earlier *bca' khrims*. These concern, inter alia, women and debts (at times of famine).

1240s 'Bri gung mthil *bca' yig*

Author: sPyan snga grags pa 'byung gnas (1175–1255)

Two versions exist:

a) Magha dha rdo rje gdan 'bri gung byang chub gling gi *bca' khrims*

In: *gSung 'bum*, vol 1. Delhi: Drikung Kagyu Publications. 2002: 247–50.

b) rDo rje gdan 'bri gung byang chub gling gi rtsa khrim.

In: A mgon rin po che (ed.) *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, vol 34. Lhasa. 2004: 390–94.

The monastery of Drigung Til ('Bri gung mthil byang chub gling) was founded in 1179 and was already powerful, with good allies and people official positions, by the mid-thirteenth century. It seems that the monastery was establishing itself as an elite establishment, as most rules are concerned with its reputation in some way.

The rules prohibit beggars from becoming monks, they prohibit alcohol drinking, they are concerned with *ser kyi pa*, 'yellow men', meaning lay practitioners who pretend to be monks. They are to be caught and forced to take vows or expelled from the monastery.

In the *gSung 'bum* the text is called a *bca' khrim*, or *rtsa khrim*, which could be a reference to existing rules, as well as to the actual text.

1417 Byams pa gling bca' yig

Author: bLo bzang grags pa'i dpal (Tsong kha pa).

Title: Byams pa gling na bzhugs pa'i spy'i dge 'dun la khrim su bca' ba'i yi ge.

Source: *gSung 'bum*, vol 2. New Delhi: Mongolian lama Gurudeva. 1978–79: 250b–58a.

The text concerns a monastic community in north-east central Tibet and its relations with lay-people. This includes corvée labour. It says that monks are not to be involved too much in secular affairs and laws.

16th century dPal ri chos sde bca' yig

Author: Shes rab 'od zer (1518–1584/72)

Title: Grwa tshang gi bca' yig bstan pa'i nyi 'od.

Source: *gSung 'bum*, Gonpo Tsetan (ed.) Gangtok. 1977: 455–60.

The author was a Nyingma reformer, who founded the monastery. The text refers to both the *rgyal khrim* and the *chos khrim*. Monks are not supposed to engage in litigation (*bka' mchu*). However, if they commit acts of violence, revolt, or meddling, they should be punished according to both systems of law. Other offences are dealt with according to the monastic rules.

The text refers to the Pratimoksha sutra (containing the monastic vows) as *nang pa sangs rgyas pa'i khrim kyi yi ge*, that is, the Buddhist law-book.

16th century mTshur phu bca' yig

Author: Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554).

Title: dGa' tshal karma gzhung lugs gling dang por sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan du bzhugs dus kyi 'phral gyi bca' yig.

Source: *gSung 'bum*, vol 3. Lhasa. 2004: 700–15.

mTshur phu monastery was founded in 1159. The author is the Eighth Karmapa. The text is closely concerned with Buddhist ethics and morality, suggesting Vinayic influences, rather than being closely related to recent events. It has a Buddhist structure, discussing the four root vows (sex, stealing, killing, lying), breach of which causes downfall, along with waste and debt. It gives detailed guidance about clothes, male decorations, also the content of *dharma*, such as mental cravings. It sets a model of ideal behaviour.